
Ohio

AIRSHIP REPORTS

OF 1897 .

OHIO AIRSHIP REPORTS OF 1897

62 PAGES

QUINCY ALLIGATOR

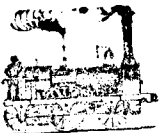
Making Things Lively About the Marsh Lately.

Saturday's Kenton Daily Democrat says: The people in the vicinity of the Scioto Marsh are in a great state of excitement because of the appearance of an alligator in a swamp near Foraker. It was first seen Wednesday by some boys who were hunting. They were badly frightened and reported their discovery. A search was made but it was not seen again until Friday. It is probable that the alligator is one that escaped from the park at Quincy a few weeks ago.

(Logan County Index, April 8)
1897

AIR SHIPS ARE NOW A FAD

...On April 5 people at Nashville, Illinois, saw something that some thought was a balloon, while others were sure it was a flying machine. Two days later a doctor at Vinton, Iowa, reported that he and his family heard the air ship "swishing through the air" and that he saw it flying against the wind.... and Northwood, a town near the Minneapolis state line, reported the machine in sight at 10:30 o'clock [April 8].



(Toledo Blade, April 12)

ANDERSON PEOPLE

Claim to Have Seen the Strange Flying Machine Recently.

...Parties in another section of the city, among them Deputy Clerk Fulton, state that they saw it early Friday morning.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 15)

Platte City, Mo., April 12.--The town was roused Saturday night at 10 o'clock by tinkling of bells overhead. Every one rushed out doors. Suspended in mid air was an object over 100 feet long and 20 wide. Two immense fins on either side of it moved up and down.

(Columbus Press, April 12)

Saw a Man In it.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

LAGRANGE, IND., April 12.--The mysterious airship which has been hovering over Chicago for the past few days was visible here early last night. It came from a westerly direction, and then, turning southwest for awhile, hovered over this section, and then turned and went toward Chicago. The powerful telescope at the How Military School, at Lima, was turned on it, and the professor in charge declares he could distinguish a figure moving about.

Elkhart Right in Line.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

ELKHART, IND., April 12.--A large number of persons claim to have seen an airship passing over this city between 10 o'clock and midnight last night. It presented all the peculiarities that have been so generally described.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 13)

2

Seen at Manchester.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

WABASH, IND., April 13.--The report came from North Manchester last night that what appeared to be an airship floated lazily over that place at a height of a quarter of a mile last evening. Several persons claim to have seen the headlight and watched the dark mass until it disappeared. The description of the machine corresponds with that given by the Western people who assert they have seen it.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 14)

Muncie Speaks Up.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

MUNCIE, IND., April 13.--Sylvester Oran, a resident of Avondale, a suburb of this city, claims to have seen the mysterious airship this morning about 3 o'clock. He was called to go for a doctor, and on leaving his home he says his eyes were attracted by a bright light in the heavens. It moved swiftly from north to south, going at a great speed and vanishing in a few seconds. He bears a good reputation for veracity, and his story is believed.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 14)

ANDERSON PEOPLE

Claim to Have Seen the Strange Flying Machine Recently.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

ANDERSON, IND., April 14.--Fifteen or twenty Andersonians of good reputation claim to have seen the real thing in the airship line last night. It was hovering over the city, and those who saw it say there could be no further doubting. They were in the west part of the city. Ladies were called out, and the party watched the strange electric light until it disappeared in the northern mist....

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 15)

SIX MEN

Seen in the Airship...

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

MARION, IND., April 14.--The much-talked-of airship passed over Marion this afternoon about 3 o'clock about six miles to the south and apparently about a mile from the earth. It came from the northwest and veered around to the east. It appeared to be a cigar or boat-shaped body, with large wings. Six passengers were aboard.

Strong telescopes made the color of the body visible, and reliable citizens declare that it was of a brown cast, and that the wings

were white. About 7 o'clock this evening an object carrying a large light, apparently that of a headlight, was seen passing over Marion, coming from the east and bearing off to the northwest.

Prof. Alva Graves, Principal of the high school, with W.H. Sanders, editor of the Chronicle; Howard Roose, city editor of the Morning News; H.M. Elliott, an attorney, and your correspondent, went to the High School Observatory, where they have a telescope of the finest make, but when the telescope was placed in position, the object had passed behind a bank of clouds, and could not be seen.

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3

IN DAYLIGHT

The Queer Machine Seen to Land Near Gas City.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

GAS CITY, IND., April 14.--About 3 o'clock this afternoon hundreds of the inhabitants of this city were amazed and startled upon looking into the heavens to see approaching from a northwesterly course what appeared to be an immense bird. As it approached it came nearer the earth, and the outlines of the flyer could be distinctly seen. It was in the shape of a cigar, and was propelled by broad canvas wings.

People rushed to the point where they thought it would land, but all were fooled. The airship, as it proved to be, lighted in a field on the Roush farm, about one mile east of the city. Cattle and horses were terrified, and consternation reigned supreme. A rush was made for the Roush farm, but the navigators of the monster anticipated the move, and before the crowds reached the farm the mysterious airship was again seen in the air, going in an easterly direction.

Some of the best business men will vouch for having seen the ship, among them L.V. Seybrant, and D.E. Conway, of the Mississinewa Hotel; W.H. Guthrie, W.P. Garthwait, G.W. Villars, D.W. Cox, William M. Dunlap and others.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 15)

FARMER SCARED

When the Air King Sailed Over to Jig Time.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

CASSTOWN, OHIO, April 15.--This morning James McKensie, a well-known farmer living about a mile north of here, came to town with a startling story about the airship. Mr. McKensie is entirely responsible. His story is that about 6 o'clock last night, while engaged in feeding his hogs, he was startled by a strange noise not unlike the passage of a flock of geese. Upon looking up, he further says, he saw what at first appeared to be a huge bird headed in a southwesterly direction.

He distinctly saw the wing-like object by which the supposed airship propelled itself through the air, and noticed what appeared to be a large rudder. The ship was moving quite leisurely, and Mr. McKensie avers that a sound like that of distant music accompanied it. The object was not more than 150 feet from the earth, and but

for the gathering dusk he believes he could have seen its tenants.

One of his neighbors heard the strange sounds at the same time, but did not get to see the great modern air bird. As the farmer had not read anything about the alleged airship said to be travelling through space, he was on the lookout for nothing of the kind, and now, since he has heard of the airship, he is of the opinion that it was the object he saw last night over his farm.

As the thing disappeared he says he heard a sound very much like a human voice, and something large and white seemed to leave the ship. A party will leave this village to-day to look for the supposed message which is expected, if found, to reveal the identity of the air king and its people.

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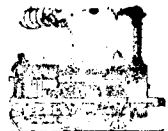
Seen in Portland.

PORTLAND, IND., April 15.--Several citizens claim that the mysterious airship which has been causing such a furore passed over Portland last night, and that the lights were plainly discernible. Some claim to be able to give in general its outlines, and their description is in accordance with that which has been telegraphed from a number of places.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 16)

Several young men claim they saw the much talked of flying machine, or some other bird, flying over Bluffton last Wednesday evening.

(Bluffton News, April 22)



ANDALUSIA, ILL., April 15.--Seven residents of this place saw the mysterious air ship at 11 o'clock last night. Jim Dinkerson, the livery stable man, shot at it, and the air was at once so strongly charged with sulphur that breathing became extremely difficult. Fearful noises issued from the clouds by which the ship was surrounded, and some of the more superstitious people ran into their houses and locked themselves up, being convinced that Old Nick was out on one of his periodical excursions....

DOWAGIAC, MICH., April 15.--Several people saw the air ship passing over Dowagiac last night, at about 11 o'clock. It left three distinct trails of fire in its rear, and for two hours after the stranger had gone the air was heavily charged with something that gave out an odor like garlic.

HORNELLSVILLE, N.Y., April 15.--The air ship passed here last night. An envelope was dropped from it with a message to the effect that the ship was on its way to New York, where an effort would be made to have it written up for the new journalism. The message was signed: "Nemo Numis, chief deputy for the Second district of Mars."

(Washington Court House Cyclone and Fayette Republican, April 22)

(7A)

THE AIR SHIP

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That Was Seen in Chicago Last Week
Was Seen by Kenton People Last
Evening.

5

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The air ship that was seen in Chicago last week seems to be near Kenton, as many people from this city claim they saw the air ship last night about 7 o'clock. As will be remembered, the air ship started a few weeks ago from San Francisco to make a trip across the continent. Since the ship has started it was seen only a few times, and Chicago was the last place it was seen until some well-known Kenton people saw it over this city last night. They supposed, of course, the ship was coming this way to see those new bicycle suits at Morgenroth's....

(Kenton News-Republican, April 15)

AIR SHIP A FAKE.
No Truth In the Story That it Has Been
Seen Over Omaha.

6

Among others who have read about the wonderful airship that the dispatches state has been seen over Omaha and other western cities nearly every night for weeks past is Attorney W.T. Sawyer of this city. Having a brother-in-law out in Omaha, a practicing attorney, Mr. Sawyer determined to write him and learn of the strange ship that navigated the air. This is the answer to Mr. Sawyer's letter:

OMAHA, Neb., April 12, 1897.

DEAR BROTHER--I received your letter ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ dated April 9, this morning, and will endeavor to give you the desired information. I have not been around through the city a great deal after night and have found but one or two parties who have seen the air ship that you inquire about. From the location of the city where they reside, and the associates accompanying them, and the kind of liquor that they partake of, they would most certainly be capable of not only seeing air ships, but also reptiles of most any description. There is absolutely no foundation in the rumors and the telegrams that have been sent out, and the parties who have claimed to see it are not responsible nor reliable, and it is all fiction.
I.F. MADLEM.

(Akron Times-Democrat, April 14)

Prominent residents of Dunkirk, a small village north of Kenton, claim to have seen the mythical airship Thursday night at 8:15 o'clock. It was going east at a rapid rate, and was so close to the earth that you could hear men's voices. It looked as large as a wagon bed and had something like wings stretching from each side and a propellor at each end. On the front was a red light, while the rear carried a greenish yellow lamp.

(Cadiz Harrison County Democrat, April 21)

TALKING
Heard by the Citizens

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.
DUNKIRK, OHIO, April 15.--An airship passed over this place about 4 o'clock this morning. It is supposed to be the same one which was seen in Marion, Ind., yesterday evening. It was going in an easterly direction, and when at the eastern part of the city it was within 200 feet of the ground. It was seen by Willie Mahon, the Marshal, railroad tower men and several prominent ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ citizens. When passing over these gentlemen they could hear several men in the airship talking very loud, but could not distinguish what they were saying. From what could be seen it resembled a wagon bed with large wings extending on either side, and looked to be large enough to hold a dozen men.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 16)

SEEN AT DUNKIRK

THE MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP

Which Is Causing So Much Talk Passed
Near Kenton and Over Dunkirk Last
Night

7

Seen by Several.

"I tell you I saw it."

Such was the joint remark firmly asserted by two young men last night who were trying to make the reporter believe they had seen the famous airship that has of late obtained somuch newspaper notoreity.

These young fellows insisted that last evening about 7:30 they had observed close to the western horizon a bright light that gleamed forth first red, then green and then a sickly yellow. They spent some time watching the light and say that it seemed to flicker and dodge about as though it were on the move. In a few minutes a cloud came along and prevented further observation. They had read of the airship, knew it was on its way to Kenton and are now sure they saw it.

It is a shame to spoil a mysterious item like this, but conscience, which doth make cowards of us all, compels the writer to explain that the weird, flickering, airship-like light radiated not from a head light but from the star Alpha Orionis, a staid, steady old twinkler that has been peregrinating about in the heavens for several millions of years more or less. This star appears on the meridian about 5 o'clock and becomes visible to the eye about 7:30. It first becomes noticeable in the central southwest portion of the sky and resembles a strong white electric light. It then takes a course towards the northwest, traveling at an unusually rapid rate. As it begins to sink, the atmospheric conditions cause it to appear of a dull, reddish hue on the under side and green on the upper side, the central portion being white.

SEEN AT DUNKIRK.

The Airship Was Near That Place
Last Night and Certain Citizens
Could Hear Talking.

Special to the NEWS-REPUBLICAN.

DUNKIRK, O., April 16.--The airship that was seen at Marion, Indiana, yesterday passed over Dunkirk at 8:15 last night, going east at a rapid rate. Willis Mahon, ex-Marshal French and several other citizens saw it. They say it was so near the earth that you could hear men talking in it. The affair looked ~~XXXX~~ as large as a wagon bed and had something like wings stretching from each side and a propellor at each end. On the front was a red light while on the rear was a greenish-yellow lamp. Considerable excitement was created here when it was learned that Dunkirk had had a visit from the air navigator.

Probably the light seen by the Kenton young men might have been the air ship after all but we are led to believe that the Dunkirk people are merely trying to create a little excitement and thus boom Dunkirk. Ada and Forest will no doubt feel slighted now that they didn't have a visit from the aerial navigator.

(Kenton News-Republican, April 16)

THE MYSTERIOUS SHIP

WHICH PEOPLE HAVE SEEN FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.

8

Floating Over Their Housetops, is observed
Near Lancaster Last Night, and One of the Occupants
Leaves a Strange Message With a Farmer.

"If I didn't see that air ship last night," said Byron Rutter to an EAGLE representative this morning, "it was a spectral invention painted with natural exactness in the vaults of heaven and there issued from it the sound of voices like those of human beings although the distance seemed so great that it reached me in a low, inarticulated rumbling from which nothing intelligent could be deduced."

"I will tell you how it was. Billy Schneider, you know Billy don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, Billy and I were up in the northern part of the county looking at some cattle. You know the night was cloudy, and only occasionally did the moon peep out from behind some large embankment to smile in ghostly radiance on the earth below.

"It was during one of these spells, as we were driving along slowly that a dark shadow crossed the road immediately in front of the horse.

"I am not superstitious and never allow any thing to rattle my brain and for this reason, perhaps, I did not cry out in surprise or alarm. I just turned in the buggy and looked at Billy, and he was looking at me with an expression of inquiry over his countenance that spoke plainer than words could express that his thoughts were similar to mine.

"...at first I was half inclined to think that I had dozed off and dreamed that the ship was floating over me, but when Billy turned to me with the puzzled expression I knew that I was very much awake and the shadow was an actuality.

"We stopped the horse and both jumped out and we could just make out a dark object disappearing behind a rift of clouds. It was inclined at an angle of about 45 degrees, as though a landing had been made at some place not very far distant and they were ascending to a point above the lower wind currents.

"The thing was a great big massive structure in the shape of a cigar and seemed to be propelled by two pairs of large canvass wings. It moved with considerable velocity and seemed to be well under control.

"We did not see the headlight, which most of the Indiana people claimed that they had seen, but there might have been one attached that escaped our observation, as the thing was going upwards and away from us.

"After the ship had disappeared, we continued down the road and met a group of men. We made inquiry if they had seen the mysterious aerial monster, and they all replied that they had. One of the men stated that his attention was first attracted to the mysterious contrivance by noticing a large cigar-shaped monster rising slowly from one corner of his farm. He ran towards it and distinctly saw six or seven faces looking over the top of the car, and could distinctly hear their voices as they conversed with one another.

"What did they say," I eagerly inquired.

"Oh nothing much," replied the farmer, "only one old fellow leaned away out over the side and yelled loud enough to rip the canvas wings: 'if you see a couple of air ship prevaricators coming down the road, just correl them and I will stop tomorrow night and take them away.'" }

AIR SHIP CAUGHT IN CINCINNATI

It Is Photographed for the Commercial Tribune.

ON EXHIBITION TODAY

Old Trick of the Camera Explains the Hoax.

OTHER PICTURES TAKEN

A NATIONAL JOKE THAT IS GROWING OLD

SHIP'S TRAVELS YESTERDAY

The airship has arrived in Cincinnati. It was photographed for the Commercial Tribune while in full flight, and is at this identical moment in the Commercial Tribune counting room, where any one who cares to look at it may do so.

The airship in the Commercial Tribune counting room may not be the only one on earth, but it is as real as that which has been seen in so many different parts of the country by so many different people who do not own telescopes. It is a matter of record that not a single astronomer has seen the navigator of the air.

* The correspondents of the country have shown a wonderful lack of cooperation. On one day the ship was sighted at Topeka, Kan., at Cartersville, Ill., and at Muncie, Ind., at the same time.

Photographs ad lib. have been obtained and exhibited as proof that the airship really had been seen.

The joke was getting a bit stale, so the Commercial Tribune decided to try a little camera manipulating itself.

The Wily Camera.

For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, the photographic camera is peculiar. It can give a man any number of heads, can make him face himself, stand on his own head and perform a thousand curious feats, all by the simple changing of the focus, or the position of the camera.

The Commercial Tribune has a photograph of the airship. It is a genuine photograph, and copies of it may be seen on exhibition in the Commercial Tribune counting room. The negative has not been touched or changed in the slightest degree and it is a bona fide photograph of a real airship. The only apparent deception is that of distance. The airship looks as if it were a mile or two up in the air, whereas it was at the time of taking of the photograph just eight feet and six inches from the earth by actual measurement.

How It Was Done.

Two pieces of cardboard were cut out in accordance with the popular idea of an airship. These two bits of cardboard were fastened together by a bit of slate-colored silk, which makes no impression on the photographic plate. The cardboard was rubbed with a lead pencil to dull its color, and the whole contrivance was hung by a bit of slate-colored silk to the end of a broomstick, about eight feet in the air and about the same distance from the camera.

Taking the Photograph.

The camera was pointed toward the sky so as to throw the top of the building next door (Colonel Nelson's residence in Newport) well toward the bottom of the plate. At the same time the airship was swung into position so as to show against the background of the sky. With that infinite depth behind it, it looked as if it might be well up toward the sun. An exposure of a fraction of a second over the usual time was allowed for the vibration of the airship, so as to give the indistinct appearance that is noted about any object

at great height. By the simple shifting of the camera the airship could have been shown at any altitude desired by the photographer.

A True Negative.

The negative thus obtained is absolutely true. There is no retouching, no "doctoring" nor putting in of figures. Any photographer might have developed the plate, and the same picture, as reproduced above, would have been secured.

The process used is just the reverse of that employed by the truthful fisherman to prove the stories he tells of six-foot fish he has caught....

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AERONAUTS GO FISHING.
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10

The Mysterious Ship Found Anchored in Lake Erie.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

CLEVELAND, O., April 15.--S.H. Davis, of Detroit, was in Cleveland today. He says he was out on his fish tug, the Sea Wing, Wednesday, headed for Cleveland Harbor, about fifteen miles from the piers. The fishermen noticed a queer looking boat about two miles away. Captain Jos. Singler, master of the tug, and Mr. Davis agreed in the statement that it appeared to be about four feet in length. It had a cabin covering about one-fourth of the deck surface. A man dressed in a checked hunting suit and wearing a long, peaked cap, was fishing from the boat. He was apparently about 25 years of age. A woman sat at his side. A boy of about 10 years sat at her feet.

As the Sea Wing neared the curious craft, to the amazement of those on the tug, a gaily decorated object which had been lying on the framework over the boat, was slowly inflated, and rose to the length of the ropes by which it was attached to the boat. It was a balloon, cylinder-shaped, about fifty feet long. Slowly the boat rose into the air until it stood directly over the tug, about 500 feet from the water. A large sword fish had been dropped from the airship. The fish was stunned by its fall, and was picked up by Captain Singler, and is now on exhibition in a tank at the fire tug, Cleveland, O.

After moving aimlessly about for a short time a sail was dropped from the air-ship, and the mysterious people were carried away by the high wind.

Mr. Davis said that the boat had a wheel similar to those on steamers. This, it is stated, acts as a propellor in the air, as well as on water.

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AIRSHIP'S TRAVELS.
--

Seen All Over Illinois and in Michigan.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

CARLYLE, Ill., April 15.--The airship was seen here tonight, going rapidly in a northeasterly direction. It showed a number of red lights.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

MT. VERNON, Ill., April 15.--What is thought to be the mysterious airship was seen here last night by a hundred persons. Mayor Wells says it resembled the body of a huge man swimming through the ~~air~~ air, with an electric light on his back.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

SOUTH HAVEN, Mich., April 15.--The airship passed here last evening, headed westward. It was cigar-shaped, and moved with remarkable speed.

(SE)

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

HILLSBORO, O., April 15.--A number of reputable citizens saw the airship here last night about 10:30 o'clock. Red lights were plainly visible.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

QUINCY, Ill., April 15.--The Wabash passenger train which arrived here at 10 o'clock tonight raced for fifteen miles with the airship. They first sighted the thing near Perry Springs, fifty-two miles east of Quincy, and raced with it to Herzman, when it pulled ahead of the train and disappeared. The train was running forty miles an hour. All of the passengers saw it, but all they could see was two lights, one white, the other red.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 16)

11

[editorial on French newspaper's attitude--
they think somebody's finally invented one]

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 18)

THE WONDERFUL AIRSHIP
It Has Been Seen by Akronians on Two Different
Nights.

John W. Hudson, of 476 East Center street, says that one of his neighbors called him out of the house last evening, saying that the celebrated airship was floating above the city. Hudson responded and said that he could see what looked like a moving light in the heavens. His neighbor says, however, that he could distinguish the outlines of a huge air ship.

The effects of North Howard street whiskey are said to have exerted such a powerful influence on a number of residents of North Hill the other night that they were able to see the ship plainly in the heavens.

It would have been too bad if Akron had not been able to give its air ship story to the world, in view of the fact that every other town in the country has had the air ship floating over it.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 16)

12

St. Louis, April 17.--The airship visited St. Louis again at night. This time the bright searchlight was not only seen by thousands, but the object was observed through a telescope, and the outlines of the craft were seen. The person who caught this exact view of the transitor and brought it near the earth by means of a powerful lens is Dr. Loo Caplen. Dr. Caplen is one of the leading men in his profession. He is respected by all who know him, and his word is to be implicitly relied on....

Louisville, April 17.--Citizens of Russellville, a city of 10,000, say they saw an airship Thursday night. Mayor B.B. Andrews, City Clerk McCutcheon, James McCutcheon, the oldest and wealthiest merchant in the city, and Dr. Charles Forthand, men of unquestioned standing, declare they saw a "strange aerial cruiser" circle around the city for ten minutes before sailing off to the west.

Clarksville, Tenn., April 17.--Two local warehousemen, three merchants and four city officers saw the mysterious airship Thursday night. They say it was about one mile high and travelled from the east to the northwest....

TOOK ON COAL.

Wellsville, Mo., April 17.--S.S. Kettle, a prominent citizen, positively says he saw the airship Thursday at 9:15. It stopped half a mile west of the city and took on three tons of coal, then left in a southerly direction.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 17)

...Robert Hitch and family, who live three miles south of Elpaso, saw an airship in the heavens between 8 and 9 p.m. yesterday

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

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The air ship which has been attracting so much attention in the west has made its appearance in Licking county, this state. Several citizens of Newark claim to have seen it Friday night.

(Caldwell Journal, April 22)

THEY SAW THE AIRSHIP.

--
Two Belated Sanduskyites Claim to Have
Seen it Yesterday.

13

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That much discussed and variously located airship has been soaring majestically over this city. Wm. McKean and Dan Spran, it is said, are willing to make affidavit and do solemnly swear that they observed the strange aerial traveler sailing rapidly over Sandusky in a westerly direction and observed the several colored lights, it is alleged the thing displays to warn meteors, comets, planets and various other heavenly navigators of her approach to starboard or port or otherwise, as the case may be.

Messrs. McKean and Spran claim to have seen the airship between 10 and 1 o'clock yesterday morning and believe it was no illusion but the much talked of airship.

(Sandusky Register, April 17)

(1)

UNQUESTIONED

Is the Veracity of Those Who Saw the Mystery.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

VINCENNES, IND., April 16.--More than a score of citizens of unquestioned veracity saw some strange body passing over the city early this evening, which they think was the mysterious airship. It was at a great altitude and moved rapidly in a southeasterly direction, straight over the city.

Such men as Colonel M.P. Ghee, ex-Mayor Ewing, Edwin Watson, Thomas Eastham, Judge DeWolf, Scott Emison, Will Mason, and others, saw the strange aerial visitor in its nocturnal migration. Heretofore they have doubted the story of the airship, but all now admit that seeing is believing.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

14

AMONG THE HOOSIERS.

Washington, Ind., April 17.--The supposed airship was seen several miles west of this city Friday night. A dull red light, described as one foot wide and two feet long, was exhibited.

The airship was also seen at Lawrenceburg, Ind., Friday night.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 17)

THAT AIRSHIP.

--
Strange Lights Seen High in the Sky

--
Are Believed to Have Been Carried by
the Mysterious Aerial Navigators--
North Side Young Men "Drooped."

Shortly after 7 Friday night Mrs. Thomas Kyte of 509 East Thornton St., saw several lights in the sky, apparently just beneath the clouds, moving in a southwesterly course. She called the attention of her husband and daughter, Miss Eva, to the lights. Mrs. Kyte called Groceryman J.A. Rohner, whose store adjoins the Kyte property.

Those who saw the lights concluded that they were attached to an air ship, as the uncertain outlines of an object of prodigious size, resembling a balloon, could just be distinguished.

Mr. Rohner was enabled to catch only a glimpse of the lights, as a cloud obscured further vision.

Mr. Kyte's family and Mr. Rohner are firm in their belief today that the lights they saw were attached to the mysterious air ship of whose supposed journeys at night so much has been said in the newspapers of the northeastern and middle states recently.

A DEMOCRAT reporter accompanied by a notary, started out today to get the affidavits of John Hoagland, Ralph Hogan and other North Side residents, who reported that they had seen the supposed air ship two nights ago....

(Akron Times-Democrat, April 21)

STRANGER
Seen in the Heavens.

Many Responsible People
Declare It an Airship--the
Whole Country is Excited.

15

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

BLOOMINGTON, ILL., April 16.--A number of reports of airships seen this evening have been received, and are occasioning much wonderment in Bloomington. The telegraph operators at Rankin and Arrowsmith Stations on the Lake Erie and Western Railway, east of Bloomington, reported about 7:30 p.m. that about dark an airship had hovered over the towns and set out in the direction of Bloomington. Soon after this the crew of an Illinois Central train from the north arrived in the city. Conductor William Wamsley, E.M. Carter, Superintendent of Bridges, and Mr. Adamson, Chief of the Illinois Central, reported that while the train was at Woodford Station, near Minonk, about 8 o'clock, they saw an airship at great altitude and going west or northwest.

A few minutes later a passenger train of the Illinois Central arrived from Chicago. The mail agent on the train, J.P.W. Eson, of Bloomington, and William Black, train baggage men, asserted that they saw a gigantic aerial boat sailing westward while they were between Barnes and Marna Station in this (McLean) county. Others on the train declared that they also saw the airship. It was flat, of apparently perpendicular form, and carried red and white lights. Robert Hitch and family, who live three miles south of Elpaso, saw an airship in the heavens between 8 and 9 p.m. yesterday.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

IS YOUR CREDULITY
IN CONDITION FOR THE ONLY TRUE
AIRSHIP STORY?

At last that mysterious wonder of the skies--the flying machine --has been seen by Marion eyes. This is no joke. Don't smile.

For many days the metropolitan papers have been teeming with dispatches from various points of the compass where the wonderful aerial navigator has been seen, describing its appearance, lights and sounds.

Friday night H.R. Bolander, superintendent of the Ohio Bicycle works, of this city, who is something of an astronomer in a small way, was out in his yard with a mirror scanning the heavens for a glimpse of the moons of Jupiter.

At about 8 p.m. Mr. Bolander says he was surprised to see in his mirror the bright lights from a peculiar looking airship. Quickly looking up he observed that the machine was cigar shaped and had a bright, spreading light looking something like the illumination that a large incandescent light would produce. Bolander says the airship was very high up and was moving in a southwesterly direction. He could hear no sounds emanating from the mysterious aerial visitor, but says he is a little hard of hearing.

The flying machine was also seen by John Reed, the State street

railway watchman, L.B. Gurley and other reliable men.

Some might say that it must be a peculiar kind of liquor that would make a man see flying machines, but then it is well known that these men are teetotalers, and no such excuse will go with them.

The celebrated flying machine has been seen in Marion. That's settled.

(Marion Daily Star, April 17)

STRANGE AIR CRUISER
ASTONISHES THE GOOD CITIZENS OF LOGAN.

16

--
A Church Member Describes the Curious Craft

--
Baffling America's Most Able Scientists and
Revolutionizing Atmospheric Travel.

Logan, O., April 17.--(Special.)--Friday night about 11 o'clock, while a party of young men, prominent in musical circles, were out on a serenading tour in the southern part of our city, they were somewhat startled and attract [?] flash of light and loud talking in mid air, in what seemed directly over their heads. At first they thought it was a streak of lightning, but on closer investigation they found it to be some large dark object hovering over the city, moving at a slow rate of speed in a southerly direction. The party became somewhat excited and started for the city and pointed the object out to their friends. At first they thought it some huge joke, a large kite sent up by some small boys, but after watching it for awhile they noticed it settling down on mother earth, and becoming more excited the boys concluded to follow the strange object and find out if possible where it would find a resting place. Messrs. Henry Rose, Fred Friesner and Charles Wood, three of Logan's young business men procured a buggy and started in hot pursuit, and, finally when three miles below the city, they saw the strange boat within a few feet of ground, and the men within seemed to be very much excited, judging from their loud talk. The young men in question alighted from their buggy and started tiptoeing to catch the strange article, but when within perhaps 50 feet it took sudden flight to the air. Mr. Rose judged the ship to be about 35 or 40 feet long and painted black and resembled a very large boat. Mr. Wood states that it was the most peculiar-shaped machine that he ever gazed upon and says it reminded him of the plans of the famous air ship at the world's fair, only built on a much larger scale. It is the current topic of the day on the streets of Logan, but up to this hour nothing new has been learned.

(Columbus Sunday Morning Press, April 18)

*Evelyn Briggs
Baldwin*

[Professor Baldwin, the Arctic explorer, watched the airship at Cairo, Illinois, and says it was Venus. "The air strata and smoke over its face as it hung a few degrees above the horizon distorted its appearance, and as it set it appeared to slowly float away."]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

WAS PLAINLY SEEN

The Airship Attracts Wide-Spread Attention.

TAKES PECULIAR FORMS

AS IT IS OBSERVED FROM MANY STANDPOINTS.

17

The flying machine has passed over Cincinnati!

This startling statement will come as a surprise to possibly two hundred thousand of the Queen City's sleepy inhabitants; but the other two hundred thousand will be glad to testify that last night between 12 and 1 o'clock the strange aerial ~~light~~-boat which has become famous of late, was seen passing over the city. Most of them saw it, or saw something strange in the sky, and, from the best authority obtainable, the Commercial Tribune prints this morning full descriptions of the new wonder that is startling the continent.

As the sun went down Thursday evening and the busy city prepared to enjoy itself for a few hours before taking its nightly rest, nothing seemed to indicate to the thousands of human beings who have read of the weird western visitor, that it would pass that very night over the Queen City, and that the trip would be witnessed by thousands of men and women. Unlike the city's other distinguished visitor, William J. Bryan, the vessel did not stop off and take supper. It is not a candidate for anything, it may be said in passing, save popularity and the free coinage of gas.

Felt It in the Air.

Later in the evening several people who are in the habit of having premonitions, declared that they felt that things were going to happen, and some went to their homes in order to avoid their creditors in case an earthquake threw them together in an indiscriminate mass. Their predictions came true at precisely 12:36 by the City Hall clock, which had gone to sleep an hour earlier.

Several days ago the flying machine was "spoken" near Sandusky, O., and it was observed then that she was headed for Cincinnati, with a look of get-there-or-bust in her electric eye. She got there. And she did not bust.

Suddenly there appeared in the clear, quiet, sky a small, brilliant, light moving at a rapid rate toward the south, and flying about half a mile above the level of the Ohio. It increased in size, and, almost before the astonished on-lookers could determine what they were gazing upon, it passed over the city, its great wings flapping silently in the air, its speed at least thirty miles an hour, and the sound of a triple expansion engine came from its vitals. As the thunderstruck and excited Cincinnatians looked up they all heard voices above them, and laughter and songs were also wafted down to the inhabitants. Then the great ship of the air was gone....

[lengthy and facetious stories by named persons follow--
"a huge champagne bottle as big as a house," "like a tray...
There was a steam calliope aboard," etc.]

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 18)

[Jokers sent up hot air balloons at Muncie, Ind., at 9:30 p.m., April 17. The jokers were not identified, however.]

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 19)

THAT AIRSHIP AGAIN.

This Time It Is Seen by some Upper Sandusky Young Men Who Were Going Home Early in the Morning.

18

Special to the Plain Dealer.

UPPER SANDUSKY, April 17.--What appeared to be an airship of huge dimensions was observed by E.T. Kenan, clerk in Supervisor Shineman's office, at an early hour this morning.

Mr. Kenan, with a party of other young gentlemen in this city, attended a country dance and were on their way home. One of the party on looking to the northwest at a shooting star was thrilled by the sight of a brilliant object in the heavens. The party was alarmed at the sight. Finally Mr. Kenan suggested an airship and the party at once felt at ease.

The object was watched for fully half an hour as it seemed to gradually approach them. When it got near enough the lights were of very bright purple, yellow and green. The night was rather cloudy, but by the time the young men reached town the moon was shining and the outline of the huge airship could be traced. It was about forty feet in length, of the shape of an auger and had huge wings like a sixteenth-century windmill. At one time it made a dive to the earth but soon recovered itself and passed to the north and was soon lost in the darkness. It is the talk of the town today and but for the young men's standing in the community would not be believed.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 18)

SAW THE AIR SHIP.

A Motorman Who Made an Examination through a Beer Glass.

A motorman on the Main street electric line is the latest Akronian to describe an air ship. He claims to have seen this aerial wonder last Saturday night and made a careful microscopic investigation through the bottom of a beer glass. He states that contrary to universal opinions the body he saw in the heavens has the shape of a monster sea serpent and the light that glows from it is the fire spouted from its mouth. He claims to have made 16 examinations in 16 minutes...

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 20)

UP IN A BALLOON!

WENT THE THOUGHTS OF A COUPLE WHO CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP.

Honest In-gin the Great Monster Has Been Sighted from Morrow County by Two Who Never Tipple.

At about 8 p.m., on Saturday, three weeks since, there was seen in Gilead township something, call it what you may, that is strange. The witnesses are reliable, responsible people, who are farthest removed from anything sensational, or superstitious, or excitable.

They are sensible, everyday farmers who, for fear of even the little notoreity that would come with their names being connected with a report of the airship, request their names withheld. But that they saw something on that night out of the ordinary there can be no doubt. Whether it was an airship or not they do not even profess to say. All there was to be seen was a great light high up in the air with several lesser ones in the rear and traveling in a northwesterly direction. "When we first saw it," said they, "it was seemingly very high up. It looked more like the headlight of a locomotive than anything else we could think of. While we watched, it came down until it seemed not much higher than the treetops. It acted as a balloon does on coming down. The big light was very red, and the smaller ones not so bright, and seemed hung out behind the large one. It must have been far off and I said to my wife that it might not even be in Ohio. There was no quick motion to it at all, but was of slow, easy motion like a balloon. The lights were all we saw. The neighbors have joked us a good deal about it but," said the man, "I shall always think that it was something unusual. It was certainly no star nor meteor, but something beside that."

This is what they saw about what they saw. The wife saw it first when out taking some clothes in. Without going in she called for her husband who came out without a coat on. The evening was quite ~~XXXX~~ cool and he watched for some time, until chilly. He went in to get his coat on and on coming out it was out of sight. Take it for what it is worth this is a plain, unvarnished account of the sight. Was it an airship or not? Who will answer?

(MT. Gilead Union-Register, May 12)

19

TALKED

With the Airship Man, But He Would
Not Answer Them--Latest Chroniclers

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

LEXINGTON, KY., April 18.--George Alverson, a butcher, and Alex Oxford and Charley Hunter, railroad men, claim to have seen the much heralded airship and to have conversed with its lone occupant. They say that they were walking on Manchester street, near the Cincinnati Southern trestle, last night, when they were startled by a strange whirling noise overhead. It was near 9 o'clock. Through the darkness the machine made a rush earthward, settling in a vacant lot about 200 yards from where they stood. They hurried toward the vehicle of the clouds, but were met by a stranger some 40 years old. He had just emerged from the machine and had in his hand a bucket, which was filled with water from the springs near which his machine rested on the blue grass. Supplied with water, he re-entered the car, and then, declining to answer any of the questions put to him by the three men, he sailed away in the direction of Richmond. Alverson describes the machine as looking like a huge, winged spider. The body was cigar shaped and had a dull lead color.

The three men were reputable citizens, and their stories were so generally believed as to cause those who heard them last night to sit up later than usual, hoping that the airship might return.

*

BOTH SAW IT

And Both Are Certain That It Was an Airship.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

PADUCAH, KY., April 18.--Mr. George Langstaff, Jr., member of the firm of Langstaff & Orme, lumber dealers, and one of the most prominent men of the city, stated tonight to THE ENQUIRER correspondent that he and his wife and Mr. Isaac Quigley, one of the best known lawyers in the state, saw the airship last night at 9:30. Editor Starks, of the Metropolis (Ill.) Journal, has also written a description for THE ENQUIRER correspondent of the ship which he saw last night an hour later below Metropolis. Both are gentlemen of unquestioned integrity and both say that by no possibility could it have been a star.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 19)

20

COOLVILLE...

Some of our reputable citizens, Saturday night between nine and ten o'clock, claim that they clearly and distinctly saw the air-ship which according to the "dailies," has attracted the attention of hundreds of people throughout the west. This was in a northerly direction from our village and looked to be of an immense size, three different colored lights being easily distinguished. It no doubt, is the same as has created such comment throughout other states.

(Athens Messenger and Herald, April 22)

Wonderful Capers of That
Mysterious Airship About Ashland.

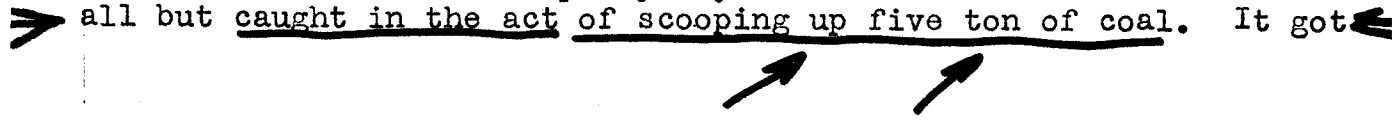
--

It Swoops Down Into a Coal Yard
and Steals Five Tons of Coal.

--

Well, at last the wonderful air ship which has been seen shooting through the heavens on a great many localities throughout the country has been witnessed right here in Ashland besides having been seen from various other places in the county. Indirectly the GAZETTE reporter has got particulars from the party who claims to have seen the wonderful thing but by request we do not mention the name, for fear people might think he had imbibed too freely of spirits, something he tells us he very seldom does, in fact never or hardly ever. From the report we find the ship appeared about eleven o'clock Saturday night and was seen coming in this direction from the north-west. It was about a mile high and appeared spiral or snake-like in form with six green lights emanating from it. It swung south rapidly when only straight above town and seemed to sink down towards the earth about three miles away. It was lost sight of for a few moments but was gradually seen to arise and wheel about, taking a northeasterly direction when it appeared almost due east again from the town it again gradually settled to the earth, after which time nothing more could be seen of it.

The latest report now comes from a small town just north-west of here where the air-ship rapidly descended to the earth and was all but caught in the act of scooping up five ton of coal. It got



away with the coal however and the manner in which it did it is said to be pretty smooth. Attached to its tail was a large grapple fork, operated by a series of ingeniously arranged pulleys, which swoops down and takes what it wants. The apparatus is said to look like a large reptile of the snake species, the mouth being the grapple fork. Several miles south of here the ship was seen by a fellow in that vicinity who says it descended onto a neighboring farmer's straw stack where it was observed sucking eggs from a nice big Easter nest. East of Rowsburg again it is reported to have been seen milking a man's Jersey cows. From a circular dropped there and picked up by the fellow, it stated that "this airship is a remarkable success and is on its way from San Francisco to New York and return by way of Texas, all to be accomplished this Saturday night. The details of the invention will be made public in a few days by the inventor."

(Ashland Gazette, April 20)

Alliance persons claim to have seen the air ship.

(Canton Repository, April 20)

Mrs. Eleanor A. Woodruff, a highly connected lady, of Findlay, has gone crazy over the reports of the airships published in the papers. She went to a neighbor's and requested him to make her an airship after her own plans so she could navigate it. In the evening she went into the street and stopped all passers-by and pointing to the evening star claimed it was her ship coming to take her and her friends on a long trip. She became violent and will be taken to the Toledo insane asylum.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 20)

CRAZY ABOUT AIRSHIPS

A Widow Imagines That She Has Built a Flying Machine.

...Mrs. Eleanor A. Woodruff, a widow of good family, recently appealed to a neighbor to build her an airship, saying she had all the plans in her head, and if he would build it for her that day she would navigate it that night.

She was put off with an evasive answer, but at night she became wild, and, going out into the street, stopped all passersby, and, pointing to the western heavens, wanted to know if they didn't see her airship. She pointed directly to the bright evening star and said it was the light of her ship, in which she would take them all around the world.--Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, May 4)

[Mrs. Woodruff said to be "large and powerfully built" since "it required four men to place her on the train to Toledo."]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 20)

AIRSHIP LANDED

Took Coal and Water at East Side Pumping Station.

Its Dimensions and Shape Accurately Described by Water Works Employes--Did Latham Hog the Ship?

22

...The first time that the air ship was seen in this vicinity was last Sunday morning, and the unfortunate gentleman to feast his eyes upon it was Thomas Morris, an engineer in the employ of the Columbia Gas Manufacturing company. He caught a glimpse of it just over Steelton, and described it accurately the same day. When last seen by Mr. Morris it was going towards Cincinnati. Later that day the members of the Columbus base ball nine got a glimpse of the machine while en route to Cincinnati to play the famous Reds of that city. Latham left the train at Springfield and took a trip across country to land the machine. When he joined the players at Cincinnati he refused to say whether he caught the machine or not, but Pete Daniels said he did.

At all events the machine was not heard of again until Tuesday morning. This information was received by The Press from the East Side pumping station by telephone. The story from the pumping station is vouched for by the following employes: Levelis, Charles Wright, John Goodrick, George Mettles and Charles Shouder. They all agree in the statement that the air ship landed there at 4 o'clock Tuesday morning and took on both coal and water, and that the machine was in charge of a man who wore a base ball uniform. The ship remained on terra firma about 20 minutes and then started south. They say the machine is 40 feet and 7½ inches long, about 7 feet deep, by 13 feet wide. It is shaped after the fashion of an Easter egg, the egg shaped part being painted black, with the exception of the tips, which are dyed a brilliant red.... it is rumored on the streets that Latham was the man in charge of the machine and that he will have it on exhibition at the ball park when the opening game of the exhibition is played.

*

(Columbus Evening Press, April 20)

THE AIRSHIP
SEEN NEAR MARIETTA.

Capt. W.E. Roe, of the Barnsdall, was interviewed by the Register, Just Before Going to Press, and the Story Speaks for Itself.

"About eight thirty, last night, (Sunday) when lying at Sistersville, a light was seen by myself and others high in the air and apparently right over the river below us, though no one could tell just how far. Nothing could be seen but a large white light, too white for a gas light and not quite white enough for an electric light. It had somewhat the appearance of a small search light on a steamboat. At times there could be seen a smaller light, of the same nature, just back of the big light. The light seemed to be moving

Galton, Ill., April 20.--Aaron Watson, one of Douglas county's old pioneers and a man whose word is truth, says he was out burning brush on the night of the 19th, and all of a sudden heard a whirring sound. Looking up he saw an airship. It was sailing very low, not more than a hundred feet from the ground. The ship is about fifty feet long and twenty feet wide. He could plainly see the people in the ship, for it was sailing very slowly. He saw them dancing and could hear the music very distinctly. He said two men were standing on deck. He heard one of them say: "I wonder who the gentleman is burning brush."

They then threw out an apple which fell close by where he was at work. The apple is on exhibition at the store of J.P. Woolford, in Galton.

DANIEL STORY.

(London (Ohio) Times, April 29, quoting the Chicago Inter Ocean, April 26)

HOVERED OVER THE TOWN

23

Citizens of Cochransville, O., Make Affidavit That They Saw an Airship.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

SISTERSVILLE, W. Va., April 19.--Since the newspapers have been chronicling the movements of a mysterious airship the people of the oil metropolis have been watching for it. Tonight about 9 o'clock a mysterious light was seen approaching from the northwest, gliding along until directly over Cochransville, O., when it slackened speed and rested, flashing lights, red, white and green.

An examination with strong glasses left the impression of a huge cone-shaped arrangement 180 feet long, with large fins on either side. The lights seemed to be in only the one end.

After standing twenty minutes, it floated away to the southwest.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 20)

in a generally northwesterly direction, at other times retracing its course. The streets of Sistersville were crowded with people watching it. Nearly midnight it disappeared over a hill to the westward."

For so much the captain will vouch, but as to what carried the light he could not say. The same story was told by Elmer Hardy, watchman, and Litus Kinnard, engineer, who also witnessed it for some time, though the Register was unable to interview them.

(Marietta Daily Register, April 19)

24

Seen at Cutler.

The air ship was seen at Cutler, last night, by a rising young physician of that place, who recognized it at once. According to his account, it is about the size of a steamboat, with enormous wings. It had a big search light on its bow and gave forth a noise very similar to that of the gas engines at the Power House. It was moving in an easterly direction and very rapidly. It was apparently about 1000 feet above the earth.

The object was also seen by Ed Curtis and George Shearer, of this city. There are others.

(Marietta Daily Register, April 20)

Parkersburg, W. Va., April 20.--(Special.)--Seven responsible citizens have declared that they seen the mysterious air ship passing over this city again Monday night. The description of each of the queer vessel all correspond with one another, and as this is the second time the ship has been seen in this section much credence is given to the former reports. The description also tallies with those of the people who have seen the mysterious craft at other places.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 20)

OVER HARMAR HILL.

--
No More Doubt About the Air Ship--It was
Seen, Last Night, by a Prominent Res-
ident of Ohio Street.

--
If there has been any doubt as to the genuineness of the air ship stories they must vanish now. Mr. Pat Highland has seen it and stands ready to make affidavit that it is a reality. In speaking of it to a Register man, this morning, Mr. Highland said that his experience with the strange apparition took place last evening about half past eight o'clock. He was standing in front of his place, on Ohio street, looking at the sky and trying to determine whether or not there would be a frost, when suddenly just over the hills back of the Argand Refinery a brilliant light shot into view. It was moving at a very rapid rate and although at a considerable distance off, Mr. Highland had an excellent opportunity to study it. Mr. Highland said it appeared to be a sort of double light of a somewhat whiter color than ordinary lights. As soon as it got over the top of the hill it swooped down as if it was going right into the river, but when within one hundred feet of it veered off horizontally and soon began to rise and the last he saw of it was when it was disappearing behind the dark

Virginia hills. The whole space of time in which it made the flight described, could not have exceeded two and a half minutes.

Mr. Highland at the time had not heard of the famous air ship which had been attracting attention all over the county and he was at a complete loss to explain the wonderful phenomenon which he had just witnessed....

(Marietta Daily Register, April 20)

25

TOOK ON COAL

Did the Air Ship at Marietta.--Have the Proof of it.

--

Some small boys, last night, about nine o'clock, sent up a white paper balloon, from the Point near the Nye Foundry. This morning there were a great many Marietta people willing to make oath that they saw the air ship, and it was seen by some of them distinctly enough to describe it accurately. To some it appeared the shape of a sea-devil from the New Hebrides; to others it had the appearance of a Chinese dragon; others thought it egg shaped with wings and some believed it egg shaped without wings, but with tail and claws.

Messrs. Weber and Stewart both say they found coal missing from their respective yards this morning and this is taken as sure proof that the "ship" loaded up with fuel here at Marietta.

(Marietta Daily Register, April 20)

IT'S NO JOKE.

--

The Air-Ship Is Said to Have Been Observed Here Last Night.

--

Last night as the GAZETTE reporter was on his way home from council meeting he met two gentlemen who showed conclusive signs of excitement and it was soon found they had witnessed what they claim was the airship, so much read about of late. William McNabb and Seth Green are the gentlemen who actually claim they saw at about half past ten o'clock what appeared to them to be an air ship, and they were in dead earnest about it and willing to swear their statements. They were on Orange street at the time mentioned and suddenly they observed an object coming from an easterly direction and high up in the air. It looked like a rapidly moving street car with a strong head light upon it. Although high up it seemed to pass just over the spring bed shop on Orange street and on directly west. A brilliant light flashed from it at intervals.

When asked if the object might not have been a meteor they said it was not and had no resemblance whatever to one. The reporter was sorry he did not get the chance to see the so-called ship, but went on his way home, thinking pretty hard about the matter and scanning the heavens over and over again in an endeavor to get a glimpse of probably another ship.

Of course people will naturally be slow to believe the reports about seeing an airship until they witness the object with their own

eyes, but from the earnestness of the two reputable men above mentioned we are inclined to believe they either saw the so-called airship or some phenomenon closely resembling it.

(Ashland Gazette, April 20)

OHIO'S OWN AIRSHIP.

Message Dropped and Reward for
Its Delivery to Edison.

26

Special Telegram to the Blade.

Massillon, O., April 22--The plain people of Massillon are now wondering whether the cloud of witnesses who declare that they saw the airship here on Tuesday, have been swept off their intellectual legs or whether after all there is in fact some mysterious craft now flying through space. Since Tuesday not less than fifteen persons have come forward testifying in all earnestness that they saw this machine, and Frank Reed supplements this information by showing a letter addressed to Mr. Edison that he picked up on his premises, reading as follows:

"On Board Airship, Bound for Cuba,

"April 20, 1897.

"To the finder:

"Please mail enclosed letter and send your address to Mr. Edison, who will reward you.

"WILLIAM R. HARRIS."

(Toledo Blade, April 22)

AERIBARQUE.

That's It's Official Name.

A Lancaster Gentleman
Saw the Airship.

And Had a Talk with Its
Chief Engineer...

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

LANCASTER, OHIO, April 24.--A gentleman who is prominent in this city and well-known throughout the state but who positively declines to permit the use of his name, lest his friends should accuse him of "hitting the pipe," stated to THE ENQUIRER correspondent today that he had not only seen the much-bruited airship, but had pretty thoroughly inspected it, as well as conversed with one of its occupants.

His story, which he told in all seriousness, is a remarkable one, and argues either that he saw what he describes or possesses an imagination which ought to insure any one a fortune.

"A few evenings since," said he, "I was on my way home between Baltimore, in the northeastern part of the county, and this city. It was between 8 and 9 o'clock. My horse, a very quiet one, suddenly exhibited signs of both fear and distress, and became greatly ex-

cited. On looking about for some explanation of the animal's unusual conduct, I saw slowly descending onto a field nearby, an object which looked as large or larger than a full-grown elephant. Fore and aft it carried brilliant white lights, which illuminated the country for considerable distance like a pair of electric globes.

"By this time I had become as badly rattled as my horse, and from the whirring, hissing noise of the descending object I had expected to hear a terrific crash when it struck the ground. You can judge of my further surprise when I saw it come to the ground not a hundred yards distant without concussion or even a jar. In the scintillating lights, which still continued as brilliant as when I first noticed them, I saw the forms of two men, and heard them conversing in

AN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE.

27

"To my startled and abnormally enlarged vision, the aerial visitor, as it stood in the open field, looked as large as a barn. My first impulse was to whip up my horse, which had quieted down somewhat, and get out of the neighborhood. On further reflection, however, I concluded not to do so. Instead I drove to a near turn in the road beyond a thick growth of underbrush, where, out of sight of the machine, I securely tethered my horse, climbed the fence and went back to reconnoiter.

"I must confess it was with considerable trepidation I approached the thing, and was soon face to face with the airship and its occupants, and in conversation with them. One of them was clearly a foreigner, and it struck me that he was a Japanese, or belonged to some other Oriental race.

"He was apparently willing to talk, but his language was unintelligible to me. The other was an American, or, if not, then an Englishman, judging from his accent and pronunciation. He talked excellent English, at all events, and evidently explained to his companion that I could not understand him. At all events the foreigner addressed me no further, but from time to time asked the other a question and once or twice seemed highly

AMUSED AT HIS ANSWERS.

"The American talked freely enough, but gave me no real information. He wanted to know just where they were, and what the people and newspapers were saying about the object which stood before me. Happening to have a copy of THE ENQUIRER containing several dispatches concerning the airship in my pocket, I gave it to him to read it at his leisure. He was profuse in his thanks, and said that newspapers had been a rather scare article for some time, and that he was rather anxious to see what they said about it.

"'But why are you sailing around in this mysterious way?' I inquired. 'Why don't you let the world know what you are doing?'

"'That's easily explained. We have discovered the principle, but there are, doubtless, many applications of it, if we were to appear in public, even after patenting our principle and discovery, with the appliances we now have, it would only be a little while until other men would probably discover better forms of application and we would be compelled to divide the benefits of our discovery. We are on a tedious voyage of experimentation, and have been for more than six months. We often mingle with the world, but our discovery is hidden away, as it can be in a small compass, and no one suspects who or what we are. We pass as tourists among our fellow men.

"We are constantly making improvements. As soon as one is worked out we descend in some secluded spot, go to a town or city, and have the necessary mechanism made from drawings, adjust it and go on with further tests and experiments. At these times we are probably looked on as harmless cranks trying to

INVENT PERPETUAL MOTION.

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Six months hence we will probably have reached the limit of possible improvement. Then we will patent it in every country, and then in every manufacturing center they will turn out the aeribarque, which will revolutionize the world."

"Do you call this concern an aeribarque?"

"That is what we call it. The name is exactly descriptive of the object."

"Will you permit me to inspect it?"

"He turned to his companion, and after a short conversation, replied:

"In a general way only. But I will explain nothing to you. If you can reckon out how it ascends and descends, or is propelled, well and good, but I shall answer no questions. Look it over and draw your own conclusions."

"The contrivance itself was a strange piece of mechanism, and stood from 12 to 15 feet high. The lower half, or car, was an oblong square 8 by 5 feet. The upper half, an elongated globe, apparently 8 feet at its greatest diameter, gradually diminishing and terminating in rounded points, its extreme length being 15 to 18 feet. The frame appeared to be a wire net work, only the wires were of an immense size--an inch in diameter on the bottom and sides of the car, growing smaller as they ascended, until at the top of the elongated globe they were not more than a quarter of an inch.

"They were joined together at close intervals and in both directions across the bottom, and ran up perpendicularly 5 or 6 feet, then curved inward

TILL THEY NEARLY MET.

Then outwards, upwards and over, till they formed the complete circle of the outer frame of the elongated globe or cigar-shaped apparatus spoken of in the papers. Inside of this upper net work was a bag or balloon, just fitting it and partially inflated.

"A very little testing convinced me that the supposed wires were tubular contrivances composed either of steel or aluminum or some new metal, clearly of great strength and exceeding lightness. A series of these tubes ran horizontally around the lower part of the car at close intervals, joined into the upright tubes, to a height of three feet. They were safety or guard rails. At the forward end the uprights were turned abruptly right and left at the height of 18 inches, and then brought together at the upper half, forming an entrance and exit to the car something like two feet wide. At this end the guard rail came no higher than the abrupt angle of the uprights, while at the other end they were uniform with the sides. At every point of contact these tubular wires were inserted into each other, while one nearly an inch in diameter, coming up independently from below, was inserted into the lower part of the balloon centrally.

"Thrown on the bottom of the car were several Oriental rugs, while all sorts of luggage, blankets, coats, canned goods and the like were stowed away at convenient points, or suspended overhead.

Near the rear end of the car was a small box-like table on the top of which were a number of knobs or buttons, very like the appliances we see in

ELECTRICAL [?????].

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"As I was not permitted to enter the car, nor even thrust my hand inside, I could only guess as to the purpose of this table. It seemed clear, however, that it was the motor or controlling principle of the aeribarque.

"The gentleman with whom I had been conversing, seated himself at the table and said:

"'Take hold of the cross bars and lift the aeribarque or turn it over, if you can.'

"I made the attempt, but failed.

"'You are weak and excited. Calm yourself and try again when I tell you.'

"He touched one of the points on the table, and there was a hissing sound like escaping steam or compressed air. He touched another, and a tremor ran through every part of the machine, and the balloon expanded perceptibly.

"'Now try it again.'

"I grasped the cross bars and threw all my weight into the effort, but this time, machine, men and baggage didn't seem to weigh a pound. With one hand I could tilt it above my head. I begged him to tell me how the attraction of gravitation had been overcome, but he paid no heed to me, except to say:

"'Wait till the proper time comes.'

"He touched a third button and the lights disappeared, a fourth and they reappeared. One a vivid green, the other white; then he alternated them with other colors. In the meantime I discovered that he was changing the temperature of the tubular frame from temperate to extreme cool and then to 200 degrees or above.

"Just below the points of the elongated globe I had noticed what looked like two folded window shades of different sizes or shapes depending from metallic projections. He touched two buttons at once. The forward one unfolded into a rudder, the rear one into

A FAN-LIKE PROPELLOR.

"'Explain to me, my dear sir,' I said, 'these remarkable mysteries.'

"'Wait a moment.'

"He touched a series of buttons in rapid succession. There was the hiss of escaping air; the tremor through every line of the frame work; the balloon filled with a hissing sound, till it budged through the metallic network, and the aeribarque rose like a startled bird.

"'Good night.'

"This was called down from a height of a thousand feet; the propellor expanded; the rudder dropped into place and swung around, changing the ship's course at an acute angle instantly, and more quickly than it takes to tell it it had disappeared in the direction of Newark."

"And what conclusion do you draw?" asked THE ENQUIRER man.

"Why, sir, some one has got on the inside of nature at last. Don't you know that this thing is constructed on the principle of a bird, in every essential? The frame of a bird is a combination of

(115)

light, strong tubes, or bones and quills. The strongest and longest flyers have the largest proportionate bones and quills.

"We know, as a general principle, that a bird is capable of expelling all the atmospheric air from its bones and quills, or tubes, and supplying, in some unknown way,

30

A VOLATILE SUBSTANCE.

"This overcomes the attraction of gravitation, and enables it to rise in the air, with the aid of its wings, and fly away at will.

"When it wants to descend it ballasts with atmospheric air the tubes from which it lately excluded it. Kill a bird instantly on the wing and it drops perpendicularly, if the wind is not blowing. Wound it seriously and it falls at an angle. In the one instance the attraction of gravitation becomes ascendant instantly-- in the other gradually, hence the angling float.

"I am convinced that this airship not only embraces all the principles of flight of birds, but another more wonderful, and incomprehensible. The expulsion of the air from the tubular framework, supplying its place with some volatile substance; the expansion of the balloon compartment, with probably the same substance, and the lifting factor; the light, the heat, and the motive power for the machinery, I am convinced, all come from the same source, and are produced and modified at will.

"Whether this be electricity or some more subtle or powerful principle in nature, I have no idea. But seeing what I did leaves not a single doubt in my mind as to the feasibility as well as the reality of the airship. It is really less improbable than the telephone and Edison's discoveries were a score of years ago. The men I saw have evidently unlocked one of nature's ~~XXXX~~ profoundest secrets."

W.A.T.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 25)

STILL SEEING THE AIRSHIP

Reports From Towns Where It Appeared Yesterday.

According to the telegraphic reports received over the Commercial Tribune's special wire last night from places where the airships and other impossible phenomena are seen frequently, this bright, particular April bird of the imagination, conspicuously adorned with all of its unheard-of paraphernalia, was observed yesterday by "prominent citizens" in or near the following named cities and towns: Jacksonville, Fla.; Massillon, O.; Batavia, O.; Newport, ~~the~~ Ark.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 21)

THAT AIRSHIP...

...A DEMOCRAT reporter accompanied by a notary, started out today to get the affadavits of John Hoagland, Ralph Hogan and other North Side residents, who reported that they had seen the supposed air ship two nights ago. At first the young men were inclined to stick to the story that they had seen the aerial thing of mystery, but when asked to raise their right hands and swear to a written statement, they admitted that they had been joking.

Those who saw the strange lights last night implicitly believe that they were carried by an air ship.

31

[Same issue has Hoagland report--John, Robert, and Ralph Hoagland, Clarence Baker and R. Gilletz(?)--corner of N. Howard and Lods St.--Tuesday night around 10 p.m.--heard a whirring noise--saw air ship moving westward.]

(Akron Times-Democrat, April 21)

A BRIGHT STAR.

The Brilliant Display Venus Makes in the Western Heavens--Mistaken for the Airship.

...For several months Venus has been a remarkable object in the western sky during the early evening. First appearing in the south-west, it has moved around until now it shines low on the northwest soon after the sun sets. About the first of April it attained its greatest brilliancy...

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 20)

It is asserted by Carl Browne that Anarchists have six airships two finished and four under way, and when all is in readiness show-ers of bombs and chemicals will descend upon the sinful, while those of the true faith will be advised in time to reach the mountains. After the weeding out process is completed the Anarchists will rule according to their schemes.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 22)

Carl Browne has received a silver medal, given him by a firm of patent attorneys in recognition of his ingenuity in planning an air ship, one that presents feasible points. Browne had hit upon some method of utilizing a vacuum for lifting purposes.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, May 13)

[Chicago preacher believes that the airship is Jesus Christ coming again.]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 21)

THAT AIR SHIP
Was Thought to Have Been South of the
City Last Evening.

Last evening the people residing in the southern part of the city were surprised to see in the southern sky a monstrous light as it gradually rose above the horizon now flickering, now soaring high into the air, visions of the air ship passed across the good citizens' minds. Frightened children scurried home and sought the seclusion of their mothers' aprons. Dogs and horses barked and whinnied as they saw the light. One over bold citizen started out to investigate and found that it was a huge Chinese lantern attached to the nether extremity of a kite.

(Bucyrus Evening Telegraph, April 22)

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[Also at St. Joseph, Missouri, what was thought to be an airship turned out to be a hot-air balloon attached to a kite.]

(Ashland Press, May 6)

The latest report from the air ship is to the effect that it stopped at the Calamity Oil Co.'s well at Cutler, last night, and took on a supply of oil to lubricate its bearings.

(Marietta Register, April 22)

Willard Herbert got the airship scare started in this city on Wednesday night of last week, by sending up a paper balloon, supplying it with gas from a burning ~~KOHNOON~~ turpentine ball. People around here would not believe in an air ship now if one should settle down in Court street.

(Washington Court House Cyclone and Fayette Republican, April 22)

WHAT WAS IT?

--

It was a Remarkable Phenomenon if It Was
Not an Airship.

--

There is no disputing the statement this time that some strange phenomenon was observed last Wednesday night in the heavens southwest of Ashland at between eight and nine o'clock. The attention of many people was called to the sight but what it was and whither it went no one is able to tell satisfactorily. The object, or whatever it was, appeared in the south when first seen and the light was very bright; its course was westward and it grew more faint as it ~~got~~ west until finally it disappeared entirely from sight. What could be seen from here was simply a vertical line of light several hundred feet long. Of course it did not look like an air-ship but the people naturally called it that since there has been so much talk about such sort of sailing vessels of late. Whatever it was there remains the fact that it was a rare sight and a wholly unaccountable phenomenon. Nothing like it has ever been observed before. It might have been some sort of aurora borealis, yet no other lights in the north or anywhere else could be observed excepting the stars.

(Ashland Gazette, April 23)

(21A)

Muncie, Ind., April 22.--Special Telegram.--George Haskell, a farmer who lives east of this city, reports that while he was milking the cows last night the airship lit in his barnyard. One of the occupants stepped from the car attached to the ship and asked for some milk. He said that they had been without a supply since leaving Evanston, Ill. The farmer handed the aeronaut a pailful and was rewarded for his kindness by seeing the balloonist step into the airship, pull a cord, and sail away. The airship took a northerly course. Haskell is now wondering where he will get pay for his milk. He says he can prove what he says, and he will show the cow which gave the milk, if anybody doubts his word.

(Photo)

(London Times, April 29, quoting the Chicago Inter Ocean, April 26)

AIRSHIP AT MOXAHALA.

It Drops a Big Cargo in Wiggins' Wheatfield.

34

Moxahala, O., April 22.--(Special.)--For the last three nights there has been hovering over this part of Ohio something that the oldest inhabitants cannot explain. Three lights as it is seen flying, but at times when it seems to pause and take notes one red and one green light apparently the eyes of the monster (for such it appears to be) are only seen and then seem to be the head of--well what is it?

This phenomenon has been witnessed by reputable parties there and they will readily endorse this statement.

If I had the time and the inclination to "Baron Munchausen" I might send you a wonderful tale, but what I send you now is strictly true (nit).

LATER.

⊗ ("The airship" stopped here for coal from Post's bank at 9:45, but not finding it of the right quality they dropped the entire cargo in Scott Wiggins' wheat field.)

(Columbus Evening Press, April 22)

THE OHIO AIRSHIP

A Judge Beholds It and Gives His Testimony.

Special Telegraph to The Blade.

Elyria, O., April 23.--Among other well known citizens who saw the airship Wednesday night was Judge E.H. Hinman, of the probate court. The judge makes the following statement: "About 2 o'clock in the morning I got up to feed my baby, and upon looking out of the window I saw what I suppose is the famed airship. It was shaped like a 'Pittsburgh stogie,' and appeared in lights. I should say it hovered over Elyria for at least ten minutes, at an altitude varying from 1,000 to 3,000 feet. The lights were intense and glistened and glittered. If I am not mistaken it had a short blue tail, with a brass ring around it. I went to call my wife to enjoy the sight with me, but it disappeared while I was awaking her. It is truly a wonder."

(Toledo Blade, April 23)

MORE NEWS FROM THAT AIRSHIP.

An Alleged Message is Found at Lorain and Something Was Seen in the Air Near New London.

Special to the Plain Dealer.

→ { LORAIN, April 24.--The Times tonight prints a letter, alleged to have been found by a "prominent townsman," giving out some interesting points in connection with the much talked about airship. On the outside of the envelope was written the words: "Aboard the Airoia, April 22, 1897." ←

In the letter the writer stated that the ship was built in an obscure place near Santa Fe, N.M., from which place the journey began. "We have hovered over every state in the union," continued the writer, "fished in the great lakes, crossed the plains and settled on mountains and valleys." He states that the ship is eighty-two feet in length and nineteen feet wide, supported by a balloon thirty-five feet in diameter. A wheel at the stern, he states, is propelled by means of a storage battery, the wheel having eight paddles. He claims that himself, wife and child are the only persons aboard the ship.

The hull of the air craft is a wire netting covered with thin but strong oiled silk, through which neither air nor water can pass, and in shape resembles a cigar. "During a rain," continues the navigator, "we rise above the clouds and are perfectly dry." In closing the writer says they will return in a few days to New Mexico, where a larger boat is under construction, with which he hopes to cross the sea. He signs the name of William R. Harris.

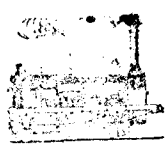
(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 25)

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NOT AN AIRSHIP.

--
Westerville People Discover a Peculiar Light in the Heavens.

--
It Traveled Over the Town and Then Took Its Course Eastward.



--
Special to the Ohio State Journal.

Westerville, O., April 23.--Last night about 8 o'clock the people of the village, living on the West Side, were attracted by a strange light which appeared in the air in the western sky. The light appeared as a very large star, only it was duller than that of a star. It seemed to be several miles away, but not at a great height. After some time the position changed and the light began to approach the village. As it came nearer a rapid sweep carried it far southward. By this time hundreds of people were watching it. Speculation as to what it was has been rife. The distance and the height of the object, and the progress over the town completely evaded all examination by spectators. By 10 o'clock the light had retreated to the eastern part of town and every person in the village had seen the strange sight but none seemed able to explain. One party of men called at Professor Wagoner's to have him notice it, but owing to sickness he could not go out.

Dr. Haywood, the venerable astronomer, was called out, but the motion and the distance precluded his examining it with a telescope. Professor Guitner was called out and could offer nothing satisfactory.

Most people believed it to be one of the airships of which some of the papers have told the last few days, and as supporting this a large number of skyrockets were sent up as a signal to the occupant of the ship if such it could be. Others believed it was a balloon, but this was soon out of mind, for the wind at that time would have carried it directly north, while the object was moving eastward. The kite theory was proposed, but it is impossible to

ford Alum creek and if it were a kite the carriers would have been compelled to cross the creek. And besides it would seem impossible to fly a kite with a lantern attached at so great height as this object appeared.

For fully an hour longer the object kept its eastward course and finally growing dimmer, disappeared from sight, hidden either by clouds or trees.

(Ohio State Journal, April 24)

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AIRSHIP TERROR

--

Dumbfounds the Staid People of Westerville.

--

Westerville, O., April 23.--(Special.)--The Westerville people were very much excited here Thursday evening at the appearance of a red light, moving about high in the air. Many suppositions were given as to what the light was, but the general opinion seemed to be that it was the air ship, which is reported to be traveling about in the heavens at night.

The light was anchored above Westerville for about one-half hour then took a southerly direction toward Columbus and returned in the direction of Pittsburg.

Signals were given here with different colored lights and were answered by those in the air ship by moving in order the green, red and white lights.

The appearance of the ship compared very closely with the description given in THE Press. It was witnessed by hundreds of people between the hours of 9 and 11.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 23)

WHAT WESTERVILLE

People Say About Airship's Visit There
Thursday Night.

--

Westerville, O., April 24.--(Special.)--A general exchange of opinions has been going on in our village since the appearance of a presumable airship over the town on last Thursday evening. The excitement has even run so high that many are reported to have been badly disturbed in their slumbers by serious reflections in regard to the queer light darting its rays in a threatening manner over the excited people of the town. Your correspondent has made a careful investigation of the facts pertaining to the event and has interviewed a large number of reliable business men of the town. The following gentlemen witnessed the sight and have given their names for publication: Miles Weibling, a prominent hardware man; W.O. Knox, the shoe dealer; Francis Rank, the postmaster; Bookman Bros. grocers W.M. Bonebrake, a jeweler; Levi Williams and others. All the above gentlemen saw the phenomenal appearance in the sky and hold to the opinion that it is a good representation of the airship described in the newspapers.

They were not able to make positive statements as to what the queer object really was, as the machine did not descend to earth

for inspection. They mutually agreed that if the thing observed is a fake and not the much-talked of airship the man who made the representation is a genius.

...opinions in the affirmative are substantiated by ³⁷ several letters having been found and bearing evidence of being written in the airship. Two letters were found by Cyrus Riggle and one by Cleve Boyer on Friday morning after the notable event.

The one letter found by Mr. Riggle contained shot so that it would readily descend to the earth and was directed to Arthur Burr, of Columbus. At the time the letter was written, as stated in the letter, the altitude was 2134 feet. The reading matter in the letter was a description of the journey through the ethereal realms, 40 degree parallel at 9:30 p.m. The writer seemed to be a personal friend of Mr. Burr and recalled many associations of their past lives. He also stated that the ship would go in the direction of Baltimore, thence eastward and around the globe. Signed Jim McC. The other letter was enclosed in a brass cylinder and attached to a card, directed to Walter Hartrum, of Westerville. The tone of this letter corresponded very closely with the one above described. The altitude at which the letter was written was 34 feet, nearer the earth than at the time the former was written. The letter found by Cleve Boyer and bearing his own address was enclosed in a tin box weighted with chunks of lead. The writer of this letter was evidently in the airship for it was an acknowledgment of having seen the signal lights as sent up by Mr. Boyer and kindly thanked him for so doing.

Mr. John Haywood, professor of astronomy, viewed the bright light through his telescope and stated that the object was very phenomenal in appearance, that it looked like a large bright disk, but he was unable to give any opinion in reference to its outlines as he could not determine anything other than a large disk....

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

[see Lazarus ad]

(Columbus Evening Press, April 24)

[Advertisement for Lion Coffee has airship]

(Toledo Blade, May 10)

Headlines:

The Airship Seen by Press Correspondent. He Claims to Have Approached the Aerial Cruiser and Interviewed Captain De Falamath, the Officer in Command of the Atmospheric Vehicle. Said to be Manned by Twelve Sailors and Carries Besides Them, the Commander, His Brave Wife, Two Children, His Father and a Maiden Sister. His Description of the Fast Flying Vessel.

→ [Seen by Glouster journalist at Mine No. 8 after 10 p.m. April 22 as it landed to take on coal and water.]

(Columbus Evening Press, April 23)

BALD-HEADED FAKE.

Special to the Ohio State Journal.

Glouster, O., April 24.--The story published in a Columbus paper Friday evening to the effect that the airship was seen in this vicinity and its captain interviewed by a correspondent when it was taking on coal, is one of the most bald-headed fakes that was ever sent out of Athens county. It has made the paper in question a laughing stock in this vicinity.

(Ohio State Journal, April 25)

38

THE AIR SHIP AGAIN.

It Appears to a Number of People in Washington.

The mysterious air ship was seen in Washington, D.C., Friday morning. It came down the Potomac and gradually disappeared from view over the hills of Virginia. It was plainly seen by the officers and soldiers at Fort Meyer, by the attaches of the Analostan boat club and by hundreds of other reputable citizens who are willing to make oath that it was the genuine thing. To the naked eye it seemed like an oblong balloon floating along its side, with a slight pitch in the direction in which it was going. Those who were fortunate enough to have glasses declare that it was a double-barrelled arrangement, shaped like a catamaran, hanging vertically, rocking from side to side, and often shifting its position as if it was drifting in the atmosphere. Sometimes one of the ends would be toward the observers and then they would see it fall broadside. No smoke or smokestack or wings or other means of propulsion could be detected-- nothing more than the two cylinder-like objects that were coupled to each other fore and aft.

*

(Harrison County Democrat, April 28)



That "Air Ship."

...A Leader dispatch dated Calla, O., April 24, says:

The air ship has passed over Mahoning county. It was seen by people six miles west of here, and Frank Rogers and Scott Ebert, both reputable men, claim to have seen the air ship going northwest about half a mile west of here at an early hour yesterday morning. They say it had the appearance of a cigar, with fan-shaped apparatus on the sides, and brilliantly lighted.

Though previously skeptical, people hereabouts think there must be something in it. They have the utmost confidence in the above named gentlemen.

(Norwalk Daily Reflector, April 26)

And now the airship has been seen at Zanesville. Supt. J.B. Rhodes of the B.Z.& C. railroad, together with a half dozen shop men state that they saw the ship pass over that city Friday night. Dennis Carl and Ed. Neff, two Zanesville firemen, claim to have seen the ship also.

(Caldwell Journal, April 29)

(46A)

NO MISTAKE THIS TIME

Reputable People See the Airship.

Was Probably a Balloon, But It Dropped
Mr. Remme a Message.

39

The airship that has visited several states and has startled people all over the country passed over Newport, Ky., Friday night at 8:30 o'clock and was plainly seen, so declare several reputable citizens. Not only was the ship plainly seen, but its passengers communicated with the citizens, a message being dropped from the clouds and found in the rear yard of Mr. Charles Remme's residence, at 22 West Third street. The message was written on a small linen bag, which was filled with sand, and was as follows:

"Airship Pegasus, April 23, 8:30 p.m.--Passed over Newport, Ky., at 8:25 p.m., traveling at the rate of forty miles an hour, due west. Aerometer recorded 200 miles since 4:30 p.m. Expect to arrive at Nashville, Tenn., at 3 a.m. Sunday.

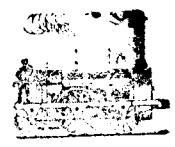
"CAPTAIN PEGASUS."

The message was displayed yesterday on the streets of Newport by Mr. Remme, who is a manufacturing jeweler and a brother of Captain Edward Remme, of the German National Bank. Mrs. G.T. ~~Am~~ Pillings, of 20 West Third street, stated that she was sitting on her front porch Friday evening when she saw a light in the west that seemed to be moving about, but she thought nothing of it until it began growing nearer. She says she watched it until it passed over her house; that once or twice she started in the house to get a pair of large field glasses, but she was afraid it would be gone before she could get back. She stated it was the shape of a cigar and was very long.

Mr. Ezra Van Duzen stated that he saw the light coming from the west, but did not suppose that it was an airship, but kept watching it until it came near enough to be seen very distinctly. He then called for Mrs. Remme and her daughter, Miss Lucy Remme. They, too, with Mr. Van Duzen, watched the light until it disappeared over their house, when they ran through the rear yard to again watch it. Just as they got into the rear yard they heard something heavy drop near them, but in the darkness they could not see what it was, but spoke of it among themselves. The statement made by Mrs. Pillings and Mr. Van Duzen was corroborated by several other persons. Mrs. Remme arose early yesterday morning, and remembering what she had seen the night before, went out in the rear yard to see if anything had fallen, and there found this bag of sand and the message. There was a small break in the bag in two places, showing evidence that it had fallen a great distance. The seeing of the airship and the communication received from the aerolists was the sole topic in Newport yesterday.

--
DROPS THINGS NOW,
--

Does the Mysterious Airship
--More Queer Antics.



The airship discoverers from out of town districts have taken a new steer. The heavenly travelers, according to those veracious chroniclers, have taken a turn of a sudden to dropping things from their lofty aeromotor. This propensity, like the original man story, has come from all quarters simultaneously, and is enumerated in detail with such remarkable accuracy as to leave no doubt in the minds of any as to its truth or falsity.

*

Dupont, O., reports a man who followed the vessel of the air, and came up with it just in time to see it rise and fly away. But he found a note from the crew saying they had traveled 4,000 miles and were going to find the North Pole.

Despite their assertions the atmospherical bugbear is next seen at Newport, south of Dupont, although in the meantime Lorain, O., gets a glimpse of the thing and finds a note giving a detailed statement of the origin, navigation and destination of the bird. It would seem that for North Pole voyagers the navigators have either lost their compass or success has turned their heads.

And from Loraine [sic] yesterday the next stop in the North Pole journey was Chattanooga, where some of the good people gifted with second sight and things, saw the cigar-shaped monstrosity late yesterday evening making for the North Pole in a due so-sou-west direction as if the helmsman thought the longest way 'round was the shortest way home.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 25)

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THE AIRSHIP MYSTERY

...
Call for Information.



The airship seems to be an accomplished fact, and the question is "Where is it from, and how is it constructed?" Conceding that the inhabitants of Mars or some nearer planet have succeeded in overcoming the force of gravitation, it is impossible that human life could be sustained while making the voyage to the earth. It must be the work of man, and of some one who inhabits this earth. While marvelous, it is not any more so than many other things which custom has led us to consider ordinary matters. Whoever has succeeded in inventing the airship should give the world the benefit of it. Air navigation, many think, is a question of the near future.--Memphis Commercial Appeal.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 22)

IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS
Cabeza del Rey Don Pedro, 9 - (2.º B)
41004 - SEVILLA (Spain)

DROPPED FROM AIR SHIP.

New London, April 24.--(Special.)--The people of Fitchville, a hamlet four miles west of this place, were in a state of excitement Friday night over the appearance of an object sailing in the air. It traveled slowly and was going in a southeasterly direction. Those who saw it say it was huge and shaped like a fish. Others say it was a large balloon. It could be seen for nearly two hours.

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

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[airship lands for repairs Friday night--exact shape of a shad, minus head and tail--aluminum bound around with strips of shining steel--two wings--passenger car made of split bamboo and aluminum. Prof. Charles Davidson invented the airship--built in Wilmington SC, landed in Chattanooga TN.]

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

HE SAW IT.

Minstrel Billy Barber is the Only Man in Town Who Saw the Air Ship.

Billy Barber, the minstrel man, is probably the only man in town who claims to have seen the air ship Friday night, and he acknowledges it without blushing. He said it was nearly midnight when he saw a dark object carrying two red lights high up in the air. It was headed toward New Boston and disappeared in that direction in a few minutes, as it travelled very fast--faster than a man trying to dodge a bill collector.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 24)

...Something Was Seen in the Air Near New London.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 25)

AIR SHIP OR BALLOON

Causes a Lively Fire in East End Saturday Night.

Although it has been asserted time and again that the stories about the airship were all fakes, the people of the east end, especially those residing in the neighborhood of Mr. S.W. Beebe, No. 1096 Franklin avenue, are paying a high premium for stock in stories about the mysterious vessel, which, for the past few weeks, has been causing universal consternation.

...the aerial monster tried to pass over Mr. Beebe's fine residence about 7 o'clock Saturday evening... the captain of the vessel that traverses only the air tried to "speak" to Mr. Beebe, and in doing so he lost control of it. It came to the ground and fell with a "dull,

[1024 Franklin Ave?] — according to other sources

heavy, sickening thud" in the alley in the rear of Mr. Beebe's house.
* The ship's beam end lights set fire to Mr. Beebe's barn--at ←
least it nearly did. It set fire to a lot of paper and rubbish just
outside of Mr. Beebe's barn door. An alarm of fire was immediately
turned in.

→ ...the airship has been burned, for the firemen could not find
anything but ashes when they got in the alley in the rear...

...There are good reputable citizens living in the east end who
are willing to testify they saw something fall from the skies. This
something had all the appearance of an airship.

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

42

The bursting of a meteor and a fragment from it caused a fire
in some refuse in the barn of S.W. Beebe, at Columbus. The damage
was slight. The noise of the fragments flying through the air at-
tracted a number of people before any permanent damage was done.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 26)

SAY THEY SAW THE AIRSHIP

--
Two Reputable Residents of Toledo are Will-
ing to Make Affidavit to That Effect.

--
Special to the Plain Dealer.

TOLEDO, April 27.--Howard Warn of the office of Southworth & Co.
and his father, M.S. Warn, both reputable citizens, are willing to
make affadavits that they saw the airship on Saturday night. Howard
states that he rode his bicycle home through a light shower, about 11
o'clock at night, and after slightly cleaning his wheel he stepped to
the door to see if the rain was continuing. His attention was at once
attracted to bright lights of different colors moving rapidly toward
the southwest.

Mr. Warn states that at that time the clouds were breaking sli-
ghtly, and were very near the earth. The lights were attached to a
cigar shaped object, moving close to the lower line of the clouds,
and in the opinion of the observer the whole affair was not to exceed
500 feet above the earth, although it was much farther away from the
point at which he stood. Warn called to his father, and they watched
the lights until they disappeared finally into heavy clouds to the
southwest.

Both gentlemen agree as to the size and general shape of the
airship, and say that there was nothing to indicate the use of wings
or propellers, neither were they able to see any human beings on
board. Owing to the newspaper jokes that are being passed upon air-
ships the Warns were reluctant to tell the story until today.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 28)

→ Farmers residing in the vicinity of Stout's run, near Buena Vista, are terrorized over the apparition of a wild man, who has been seen for nearly a week in the woods in that vicinity. A young son of Peter Tracey was caught by the creature some distance from home and severely beaten. Thirty armed men started out to hunt the wild man, but have not returned.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 28) 43

...He is barefooted and hearily nude, wears no hat or shirt and only a pair of tattered pants.

[Tracey's son was caught and struck a blow on the head which caused a gash Saturday morning--probably a lunatic.]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 27)

A Wild Man.

A great deal of excitement has been occasioned at Rome, Adams Co., in the past week by the report that a wild man has been roaming about in the woods near there. Searching parties have been out after him but have so far failed to catch him. One man who claims to have seen him says the wild man is very tall and almost naked and can run like a deer.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 28)

WILD MAN SEEN AGAIN.

He Wears Nothing But Hair, Which Is Long and Curly.

The wild man who created so much terror among the inhabitants near Rome, O., several weeks ago by his strange actions has again been seen. Charles Lukins and Bob Forner, while cutting timber a few miles from Rome, claim they encountered a wild man [on May 26] and after a severe struggle say they were able to drive the gorilla-like object into his supposed retreat among the cliffs.

They describe the terror as being about six feet tall and his only covering, apparently, a mat of long, curly hair. From their description of the supposed wild man he is undoubtedly the same seen a number of times several weeks ago.

Women and children are now more thoroughly frightened than ever and are afraid to venture from their homes lest they meet the wild creature. A posse of determined men will scour the country now until the terror is located and captured or killed.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 27;
Marietta Register, June 7)

FAIRY STORY.

A SUNBURY EDITOR TAKES A PHOTOGRAPH.

Snaps at a Flash of Lightning and Catches an Alleged Airship.

Rossville, Ill., April 25.--Special Telegram.--George Smith, a prosperous young farmer living west of this city a few miles, saw the airship this morning about 5:30 o'clock. It was high in the heavens and traveling very rapidly in an easterly direction. The sky was clear and the sky was brightly shining. His wife and employes also saw it and bear testimony to its existence. Rossville people have refrained telling about seeing it at night, but now our whole population will swear that said airship does soar in the starry heavens. Mr. Smith has always borne a first-class reputation for truth and veracity, and your correspondent can assure the Inter Ocean readers that there "do be something new under the sun."

(London Times, April 29, quoting the Chicago
Inter Ocean, April 26)

Special.

Sunbury, O., April 27.--Citizens of this place have read much in the newspapers concerning the airship, which, it was claimed, had been seen in different localities of the United States. Our people did not give much credence to these reports, however, believing them to be newspaper fakes. But something which occurred Sunday evening has fully demonstrated the truthfulness of these stories, or at least the most of them. 45

On the evening in question, Mr. W.F. Whittier, the editor of the News-Item, our local paper, and who is also an enthusiast in photography, wished to take the photograph of a flash of lightning, as the evening was a very stormy one. For this purpose he set his camera in the window of the second story of the printing office. The first flash after the camera was placed in position was very sharp and bright, lighting up the whole sky and seemingly so near that Mr. Whittier was not a little shocked by it. But closing up his camera he returned home, confident that he had acquired an excellent reproduction.

Monday morning he developed the negatives and was surprised beyond measure to find something besides the flash of lightning and far more wonderful, the much-talked-of air ship, in fact. He commenced at once finishing up the photos, and as fast as he finished them he sold them to the citizens, who were much excited.

Although there was such a great demand for the pictures your correspondent succeeded in getting one. The photo shows the flash of lightning, the clouds, and the outline of the supposed air ship, high up in the heavens.

(Dayton Daily Journal, April 28)

→ A FLEET OF AIRSHIPS

--
Passes Over Columbus Early Monday Evening.

--
Seen and Described by Ladies and Gentlemen Whose Veracity is Unquestioned.

The air ship or rather a whole fleet of airships visited Columbus Monday evening and was seen by reputable and representative citizens, who will vouch for the account of the visitation given here.

This fleet was seen about 8:30 in the evening and when first sighted was not more than 960 feet above the earth's surface. At the hour mentioned Mr. Samuel W. Six, a grocery keeper at 227 West Broad street, finished reading The Press and as he has quite a nice garden patch just back of the grocery, he was interested in the state of the weather likely to be visited upon the city during the night. The weather indications were the night would be clear, and as the temperature had fallen several degrees since dark, he concluded to step out and take a survey of the heavens. If the weather was cloudy then he knew there would be no danger of frost during the night. Mr. Six had hardly entered the yard when he heard a terrific loud noise in the heavens such as would be produced by the passage of a flock of pigeons. So loud and piercing was the sound that he was startled at

first and was about to re-enter the house. He could not, however, resist the temptation to look aloft, and look he did. Imagine the surprise of the gentleman when he beheld floating gracefully and with ease through the air, what he at first thought to be a monster war vessel. He could hardly believe his own eyes. He had been ⁴⁶ reading the different accounts of the airship as they appeared from day to day in the public prints, but like a great many others had doubted their authenticity. He took another glance at the air monster and was even more surprised than before when he noticed that the large ship was followed by four others, but of a smaller size. This was a poser and he determined to have witnesses to the story he would have to tell of his first sight of the air ship. He entered the grocery and called his wife and the clerk, Mr. Frank Daymuth out to take a glance at the "thing."

The parties came to the door and were rewarded with a sight of the fleet. When first sighted the fleet was coming in a northern direction, just a little northwest of Arlington, and then turned gradually to the south, passing directly over the cemetery at Camp Chase, where the bones of the confederate dead repose, and when the last glimpse was had of the fleet it was sailing rapidly in the direction of Grove City, but without the slightest appearance of being disturbed. The fleet was also seen by Mr. and Mrs. John Speece, and Mr. and Mrs. John L. Schlasman, of Lowden and Oakley avenues; Charles Birmingham of 567 Lathrop street, Willie Barton and several others. They all unite in saying that while the ships were all egg shaped, they differed greatly in dimensions, the one in front being considerably larger than the smallest one in the rear. The largest was about 80 feet long, while the smallest would measure probably 25 feet. They were all rigged out in the latest and most improved styles of sailing rigging and were painted a pure white. Judging from the amount of noise made by the ships on passing it is presumed that the supply of goose grease had been exhausted. One of the above named gentlemen says that the controlling power is electricity, and he backs this assertion by the statement that the lights attached to the ships were turned on and off at very regular intervals and that the globes surrounding them were of different shades. At times when all the lights were turned on the outline of the different ships were plainly visible. All the parties quoted are persons of unquestionable veracity, and that the ships were seen by them will not be questioned by persons who know them. A telegram was sent to Grove City Tuesday morning, but at time of going to press no answer had been received giving further details as to the movements of the fleet.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 27)

Airship Riddle Solved.

It is believed by many in this city that a solution of the famous airship, which has been going about the country for the past two weeks, has been found. For the past several nights residents near the south end of the city have been gazing at a large bright light, which to the stargazer appeared to be high in the heavens. The attraction which held their attention, and also their eyes, moved about horizontally, but it appeared to travel through the same plane con-

tinually, and those who witnessed the strange object entertained a strong belief that the airship was hovering about, being somewhat undecided just where to land. The question as to what the strange lights were was settled on Monday evening when Dr. Chas. E. Stroud, lieutenant of the signal corps of the sixteenth regiment, announced that the supposed airship was a signal kite, which had been raised by a member of Co. B. The kite is known as the Hunter kite, and when it was noticed by people who had read about the airship, the doctor was simply experimenting. If you see strange lights hereafter you will know it is not the airship, but that the signal kite is out for a little practice.

(Sandusky Register, April 28)

47

THE AIR SHIP

--
Is Now Cruising in the Atmosphere of the
Ohio Valley.

A LETTER FROM THE CLOUDS...

The airship which has been creating so much excitement in the West has at last reached this state, and is causing people to look skyward in hopes of catching a glimpse of the new wonder...

...recent events seem to prove that the air ship passed over this city last night. This morning when Agent Hughes, of the C. & O. came to his office he noticed an envelope lying on the paved street near the sidewalk. It was tied around with string and had a weight attached. He picked it up and taking it into the office opened and read it. The contents were as follows:

ON BOARD ELECTRIC AIR SHIP "BUCKEYE." NO. 5.

April 23rd, 1897.

To the people of Portsmouth: We passed over your city about 1:30 this morning at an altitude of 500. We are en route to Washington D.C. and want our friends to know that we are all well.

(Signed)

CAPTAIN AIR SHIP NO. 5.

P.S. Please hand this to some paper so that our friends will be sure to hear from us.

CAPT. "BUCKEYE."

Mr. Hughes was dumbfounded as he read this note. He had read of the air ship but had always believed it a hoax. Now that he was reading a letter from the captain of the strange craft he felt a strange thrill. He knew that if the air ship was a reality that the days of the F.F.V. and other fine trains of our great railroad systems were numbered, and that soon he and all other railroad agents would be out of a job.

The original of the letter from the mysterious air ship is now on file at this office, and to any one who doubts this story the letter will be shown as an evidence of good faith.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 28)

WHO SAID "AIRSHIP?"

The Critter Shows Up in Earnest
--Five Hundred People Saw It and can
Swear to It.
--

48

The airship has arrived!

The notice to Agent Hughes yesterday morning was not for nothing. Many people who yesterday scoffed at the story of the letter found on Market Street, last night were fully convinced that they had made themselves foolish. They saw the airship with their own eyes and this morning can read information by the yard about it.

This airship very obligingly called early in the evening. It was first seen at about half past seven, and it very soon attracted the attention of many people. A big crowd at Second and Jefferson took a square look at it, as did another at Market and Second, another near the postoffice, and still a larger crowd at Offnere and Ninth, besides a score of observation parties scattered all over town. When first it began to attract attention, it had apparently lodged on the Kentucky hills south of town. Various parties were soon found, however, who had seen it hovering over the hills north of town earlier in the evening, and over the Adams' residence in the East End, and over the postoffice.

The theory seemed to be that it had started south after inspecting this city, and had failed to reach a sufficient altitude to clear the South Portsmouth barricade and lodged there. It was almost directly opposite the foot of Market street when seen last. It was a brilliantly lighted affair, at least a score of lights being visible. The sharp eyed among the crowd declared they could see its cigar-shaped outline, and could see men moving about, apparently repairing the machinery.

A party from the West End started to cross the river to get a nearer view of the creature, but before they got to the ferry it had disappeared, and which way it went they were unable to say. There is a theory afloat that the air-ships that are becoming so common are the work of a secret organization, and are being manufactured for use in dropping dynamite and consternation in Havana.

Whatever the purpose may be, many who saw the visitor last night are thrilling with local pride to-day, to think that Portsmouth has not been left nor lost in the shuffle in this matter. We are usually up to date here, and if there are any airships afloat they can't miss us.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 28)

(3)

SAW THE AIR SHIP.

--
"Jud" Wickham Says He Saw the Phenom-
enon at the Corner of Willson and
Euclid Avenues.

49

--
"Jud" Wickham, cashier in the county clerk's office, declares he saw the air ship Tuesday night. He told the story at the court house Wednesday and he was still laboring under the excitement of the strange thing.

"I was standing near the corner of Willson and Euclid avenues about 10:30 o'clock last night," said he, "when I happened to look up at the heavens and saw what at first looked like a headlight on a locomotive. If I had been drinking anything stronger than soda water I would have thought I had 'em sure. At first all I could see was the blinding glare and then it slowly turned around and I could see the shaft of light across the skies. Of course I thought of the air ship which the papers had been telling about. Finally I could dimly discern the body of the thing. It was shaped like a cigar and right above it was a balloon shaped affair. It seemed to be stationary for quite a while, and then it moved slowly off to the southeast.

"You fellows may think I am kiddin,' but I am giving it to you straight. I saw the air ship."

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 29)

THE AERIAL WANDERER

--
MANY CLEVELANDERS BEHOLD THE AIRSHIP.
--

Cleveland, O., April 29.--The Leader of this morning prints the following regarding the mysterious airship:

"The mysterious aerial wanderer that has been seen in all parts of the country east of the Rocky Mountains during the past month, hovered over Cleveland for a short time last evening. It was first seen about 7:30 o'clock, in the western heavens at an elevation of about 45 degrees. It was moving slowly eastward, and in fifteen or twenty minutes it had reached the zenith, from which position it drifted toward the eastern horizon. It was apparently a thousand feet above the surface of the earth.

"Among those who saw the strange object was a Leader representative. He, with the others, thought at first it was a comet, but all soon came to the conclusion that it must be the mysterious 'airship.' At first it appeared like a bat of light. It was perpendicular, and, to the human eye, seemed about two feet in length. As it came nearer it assumed the form of a huge kite, with lights on the perpendicular part of the frame, and at each of the outside corners. As it hung in the zenith it appeared less brilliant, being more like a collection of small lights shining through a haze. There was nothing to indicate the balloon form or the cigar shape that has been described by those who claim to have seen the 'airship' in various parts of the country. At the time the atmosphere was as clear as it ever gets in Cleveland in the early evening, and there was little or no wind.

(31)

"If this is the same thing that has been seen in other places, it is easy to understand the amazement of the people, for there is something mysterious about it--something which has not yet been explained."

(Toledo Blade, April 29)

50

Willard Herbert got the airship scare started in this city on Wednesday night of last week, by sending up a paper balloon, supplying it with gas from a burning turpentine ball. People around here would not believe in an air ship now if one should settle down in Court street.

(Washington Court House Cyclone and Fayette Republican,
April 29)

BEAST RESEMBLING A MAN.

--

Two Indiana Farmers Shoot at a Strange
Animal Which Runs on Its Hind Legs.

--

LA GRANGE, Ind., April 30.--The farmers living near Sailor, northwest of here, are considerably aroused over the appearance in the woods of a strange animal which resembles a man. It has been reported for the last two years that a mysterious animal was inhabiting the woods, but the reports were never credited until yesterday, when Adam Gardner and Ed Swinehart, two well known farmers, reported that the animal was seen and that shots were fired at it. The men report that the beast walked on its hind feet and had every appearance of a man, save the body was covered with hair. The height was that of an average sized man. When the animal saw the men approaching it jumped and started for the thick portion of the woods upon its hind legs, but afterwards dropped on its hands and disappeared with rabbitlike bounds. Gardner shot at the animal and thinks he hit it, as the animal seemed lamed. A searching party is being organized to hunt for the mysterious animal.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 1)

SAW THE AIRSHIP.

--

What a Prominent Mt. Vernon Citizen
Thinks.

Special to the Ohio State Journal.

Mt. Vernon, O., April 30.--W.P. Bogardus, president of the city council, reports that he saw the "air ship" last night. He is of the opinion that it is an arrangement floated in the air by means of small balloons, the darkness giving the effect of great distance. Others who saw the same thing are convinced that it is a "sure enough" airship.

(Columbus Ohio State Journal, May 1)

THE AIR SHIP AGAIN.

--
Attention to It was Attracted by a
Dog's Barking at Munroe Falls--
Was Seen at 9.

51

--
C.N. Gaylord, proprietor of the creamery at Munroe Falls, heard his dog barking furiously at 9 Thursday night, and went out to see what the cause was.

About a thousand feet above the earth Mr. Gaylord saw what appeared to be an air ship, moving westward at a rapid rate. The dog was barking at that object. Mr. Gaylord called the attention of his family to the strange sight.

(Akron Times-Democrat, May 5)

CINCINNATI AIRSHIP

--
A Policeman Saw It and Describes Its
Appearance.

Cincinnati, O., April 30.--Officer John Ringer, of the First District, has been enrolled among the men who have seen the airship. He said last night: "I was standing at the corner of Eighth and Walnut streets at 10 o'clock, when my attention was called to a string of lights moving across the sky. I could see one large light in front, like the headlight of an engine, only smaller, while behind this was a long row of little lights, but much bigger than stars, and one right behind the other.

"It was so high up that I could see no outline, and nothing but the lights. They moved rapidly in a southwesterly direction, and I watched them until they disappeared. Half a dozen citizens were standing near me, and they also saw the moving lights. I believe it was the air ship."

(Toledo Blade, April 30)

THAT AIR SHIP

--
It Is Traced to Its Lair (or Liar)

--
HOME NEAR SAVANNAH

--
Owner Locks His Pegasus in the Barn of
Days and Rides It to His Elyria Farm
o' Nights.

--
Perhaps the most conclusive testimony yet given as to the existence of an air ship was received by the Leader yesterday in the following letter from Mr. John S. Chamberlain, of Shiloh, O., under the date of May 4:

"The so-called airship that has caused so much excitement in this vicinity can now practically be accounted for.

"It is supposed to be the work of an ingenious man living some twelve miles east of here, near the town of Savannah. He is wealthy and owns considerable property in the West. He has lately returned

from Nebraska and since his return his neighbors affirm that he has been experimenting with an airship. 52

"It is known that he has been planning a vessel of this kind for some years. He has a large barn on his property which he keeps carefully guarded, allowing no one to enter except two strangers who came with him from the West.

"Last Friday night after 12 o'clock he experimented with it and his vessel was seen by myself and a number of his neighbors. It set the town in a commotion, and the people have watched his premises closely ever since. He keeps his barn well guarded, and when accosted concerning the airship, has nothing to say. The people of that town do not doubt that he is the inventor of it. It is supposed that he has been testing it after night, taking it back and forth between Savannah and a farm that he owns near Elyria, and that his invention having been seen and his design suspected, he since keeps it concealed.

"Last Friday evening on my road home, rather late at night, in company with a friend of mine, Mr. Hopkins, I had the startling pleasure of seeing this vessel. When first seen it was close to us and not very high in the air. It was well lighted and revealed its outline quite plainly. As it appeared to us, it was supported in the air by a narrow, oblong, cylindrical-shaped vessel, which looked to be inflated. Underneath this part was balanced, by the attachment of ropes, the machinery of the invention.

"Although sailing at an angle against the wind, the upper inflated part was turned lengthwise parallel with the wind. Queer small sails were attached to the lower part and there appeared to be several small propellers rotating at a high rate of speed and bearing directly against the wind. The upper part was about seventy feet long and the lower part much smaller and swung beneath. It labored heavily with the wind and imitated somewhat the tactics of a sailing vessel.

"When we first saw it, it was moving slowly, but the sails were suddenly changed, and it arose high in the air and was driven back some distance by the wind. After rising to a high altitude it started off in a southerly direction at a great angle to the wind. It sailed at a good rate of speed against the brisk wind, gradually descending. After having passed, perhaps, twelve miles to the south, and almost below the hills, it again rose high in the air and took a northwesterly direction, angling against the wind, and passed some five miles ahead of us. Here it again repeated the operation of rising in the air, and passed west of Greenwich beyond our sight.

"Although this vessel did not look to be safe nor practical, still it must be said that it is the best of its kind, and will win fame and perhaps fortune for its inventor."--Cleveland Leader.

(Ashland Press, May 13)

SAW THE AIRSHIP.

--

Officer Will Ries Gets a Good View
of the Mysterious Airship.

--

Officer Will Ries was telling the C. & E. men this morning of the good view he got of the airship last night. It was coming from

(31)

the East and passed within two hundred yards of the C. & E. depot. Ries says its was shaped like a huge cigar and had a bright red head light. It probably intended to stop at the C. & E. and take on coal but seeing the officer's brass buttons was scared out and changed its course.

(Kenton News-Republican, May 3)

MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP

53

--
Edison Denounces It as a "Pure Fake"
--Thinks It Absurd.

...
"When an airship is made it will not be in the form of a balloon. It will be a mechanical contrivance, which will be raised by means of a very powerful motor, which must be made of very light weight... Their success may come. I am not, however, figuring on inventing an airship. I prefer to devote my time to objects which have some commercial value. At the best, airships would only be toys."

(Bucyrus Evening Telegraph, May 5)

[Arkansas to present clause in state commerce law to include taxation of airships that have been reported.]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, May 5)

If airships become real facts we may have some trouble about collecting tariff duties. Smuggling would simply be out of sight.

(Mt. Gilead Union-Register, May 19)

The South and West are greatly stirred up over a supposed airship or aerial machine of some kind that has been seen in the heavens. Excitement is useless. It may only be a stray postmastership or other federal appointment looking for a place to light.

(Marion Daily News, April 12)

That "western air-ship" is probably only the last remnant of McKinley's majority of last fall sailing away to the empyrean regions where the ancients supposed the pure element of fire existed.

(Zanesville Daily Signal, April 14)

Kenton Dem.: Farmers in the vicinity of Wolf Creek are considerably excited by the existence in the woods of that locality of what is thought to be a wild cat. The animal has been seen several times and an attempt made to kill it. It is a ferocious looking animal, and dashes about in an alarming manner, and when come upon suddenly, sounds terrible cries and rapidly disappears. A diligent hunt is being made. It may soon be killed.

(Bluffton News, May 6)

A PANTHER

Attacks Farmers Who Venture Out
After Night--Hunting Parties After
the Beast.

54

Special Dispatch to the Enquirer.

CARROLLTON, OHIO, May 4.—The residents of the peaceful valley of Perry Township, south of this city, are terrorized over the appearance of a large panther which had been killing sheep, hogs and cattle and frightening the people until they have adopted the good old pioneer style of wearing arms and a frightened look. Arms of all descriptions from the heirloom musket to corn cutters are carried by the badly frightened residents...

At Lamartine Emanuel Hendrick Jr., a young farmer of that section, was returning home from that town, and while passing through a small wood he was confronted by what he thought was a dog which uttered a piercing screech and made a leap for the now thoroughly terrorized young man, who defended himself with the whip and a large knife. Numerous applications of the whip kept the panther at bay after several unsuccessful attempts to leap into the carriage. Whipping the frenzied horses into a mad run he was pursued over three miles before the panther was outdistanced.

Heavily armed hunting parties are scouring that part of the country in search of this animal, which has so terrorized the good farmers who have neglected their spring labors.

(Cadiz Sentinel, May 9, 1895)

MORE AIRSHIPS.

Another One Was Seen Last Evening by Two
Reputable Citizens--They May Have
Been Paper Balloons.

Another airship has been seen.

L.M. Woolwine, a traveling man of Nashville, Tenn., was standing on the corner of Seneca and Superior streets at about 7:45 o'clock last night when he espied two exceedingly bright lights proceeding through the heavens in a southwesterly direction. He immediately called the attention of several passers by to the phenomenon, and they unhesitatingly pronounced it to be the airship. The outline of the ship was not visible, owing to the darkness, but the light at each end indicated its position. Mr. Woolwine stated that the ship seemed to be floating along at about four or five miles an hour, although the distance might have made the speed appear less than it really was. Mr. S.B. Sloss, proprietor of the Hotel Imperial, also saw the ship, his story coinciding with Mr. Woolwine's.

Several bright geniuses throughout the city have lately sent up paper balloons and the like, and an epidemic of airships will probably follow if the practice keeps up!

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5)

STILL ANOTHER WITNESS.

George W. Edmondson Declares He Also
Saw the Airship Tuesday Night--
His Description.

55

--
In addition to the testimony of L.M. Woolwine, the traveling man, and Mr. S.B. Sloss, proprietor of the Hotel Imperial, in regard to the airship seen Tuesday night, Mr. George W. Edmondson, the well known photographer, tells of the appearance of two very bright lights in the western sky, which, he says, were making their way with uniform rate towards the southwest. He says that at first he could see only one light, but that gradually two lights were disclosed as one swung around from behind the other. He further states that the lights took a sudden dip, as if the ship pitched violently and the fact that they went with the same velocity and took exactly the same path in the air persuades him that they were not ordinary balloons. Mr. Edmondson was walking past the Public library at the time.

This statement exactly coincides with the story of Woolwine and Sloss. As there is no possibility for collusion and as Mr. Edmondson is such a well known and respected citizen, the affair remains unexplained.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 6)

AIRSHIP

--
Said to Have Been Seen Passing Over
This City Last Night.

--
A number of people on Garfield place saw the airship last night about 9 o'clock, and are willing to make affidavit that they have sighted the mysterious navigator that has been creating so much excitement over the country. Dr. Louis Domhoff, 112 Garfield place, made a drawing of the light, which he describes as egg-shaped, red in color and appearing as though a portion of it was covered with a curtain, the rays escaping in the center and at each end.

It came from the direction of Price Hill and passed in a southeasterly direction, disappearing in about five minutes, and, so far as he was able to approximate, covered a distance of about 20 miles in that time, moving in a zigzag course, first up, then down. Conductor J.C. Gaupel, on the Monmouth-street car line, also saw it. W.J. Klein, an attorney in the Mitchell Building, and Fred Porter, of the Methodist Book Concern, and a number of others say they saw and watched the curious aeronaut.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, May 5)

WILD ANIMAL

--
Prowling About Chillicothe Routs
Dogs and Scares Many People.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

CHILLICOTHE, OHIO, May 7.--The west end of this city is greatly alarmed over the presence of some sort of wild animal which makes his home in the thickets along the Scioto, and which has been seen

prowling around the edges of town. A number of employees at the driving park have seen it, and describe it as being about four feet long, low, large head, short legs and big feet and light brown or yellowish in color.

Dogs sent after the animal come back bleeding and torn, and will not follow it again. The horses at the park snorted in terror and sweated with fear at night. Small animals have been killed and some people are afraid to go out at night.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, May 9)

THE AIRSHIP.

56

--
"Jud" Wickham Has Described Its Identity--A Toy Balloon with Lanterns Attached.
--

"Jud" Wickham, cashier in the county clerk's office, has solved the airship mystery. Late Wednesday night, by the light of the moon, he was at work in his pansy bed when he happened to look heavenward and observed a one-eyed monster directly above his head. Of course the first thing "Jud" thought of was the airship, and he rushed into the house to get his field glasses. With the help of these he was able to study the thing very thoroughly.

The airship proved to be a toy balloon of large dimensions. A lantern with a reflector was attached to the base of it. On both sides of the balloon were large conical shaped affairs, which, through the powerful glasses, appeared to be constructed of some flimsy material, probably tissue paper. At the apex of the balloon was a small flag and all along the conical shaped side attachments were smaller balloons. The "airship" was traveling with the wind, rising, falling and moving rapidly and slowly, according to the velocity of the breeze. The affair was high up in the air.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 7)

AN AIRSHIP ROMANCE.

--
Workmen in the Waterworks Tunnel Credited with Having Seen One.
--

The airship has been seen once more. At least employes of the waterworks department say the men working on the tunnel saw it sink into the lake a few nights ago.

It was time for a new shift to go down. As the force stood at the top of the shaft the cigar shaped mechanism, brilliantly lighted was seen in the distance. Frank Kosterling, tunnel inspector, is charged with being the first to notice it.

According to the story told in the city hall Thursday the ship descended gradually from the sky to the water's surface, then floated off and disappeared in the distance or was submerged. Kosterling denies the soft impeachment and came down to tell Supt. Kingsley it was all a joke. He does not believe in airships and thinks no one else saw this one.

Waterworks employes tell all sorts of airship jokes. Kosterling claims they did so in this instance and will make it warm for the originator.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 7)

57

AN EXPLANATION OF THE AIRSHIP.

...were toy balloons which alleged jokers have been sending up for the last few nights, having attached to them Japanese lanterns..

...It is fair to presume that no airship exists. Indeed no letter of patent has been issued from the Washington patent office on such an invention during the last few weeks....

...They have seen, through a trick of the brain, the progress of science, crowned in this latter day of the century, by the realization of aerial navigation.... they have seen the airship as a result of what is known to psychologists as auto-suggestion.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 9)

SAW THE AIR SHIP.

Two Reputable Citizens of the Falls

See it...

Correspondence of Beacon and Republican.

CUYAHOGA FALLS, May 6.--The air ship has been seen at the Falls and by people of the highest integrity and veracity. William J. Rattle and R.H. Lodge both claim to have seen the aerial travellers and it is said that some of the patients at the sanitarium have seen it several times.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, May 6)

[facetious account of landing at Cardington with occupants on Thursday]

(Mt Gilead Union Register, May 12)

THE AIR SHIP.

--

Cincinnati People Say They Saw it Saturday Night.

--

CINCINNATI, May 8.--(A.P.)--About 8 o'clock tonight what is supposed to be an air ship sped across this city from the southeast to the northwest at a great height and with incredible speed. It showed a brilliant light. Some who saw it are unable to describe its form, and others say it was cigar-shaped. It was observed by reputable citizens in East Walnut Hills, Mount Auburn and from the Esplanade and other places in the city. The speed was not less than 100 miles per hour. This is no fiction. Some strange object passed over the city high in the air.

(Canton Repository, May 9)

THAT 'ERE SHIP.

Several Norwalkians saw the supposed air ship Sunday evening about 8 o'clock, or at least they saw a mysterious bright light and what appeared something like a balloon, sailing through the air, in a northerly direction. We would advise those that saw it, though, not to wager anything that it was an air ship, for perhaps it was a large paper balloon which some of Norwalk's practical jokers contemplated sending up that evening.

(Norwalk Daily Reflector, May 11)

58

THAT AIRSHIP AGAIN

Two Norwalk Young Men Claim to Have Seen the Mysterious Aerial Navigator.

Special to the Plain Dealer.

NORWALK, May 10.--The famous airship was seen passing over this city last night. Mr. Abe Parker, a well known young man of this city, says he saw it, and he describes it as follows:

"It appeared to be but a little higher than the Glass block, and was moving very slowly. It was about 8 o'clock when I saw it moving along. The lights were very bright and must have been of an electrical origin. They were of two colors, white and red. As well as I can remember, there were ten or twelve of them. Although I could not hear the sound of music, there were those standing near me who claimed they heard the musical sounds most distinctly. As well as I can judge, the aerial visitor was in sight about ten minutes."

Another young man who saw it corroborated Mr. Parker's statement. He gives a description of its shape as follows:

"Newspaper accounts describe the airship as cigar shaped, but they are way off; at least, the one I saw is not of that shape at all, but round, like a huge ball. After the ship crossed Main street I followed it over a mile. Part of the way it led me through a field. We were so far from the street lights that it was quite dark. Whatever be the nature of the light carried by the airship, it is very powerful, for it cast a shadow, which I saw distinctly and repeatedly. Now, if the airship is cigar-shaped, the shadow naturally would be cigar-shaped, but it was not. It was round."

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 11)

THINK IT WAS AN AIRSHIP.

Balloon with Light Attached Attracts Attention of Penitentiary Guards and Prisoners.

EXCITEMENT CAUSED...

There was considerable quiet excitement about the Penitentiary Monday night owing to the fact that several of the officials of the prison, the prisoners and a number of guards saw what is believed by some of the witnesses to be an airship. The object was seen far in

the southwest by the parties, and it was watched as it swiftly flew from the southwest to the northeast and disappeared, about 20 minutes after being first sighted, in an easterly direction. Several of the observers are firmly of the opinion that the object seen is a veritable air schooner and are ready to give reasons for the faith that is in them. The object was sighted far in the west at a considerable elevation, variously estimated at from 300 to 1000 feet, and it resembled the planet Mars in its peculiar color of fiery red, but unlike the planet Mars, it twinkled after the manner of a fixed star. It was this fact, and the further fact that it lay in a different quarter from that which would be occupied by Mars at this season, that aroused the suspicions of at least one observer. The object came swiftly nearer and nearer and the light became more fiery red and at last took on an elongated shape similar to the outline of an acorn, as nearly as could be determined. The object passed swiftly and steadily from the southwest to the northeast, skirting the West side of the city, and seemed to be rocking, thus obscuring the light occasionally for an instant. The balloon appeared in sight for 36 minutes, when it disappeared behind the volume of smoke in the northeast which hovered over the region of the Panhandle shops.

Some of the prisoners were excited over the affair and one of them would make a sworn affidavit that he saw the door of an oven swing open and that he saw coal or coke shoveled into it, after the manner of a railroad engine. Others claim they saw two of the objects, but others still assert that the second was only a second sight of the one. The balloon, for such it appears to have been, was noticed by persons in various parts of the city and was probably sent up by some one to direct attention on account of the craze over the fake stories about airships.

(Ohio State Journal, May 11)

THE AIRSHIP AGAIN.

59

--
It Is Seen by Many Imaginative
Citizens--What It Was.
--

Mr. Frank Grant, of 134 West Second Avenue, reported Tuesday morning that he saw what impressed him as being an air ship Monday night, supposed to be the one seen by the O.P. guards and convicts the same evening.

Just. Wright, at 165 Vine street, also saw the ship. He is sure it could not have been a balloon, or a kite, because it moved rapidly and changed directions.

Several convicts in the state prison also saw it and thought they could make out the form of the ship.

Nevertheless these people were evidently deceived. Mr. C.C. Philbrick, of the American Press association, and Secretary Neville Williams, of the city board of health, saw the alleged "air ship" when it left the earth. It was a paper balloon and was sent up from a saloon near Goodale park. The ascension was very successful, and the gentlemen watched the little balloon while it described the very same course told of by those who saw the air ship. A little imagin-

ation will make an air ship out of a vigorous fire fly.

(Columbus Press, May 11)

60

THE AIR SHIP.

John F. Hopley Sees This
Modern Invention

AT SANDUSKY CITY.

He Says That It Is Not a
Fake and That

HE REALLY SAW IT THERE.

He Examined It Through a
Glass and Writes About It to
Our Readers.

Special to the Telegraph.

SANDUSKY, O., May 11.--At ten this morning a number of people claimed the air ship was in sight. As a "Doubting Thomas" I went up to the Park, a hundred feet from the office, and after some difficulty located it. Far away to the west, about one-third of the way to the zenith, was a fleecy white bulk floating in the air, sometimes lost to sight, but again re-appearing. Having observed it closely through a strong field glass, I could see it was neither a kite nor a bird nor yet a balloon, but it was something. Then I went across the street to the weather bureau where Observer Thompson another air ship doubter, got his glass.

By this I saw an object like a bird. You could see the same fleecy white centre, while on both sides stretched long black wings. It is difficult to say how far off the object was, but if it was a bird, it must have been a mammoth edition of the roc left over from the fabled ages. To me, it looked as if though the white centre were about six inches in diameter, and each of the black wings ten inches to a foot in diameter. The white centre was on a level with the black wings.

What it is I do not know, but it will be wise for people not to criticize too freely the air ship myth until more is found out. In my opinion, although like a bird, it was far too distant to be a bird, for it would be harder to believe a bird exists at least sixty to eighty feet from tip to tip than to believe in the air ship. Whatever it was, judging from distance, it was something floating in the air, a mile or two high and twenty mile distant, that was at least sixty to eighty feet in size.

As I never drink and have not believed in the air ship, my opinions are not biased.

JOHN E. HOPLEY.

(Bucyrus Evening Telegraph, May 11)

Airship in Ironton.

Ironton Register.

It may not be generally known that an airship is building in Iron ton. There is. It is not merely a photograph, but the genuine article. A Register reporter has been admitted to the sacred precincts of the workshop where the hand of genius is molding its mysterious shape, and has gazed upon its strange form. The airship is not a new idea, but the development of years of study, and the one now building is being most carefully constructed, after numerous experiments with mechanism and materials. And what is more, the inventor has the evidences of ultimate success, for recently, in the quiet hours before day, he took his machine, or rather, a rude model of it now being improved upon, to the old fair grounds, and there alone, at daylight, soared in the air for a hundred yards, twenty feet from the ground, and while in the air, turned about and returned to the point of starting. With this much attained, the inventor gathered up his model and retreated to his workshop, encouraged to proceed with the larger and stronger machine which he is now making, and upon the wings of which he hopes some day to fly away to fame and fortune.

(Bellefontaine Republican, May 14)

A PASTURE FULL OF FISH.

61

Farmer Living Near New London Makes a Surprising Discovery.

Special to the Plain Dealer.

NEW LONDON, May 15.--After one of the heavy storms of the week Mr. George Yarker, a farmer living near New London, described that a part of a field near the house was covered with fish. The field was used as a pasture, and on a space covering nearly an acre of ground were found hundreds of fish, all of one variety, what are commonly called 'bull-heads,' ranging in length from one to six inches. Yarker lives a mile from any stream. The occurrence is explained by the fact that a ~~XXXX~~ large waterspout burst over the field.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 16)

[Facetious account of an airship landing near Bellefontaine--men from Mars get out, who turn out to be George Washington, Patrick Henry, Roger Sherman and Anthony Wayne--they said they had come back to see how the government they had framed was doing--account signed A DELIGHTED RUSTIC.]

(Bellefontaine Republican, May 14)

[Editor declined publishing airship stories until he found some that were true.]

(Canal Winchester Times, May 19)

STRANGE ANIMAL.

Farmers in Hocking County Annoyed by a Wildcat or Panther.

Logan, O., May 25.--The farmers in the southern part of this county are excited over the appearance of a strange animal. Numerous sheep and lambs have disappeared. Several pioneers who have heard the cry of the

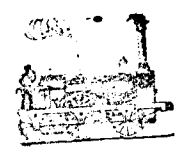
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beast at night say it is a panther, while others say the cries resemble those of a wildcat.

(Akron Times-Democrat, May 26)

62

IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS
Cabeza del Rey Don Pedro, 9 - (2.º B)
41004 - SEVILLA (Spain)



IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS

Cabeza del Rey Don Pedro, 9 - (2.º B)
41004 - SEVILLA (Spain)



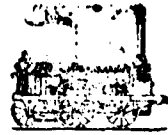
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1896-1897 Javier Sierra's File

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→ Igualmente:
Algunas de estas referencias son del archivo de Enrique y del de Antonio, y vienen de Ti. De cualquier modo aquí hay items que tal vez no tengas. Indícamelo y te lo paso

Ohio

AIRSHIP REPORTS

OF 1897 .

OHIO AIRSHIP REPORTS OF 1897

62 PAGES

QUINCY ALLIGATOR

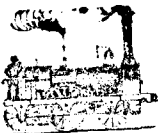
Making Things Lively About the Marsh Lately.

Saturday's Kenton Daily Democrat says: The people in the vicinity of the Scioto Marsh are in a great state of excitement because of the appearance of an alligator in a swamp near Foraker. It was first seen Wednesday by some boys who were hunting. They were badly frightened and reported their discovery. A search was made but it was not seen again until Friday. It is probable that the alligator is one that escaped from the park at Quincy a few weeks ago.

(Logan County Index, April 8)
1897

AIR SHIPS ARE NOW A FAD

...On April 5 people at Nashville, Illinois, saw something that some thought was a balloon, while others were sure it was a flying machine. Two days later a doctor at Vinton, Iowa, reported that he and his family heard the air ship "swishing through the air" and that he saw it flying against the wind.... and Northwood, a town near the Minneapolis state line, reported the machine in sight at 10:30 o'clock [April 8].



(Toledo Blade, April 12)

ANDERSON PEOPLE

Claim to Have Seen the Strange Flying Machine Recently.

...Parties in another section of the city, among them Deputy Clerk Fulton, state that they saw it early Friday morning.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 15)

Platte City, Mo., April 12.--The town was roused Saturday night at 10 o'clock by tinkling of bells overhead. Every one rushed out doors. Suspended in mid air was an object over 100 feet long and 20 wide. Two immense fins on either side of it moved up and down.

(Columbus Press, April 12)

Saw a Man In it.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

LAGRANGE, IND., April 12.--The mysterious airship which has been hovering over Chicago for the past few days was visible here early last night. It came from a westerly direction, and then, turning southwest for awhile, hovered over this section, and then turned and went toward Chicago. The powerful telescope at the How Military School, at Lima, was turned on it, and the professor in charge declares he could distinguish a figure moving about.

Elkhart Right in Line.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

ELKHART, IND., April 12.--A large number of persons claim to have seen an airship passing over this city between 10 o'clock and midnight last night. It presented all the peculiarities that have been so generally described.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 13)

2

Seen at Manchester.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

WABASH, IND., April 13.--The report came from North Manchester last night that what appeared to be an airship floated lazily over that place at a height of a quarter of a mile last evening. Several persons claim to have seen the headlight and watched the dark mass until it disappeared. The description of the machine corresponds with that given by the Western people who assert they have seen it.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 14)

Muncie Speaks Up.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

MUNCIE, IND., April 13.--Sylvester Oran, a resident of Avondale, a suburb of this city, claims to have seen the mysterious airship this morning about 3 o'clock. He was called to go for a doctor, and on leaving his home he says his eyes were attracted by a bright light in the heavens. It moved swiftly from north to south, going at a great speed and vanishing in a few seconds. He bears a good reputation for veracity, and his story is believed.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 14)

ANDERSON PEOPLE

Claim to Have Seen the Strange Flying Machine Recently.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

ANDERSON, IND., April 14.--Fifteen or twenty Andersonians of good reputation claim to have seen the real thing in the airship line last night. It was hovering over the city, and those who saw it say there could be no further doubting. They were in the west part of the city. Ladies were called out, and the party watched the strange electric light until it disappeared in the northern mist....

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 15)

SIX MEN

Seen in the Airship...

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

MARION, IND., April 14.--The much-talked-of airship passed over Marion this afternoon about 3 o'clock about six miles to the south and apparently about a mile from the earth. It came from the northwest and veered around to the east. It appeared to be a cigar or boat-shaped body, with large wings. Six passengers were aboard.

Strong telescopes made the color of the body visible, and reliable citizens declare that it was of a brown cast, and that the wings

were white. About 7 o'clock this evening an object carrying a large light, apparently that of a headlight, was seen passing over Marion, coming from the east and bearing off to the northwest.

Prof. Alva Graves, Principal of the high school, with W.H. Sanders, editor of the Chronicle; Howard Roose, city editor of the Morning News; H.M. Elliott, an attorney, and your correspondent, went to the High School Observatory, where they have a telescope of the finest make, but when the telescope was placed in position, the object had passed behind a bank of clouds, and could not be seen.

--

3

IN DAYLIGHT

The Queer Machine Seen to Land Near Gas City.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

GAS CITY, IND., April 14.--About 3 o'clock this afternoon hundreds of the inhabitants of this city were amazed and startled upon looking into the heavens to see approaching from a northwesterly course what appeared to be an immense bird. As it approached it came nearer the earth, and the outlines of the flyer could be distinctly seen. It was in the shape of a cigar, and was propelled by broad canvas wings.

People rushed to the point where they thought it would land, but all were fooled. The airship, as it proved to be, lighted in a field on the Roush farm, about one mile east of the city. Cattle and horses were terrified, and consternation reigned supreme. A rush was made for the Roush farm, but the navigators of the monster anticipated the move, and before the crowds reached the farm the mysterious airship was again seen in the air, going in an easterly direction.

Some of the best business men will vouch for having seen the ship, among them L.V. Seybrant, and D.E. Conway, of the Mississinewa Hotel; W.H. Guthrie, W.P. Garthwait, G.W. Villars, D.W. Cox, William M. Dunlap and others.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 15)

FARMER SCARED

When the Air King Sailed Over to Jig Time.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

CASSTOWN, OHIO, April 15.--This morning James McKensie, a well-known farmer living about a mile north of here, came to town with a startling story about the airship. Mr. McKensie is entirely responsible. His story is that about 6 o'clock last night, while engaged in feeding his hogs, he was startled by a strange noise not unlike the passage of a flock of geese. Upon looking up, he further says, he saw what at first appeared to be a huge bird headed in a southwesterly direction.

He distinctly saw the wing-like object by which the supposed airship propelled itself through the air, and noticed what appeared to be a large rudder. The ship was moving quite leisurely, and Mr. McKensie avers that a sound like that of distant music accompanied it. The object was not more than 150 feet from the earth, and but

for the gathering dusk he believes he could have seen its tenants.

One of his neighbors heard the strange sounds at the same time, but did not get to see the great modern air bird. As the farmer had not read anything about the alleged airship said to be travelling through space, he was on the lookout for nothing of the kind, and now, since he has heard of the airship, he is of the opinion that it was the object he saw last night over his farm.

As the thing disappeared he says he heard a sound very much like a human voice, and something large and white seemed to leave the ship. A party will leave this village to-day to look for the supposed message which is expected, if found, to reveal the identity of the air king and its people.

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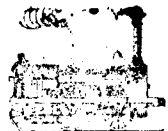
Seen in Portland.

PORTLAND, IND., April 15.--Several citizens claim that the mysterious airship which has been causing such a furore passed over Portland last night, and that the lights were plainly discernible. Some claim to be able to give in general its outlines, and their description is in accordance with that which has been telegraphed from a number of places.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 16)

Several young men claim they saw the much talked of flying machine, or some other bird, flying over Bluffton last Wednesday evening.

(Bluffton News, April 22)



ANDALUSIA, ILL., April 15.--Seven residents of this place saw the mysterious air ship at 11 o'clock last night. Jim Dinkerson, the livery stable man, shot at it, and the air was at once so strongly charged with sulphur that breathing became extremely difficult. Fearful noises issued from the clouds by which the ship was surrounded, and some of the more superstitious people ran into their houses and locked themselves up, being convinced that Old Nick was out on one of his periodical excursions....

DOWAGIAC, MICH., April 15.--Several people saw the air ship passing over Dowagiac last night, at about 11 o'clock. It left three distinct trails of fire in its rear, and for two hours after the stranger had gone the air was heavily charged with something that gave out an odor like garlic.

HORNELLSVILLE, N.Y., April 15.--The air ship passed here last night. An envelope was dropped from it with a message to the effect that the ship was on its way to New York, where an effort would be made to have it written up for the new journalism. The message was signed: "Nemo Numis, chief deputy for the Second district of Mars."

(Washington Court House Cyclone and Fayette Republican, April 22)

(7A)

THE AIR SHIP

--

That Was Seen in Chicago Last Week
Was Seen by Kenton People Last
Evening.

5

--

The air ship that was seen in Chicago last week seems to be near Kenton, as many people from this city claim they saw the air ship last night about 7 o'clock. As will be remembered, the air ship started a few weeks ago from San Francisco to make a trip across the continent. Since the ship has started it was seen only a few times, and Chicago was the last place it was seen until some well-known Kenton people saw it over this city last night. They supposed, of course, the ship was coming this way to see those new bicycle suits at Morgenroth's....

(Kenton News-Republican, April 15)

AIR SHIP A FAKE.
No Truth In the Story That it Has Been
Seen Over Omaha.

6

Among others who have read about the wonderful airship that the dispatches state has been seen over Omaha and other western cities nearly every night for weeks past is Attorney W.T. Sawyer of this city. Having a brother-in-law out in Omaha, a practicing attorney, Mr. Sawyer determined to write him and learn of the strange ship that navigated the air. This is the answer to Mr. Sawyer's letter:

OMAHA, Neb., April 12, 1897.

DEAR BROTHER--I received your letter ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ dated April 9, this morning, and will endeavor to give you the desired information. I have not been around through the city a great deal after night and have found but one or two parties who have seen the air ship that you inquire about. From the location of the city where they reside, and the associates accompanying them, and the kind of liquor that they partake of, they would most certainly be capable of not only seeing air ships, but also reptiles of most any description. There is absolutely no foundation in the rumors and the telegrams that have been sent out, and the parties who have claimed to see it are not responsible nor reliable, and it is all fiction.
I.F. MADLEM.

(Akron Times-Democrat, April 14)

Prominent residents of Dunkirk, a small village north of Kenton, claim to have seen the mythical airship Thursday night at 8:15 o'clock. It was going east at a rapid rate, and was so close to the earth that you could hear men's voices. It looked as large as a wagon bed and had something like wings stretching from each side and a propellor at each end. On the front was a red light, while the rear carried a greenish yellow lamp.

(Cadiz Harrison County Democrat, April 21)

TALKING
Heard by the Citizens

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.
DUNKIRK, OHIO, April 15.--An airship passed over this place about 4 o'clock this morning. It is supposed to be the same one which was seen in Marion, Ind., yesterday evening. It was going in an easterly direction, and when at the eastern part of the city it was within 200 feet of the ground. It was seen by Willie Mahon, the Marshal, railroad tower men and several prominent ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ citizens. When passing over these gentlemen they could hear several men in the airship talking very loud, but could not distinguish what they were saying. From what could be seen it resembled a wagon bed with large wings extending on either side, and looked to be large enough to hold a dozen men.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 16)

SEEN AT DUNKIRK

THE MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP

Which Is Causing So Much Talk Passed
Near Kenton and Over Dunkirk Last
Night

7

Seen by Several.

"I tell you I saw it."

Such was the joint remark firmly asserted by two young men last night who were trying to make the reporter believe they had seen the famous airship that has of late obtained somuch newspaper notoreity.

These young fellows insisted that last evening about 7:30 they had observed close to the western horizon a bright light that gleamed forth first red, then green and then a sickly yellow. They spent some time watching the light and say that it seemed to flicker and dodge about as though it were on the move. In a few minutes a cloud came along and prevented further observation. They had read of the airship, knew it was on its way to Kenton and are now sure they saw it.

It is a shame to spoil a mysterious item like this, but conscience, which doth make cowards of us all, compels the writer to explain that the weird, flickering, airship-like light radiated not from a head light but from the star Alpha Orionis, a staid, steady old twinkler that has been peregrinating about in the heavens for several millions of years more or less. This star appears on the meridian about 5 o'clock and becomes visible to the eye about 7:30. It first becomes noticeable in the central southwest portion of the sky and resembles a strong white electric light. It then takes a course towards the northwest, traveling at an unusually rapid rate. As it begins to sink, the atmospheric conditions cause it to appear of a dull, reddish hue on the under side and green on the upper side, the central portion being white.

SEEN AT DUNKIRK.

The Airship Was Near That Place
Last Night and Certain Citizens
Could Hear Talking.

Special to the NEWS-REPUBLICAN.

DUNKIRK, O., April 16.--The airship that was seen at Marion, Indiana, yesterday passed over Dunkirk at 8:15 last night, going east at a rapid rate. Willis Mahon, ex-Marshal French and several other citizens saw it. They say it was so near the earth that you could hear men talking in it. The affair looked ~~like~~ as large as a wagon bed and had something like wings stretching from each side and a propellor at each end. On the front was a red light while on the rear was a greenish-yellow lamp. Considerable excitement was created here when it was learned that Dunkirk had had a visit from the air navigator.

Probably the light seen by the Kenton young men might have been the air ship after all but we are led to believe that the Dunkirk people are merely trying to create a little excitement and thus boom Dunkirk. Ada and Forest will no doubt feel slighted now that they didn't have a visit from the aerial navigator.

(Kenton News-Republican, April 16)

THE MYSTERIOUS SHIP

WHICH PEOPLE HAVE SEEN FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.

8

Floating Over Their Housetops, is observed
Near Lancaster Last Night, and One of the Occupants
Leaves a Strange Message With a Farmer.

"If I didn't see that air ship last night," said Byron Rutter to an EAGLE representative this morning, "it was a spectral invention painted with natural exactness in the vaults of heaven and there issued from it the sound of voices like those of human beings although the distance seemed so great that it reached me in a low, inarticulated rumbling from which nothing intelligent could be deduced."

"I will tell you how it was. Billy Schneider, you know Billy don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, Billy and I were up in the northern part of the county looking at some cattle. You know the night was cloudy, and only occasionally did the moon peep out from behind some large embankment to smile in ghostly radiance on the earth below.

"It was during one of these spells, as we were driving along slowly that a dark shadow crossed the road immediately in front of the horse.

"I am not superstitious and never allow any thing to rattle my brain and for this reason, perhaps, I did not cry out in surprise or alarm. I just turned in the buggy and looked at Billy, and he was looking at me with an expression of inquiry over his countenance that spoke plainer than words could express that his thoughts were similar to mine.

"...at first I was half inclined to think that I had dozed off and dreamed that the ship was floating over me, but when Billy turned to me with the puzzled expression I knew that I was very much awake and the shadow was an actuality.

"We stopped the horse and both jumped out and we could just make out a dark object disappearing behind a rift of clouds. It was inclined at an angle of about 45 degrees, as though a landing had been made at some place not very far distant and they were ascending to a point above the lower wind currents.

"The thing was a great big massive structure in the shape of a cigar and seemed to be propelled by two pairs of large canvass wings. It moved with considerable velocity and seemed to be well under control.

"We did not see the headlight, which most of the Indiana people claimed that they had seen, but there might have been one attached that escaped our observation, as the thing was going upwards and away from us.

"After the ship had disappeared, we continued down the road and met a group of men. We made inquiry if they had seen the mysterious aerial monster, and they all replied that they had. One of the men stated that his attention was first attracted to the mysterious contrivance by noticing a large cigar-shaped monster rising slowly from one corner of his farm. He ran towards it and distinctly saw six or seven faces looking over the top of the car, and could distinctly hear their voices as they conversed with one another.

"What did they say," I eagerly inquired.

"Oh nothing much," replied the farmer, "only one old fellow leaned away out over the side and yelled loud enough to rip the canvas wings: 'if you see a couple of air ship prevaricators coming down the road, just correl them and I will stop tomorrow night and take them away.'" }

AIR SHIP CAUGHT IN CINCINNATI

It Is Photographed for the Commercial Tribune.

ON EXHIBITION TODAY

Old Trick of the Camera Explains the Hoax.

OTHER PICTURES TAKEN

A NATIONAL JOKE THAT IS GROWING OLD

SHIP'S TRAVELS YESTERDAY

The airship has arrived in Cincinnati. It was photographed for the Commercial Tribune while in full flight, and is at this identical moment in the Commercial Tribune counting room, where any one who cares to look at it may do so.

The airship in the Commercial Tribune counting room may not be the only one on earth, but it is as real as that which has been seen in so many different parts of the country by so many different people who do not own telescopes. It is a matter of record that not a single astronomer has seen the navigator of the air.

* The correspondents of the country have shown a wonderful lack of cooperation. On one day the ship was sighted at Topeka, Kan., at Cartersville, Ill., and at Muncie, Ind., at the same time.

Photographs ad lib. have been obtained and exhibited as proof that the airship really had been seen.

The joke was getting a bit stale, so the Commercial Tribune decided to try a little camera manipulating itself.

The Wily Camera.

For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, the photographic camera is peculiar. It can give a man any number of heads, can make him face himself, stand on his own head and perform a thousand curious feats, all by the simple changing of the focus, or the position of the camera.

The Commercial Tribune has a photograph of the airship. It is a genuine photograph, and copies of it may be seen on exhibition in the Commercial Tribune counting room. The negative has not been touched or changed in the slightest degree and it is a bona fide photograph of a real airship. The only apparent deception is that of distance. The airship looks as if it were a mile or two up in the air, whereas it was at the time of taking of the photograph just eight feet and six inches from the earth by actual measurement.

How It Was Done.

Two pieces of cardboard were cut out in accordance with the popular idea of an airship. These two bits of cardboard were fastened together by a bit of slate-colored silk, which makes no impression on the photographic plate. The cardboard was rubbed with a lead pencil to dull its color, and the whole contrivance was hung by a bit of slate-colored silk to the end of a broomstick, about eight feet in the air and about the same distance from the camera.

Taking the Photograph.

The camera was pointed toward the sky so as to throw the top of the building next door (Colonel Nelson's residence in Newport) well toward the bottom of the plate. At the same time the airship was swung into position so as to show against the background of the sky. With that infinite depth behind it, it looked as if it might be well up toward the sun. An exposure of a fraction of a second over the usual time was allowed for the vibration of the airship, so as to give the indistinct appearance that is noted about any object

at great height. By the simple shifting of the camera the airship could have been shown at any altitude desired by the photographer.

A True Negative.

The negative thus obtained is absolutely true. There is no retouching, no "doctoring" nor putting in of figures. Any photographer might have developed the plate, and the same picture, as reproduced above, would have been secured.

The process used is just the reverse of that employed by the truthful fisherman to prove the stories he tells of six-foot fish he has caught....

--
AERONAUTS GO FISHING.
--

10

The Mysterious Ship Found Anchored in Lake Erie.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

CLEVELAND, O., April 15.--S.H. Davis, of Detroit, was in Cleveland today. He says he was out on his fish tug, the Sea Wing, Wednesday, headed for Cleveland Harbor, about fifteen miles from the piers. The fishermen noticed a queer looking boat about two miles away. Captain Jos. Singler, master of the tug, and Mr. Davis agreed in the statement that it appeared to be about four feet in length. It had a cabin covering about one-fourth of the deck surface. A man dressed in a checked hunting suit and wearing a long, peaked cap, was fishing from the boat. He was apparently about 25 years of age. A woman sat at his side. A boy of about 10 years sat at her feet.

As the Sea Wing neared the curious craft, to the amazement of those on the tug, a gaily decorated object which had been lying on the framework over the boat, was slowly inflated, and rose to the length of the ropes by which it was attached to the boat. It was a balloon, cylinder-shaped, about fifty feet long. Slowly the boat rose into the air until it stood directly over the tug, about 500 feet from the water. A large sword fish had been dropped from the airship. The fish was stunned by its fall, and was picked up by Captain Singler, and is now on exhibition in a tank at the fire tug, Cleveland, O.

After moving aimlessly about for a short time a sail was dropped from the air-ship, and the mysterious people were carried away by the high wind.

Mr. Davis said that the boat had a wheel similar to those on steamers. This, it is stated, acts as a propellor in the air, as well as on water.

--
AIRSHIP'S TRAVELS.
--

Seen All Over Illinois and in Michigan.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

CARLYLE, Ill., April 15.--The airship was seen here tonight, going rapidly in a northeasterly direction. It showed a number of red lights.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

MT. VERNON, Ill., April 15.--What is thought to be the mysterious airship was seen here last night by a hundred persons. Mayor Wells says it resembled the body of a huge man swimming through the ~~air~~ air, with an electric light on his back.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

SOUTH HAVEN, Mich., April 15.--The airship passed here last evening, headed westward. It was cigar-shaped, and moved with remarkable speed.

(SE)

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

HILLSBORO, O., April 15.--A number of reputable citizens saw the airship here last night about 10:30 o'clock. Red lights were plainly visible.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

QUINCY, Ill., April 15.--The Wabash passenger train which arrived here at 10 o'clock tonight raced for fifteen miles with the airship. They first sighted the thing near Perry Springs, fifty-two miles east of Quincy, and raced with it to Herzman, when it pulled ahead of the train and disappeared. The train was running forty miles an hour. All of the passengers saw it, but all they could see was two lights, one white, the other red.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 16)

11

[editorial on French newspaper's attitude--
they think somebody's finally invented one]

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 18)

THE WONDERFUL AIRSHIP
It Has Been Seen by Akronians on Two Different
Nights.

John W. Hudson, of 476 East Center street, says that one of his neighbors called him out of the house last evening, saying that the celebrated airship was floating above the city. Hudson responded and said that he could see what looked like a moving light in the heavens. His neighbor says, however, that he could distinguish the outlines of a huge air ship.

The effects of North Howard street whiskey are said to have exerted such a powerful influence on a number of residents of North Hill the other night that they were able to see the ship plainly in the heavens.

It would have been too bad if Akron had not been able to give its air ship story to the world, in view of the fact that every other town in the country has had the air ship floating over it.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 16)

12

St. Louis, April 17.--The airship visited St. Louis again at night. This time the bright searchlight was not only seen by thousands, but the object was observed through a telescope, and the outlines of the craft were seen. The person who caught this exact view of the transitor and brought it near the earth by means of a powerful lens is Dr. Loo Caplen. Dr. Caplen is one of the leading men in his profession. He is respected by all who know him, and his word is to be implicitly relied on....

Louisville, April 17.--Citizens of Russellville, a city of 10,000, say they saw an airship Thursday night. Mayor B.B. Andrews, City Clerk McCutcheon, James McCutcheon, the oldest and wealthiest merchant in the city, and Dr. Charles Forthand, men of unquestioned standing, declare they saw a "strange aerial cruiser" circle around the city for ten minutes before sailing off to the west.

Clarksville, Tenn., April 17.--Two local warehousemen, three merchants and four city officers saw the mysterious airship Thursday night. They say it was about one mile high and travelled from the east to the northwest....

TOOK ON COAL.

Wellsville, Mo., April 17.--S.S. Kettle, a prominent citizen, positively says he saw the airship Thursday at 9:15. It stopped half a mile west of the city and took on three tons of coal, then left in a southerly direction.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 17)

...Robert Hitch and family, who live three miles south of Elpaso, saw an airship in the heavens between 8 and 9 p.m. yesterday

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

*

The air ship which has been attracting so much attention in the west has made its appearance in Licking county, this state. Several citizens of Newark claim to have seen it Friday night.

(Caldwell Journal, April 22)

THEY SAW THE AIRSHIP.

Two Belated Sanduskyites Claim to Have
Seen it Yesterday.

13

*

That much discussed and variously located airship has been soaring majestically over this city. Wm. McKean and Dan Spran, it is said, are willing to make affidavit and do solemnly swear that they observed the strange aerial traveler sailing rapidly over Sandusky in a westerly direction and observed the several colored lights, it is alleged the thing displays to warn meteors, comets, planets and various other heavenly navigators of her approach to starboard or port or otherwise, as the case may be.

Messrs. McKean and Spran claim to have seen the airship between 10 and 1 o'clock yesterday morning and believe it was no illusion but the much talked of airship.

(Sandusky Register, April 17)

(1)

UNQUESTIONED

Is the Veracity of Those Who Saw the Mystery.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

VINCENNES, IND., April 16.--More than a score of citizens of unquestioned veracity saw some strange body passing over the city early this evening, which they think was the mysterious airship. It was at a great altitude and moved rapidly in a southeasterly direction, straight over the city.

Such men as Colonel M.P. Ghee, ex-Mayor Ewing, Edwin Watson, Thomas Eastham, Judge DeWolf, Scott Emison, Will Mason, and others, saw the strange aerial visitor in its nocturnal migration. Heretofore they have doubted the story of the airship, but all now admit that seeing is believing.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

14

AMONG THE HOOSIERS.

Washington, Ind., April 17.--The supposed airship was seen several miles west of this city Friday night. A dull red light, described as one foot wide and two feet long, was exhibited.

The airship was also seen at Lawrenceburg, Ind., Friday night.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 17)

THAT AIRSHIP.

--
Strange Lights Seen High in the Sky

--
Are Believed to Have Been Carried by
the Mysterious Aerial Navigators--
North Side Young Men "Drooped."

Shortly after 7 Friday night Mrs. Thomas Kyte of 509 East Thornton St., saw several lights in the sky, apparently just beneath the clouds, moving in a southwesterly course. She called the attention of her husband and daughter, Miss Eva, to the lights. Mrs. Kyte called Groceryman J.A. Rohner, whose store adjoins the Kyte property.

Those who saw the lights concluded that they were attached to an air ship, as the uncertain outlines of an object of prodigious size, resembling a balloon, could just be distinguished.

Mr. Rohner was enabled to catch only a glimpse of the lights, as a cloud obscured further vision.

Mr. Kyte's family and Mr. Rohner are firm in their belief today that the lights they saw were attached to the mysterious air ship of whose supposed journeys at night so much has been said in the newspapers of the northeastern and middle states recently.

A DEMOCRAT reporter accompanied by a notary, started out today to get the affidavits of John Hoagland, Ralph Hogan and other North Side residents, who reported that they had seen the supposed air ship two nights ago....

(Akron Times-Democrat, April 21)

STRANGER
Seen in the Heavens.

Many Responsible People
Declare It an Airship--the
Whole Country is Excited.

15

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

BLOOMINGTON, ILL., April 16.--A number of reports of airships seen this evening have been received, and are occasioning much wonderment in Bloomington. The telegraph operators at Rankin and Arrowsmith Stations on the Lake Erie and Western Railway, east of Bloomington, reported about 7:30 p.m. that about dark an airship had hovered over the towns and set out in the direction of Bloomington. Soon after this the crew of an Illinois Central train from the north arrived in the city. Conductor William Wamsley, E.M. Carter, Superintendent of Bridges, and Mr. Adamson, Chief of the Illinois Central, reported that while the train was at Woodford Station, near Minonk, about 8 o'clock, they saw an airship at great altitude and going west or northwest.

A few minutes later a passenger train of the Illinois Central arrived from Chicago. The mail agent on the train, J.P.W. Eson, of Bloomington, and William Black, train baggage men, asserted that they saw a gigantic aerial boat sailing westward while they were between Barnes and Marna Station in this (McLean) county. Others on the train declared that they also saw the airship. It was flat, of apparently perpendicular form, and carried red and white lights. Robert Hitch and family, who live three miles south of Elpaso, saw an airship in the heavens between 8 and 9 p.m. yesterday.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

IS YOUR CREDULITY
IN CONDITION FOR THE ONLY TRUE
AIRSHIP STORY?

At last that mysterious wonder of the skies--the flying machine --has been seen by Marion eyes. This is no joke. Don't smile.

For many days the metropolitan papers have been teeming with dispatches from various points of the compass where the wonderful aerial navigator has been seen, describing its appearance, lights and sounds.

Friday night H.R. Bolander, superintendent of the Ohio Bicycle works, of this city, who is something of an astronomer in a small way, was out in his yard with a mirror scanning the heavens for a glimpse of the moons of Jupiter.

At about 8 p.m. Mr. Bolander says he was surprised to see in his mirror the bright lights from a peculiar looking airship. Quickly looking up he observed that the machine was cigar shaped and had a bright, spreading light looking something like the illumination that a large incandescent light would produce. Bolander says the airship was very high up and was moving in a southwesterly direction. He could hear no sounds emanating from the mysterious aerial visitor, but says he is a little hard of hearing.

The flying machine was also seen by John Reed, the State street

railway watchman, L.B. Gurley and other reliable men.

Some might say that it must be a peculiar kind of liquor that would make a man see flying machines, but then it is well known that these men are teetotalers, and no such excuse will go with them.

The celebrated flying machine has been seen in Marion. That's settled.

(Marion Daily Star, April 17)

STRANGE AIR CRUISER
ASTONISHES THE GOOD CITIZENS OF LOGAN.

16

--
A Church Member Describes the Curious Craft

--
Baffling America's Most Able Scientists and
Revolutionizing Atmospheric Travel.

Logan, O., April 17.--(Special.)--Friday night about 11 o'clock, while a party of young men, prominent in musical circles, were out on a serenading tour in the southern part of our city, they were somewhat startled and attract [?] flash of light and loud talking in mid air, in what seemed directly over their heads. At first they thought it was a streak of lightning, but on closer investigation they found it to be some large dark object hovering over the city, moving at a slow rate of speed in a southerly direction. The party became somewhat excited and started for the city and pointed the object out to their friends. At first they thought it some huge joke, a large kite sent up by some small boys, but after watching it for awhile they noticed it settling down on mother earth, and becoming more excited the boys concluded to follow the strange object and find out if possible where it would find a resting place. Messrs. Henry Rose, Fred Friesner and Charles Wood, three of Logan's young business men procured a buggy and started in hot pursuit, and, finally when three miles below the city, they saw the strange boat within a few feet of ground, and the men within seemed to be very much excited, judging from their loud talk. The young men in question alighted from their buggy and started tiptoeing to catch the strange article, but when within perhaps 50 feet it took sudden flight to the air. Mr. Rose judged the ship to be about 35 or 40 feet long and painted black and resembled a very large boat. Mr. Wood states that it was the most peculiar-shaped machine that he ever gazed upon and says it reminded him of the plans of the famous air ship at the world's fair, only built on a much larger scale. It is the current topic of the day on the streets of Logan, but up to this hour nothing new has been learned.

(Columbus Sunday Morning Press, April 18)

*Evelyn Briggs
Baldwin*

[Professor Baldwin, the Arctic explorer, watched the airship at Cairo, Illinois, and says it was Venus. "The air strata and smoke over its face as it hung a few degrees above the horizon distorted its appearance, and as it set it appeared to slowly float away."]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 17)

WAS PLAINLY SEEN

The Airship Attracts Wide-Spread Attention.

TAKES PECULIAR FORMS

AS IT IS OBSERVED FROM MANY STANDPOINTS.

17

...

The flying machine has passed over Cincinnati!

This startling statement will come as a surprise to possibly two hundred thousand of the Queen City's sleepy inhabitants; but the other two hundred thousand will be glad to testify that last night between 12 and 1 o'clock the strange aerial ~~light~~-boat which has become famous of late, was seen passing over the city. Most of them saw it, or saw something strange in the sky, and, from the best authority obtainable, the Commercial Tribune prints this morning full descriptions of the new wonder that is startling the continent.

As the sun went down Thursday evening and the busy city prepared to enjoy itself for a few hours before taking its nightly rest, nothing seemed to indicate to the thousands of human beings who have read of the weird western visitor, that it would pass that very night over the Queen City, and that the trip would be witnessed by thousands of men and women. Unlike the city's other distinguished visitor, William J. Bryan, the vessel did not stop off and take supper. It is not a candidate for anything, it may be said in passing, save popularity and the free coinage of gas.

Felt It in the Air.

Later in the evening several people who are in the habit of having premonitions, declared that they felt that things were going to happen, and some went to their homes in order to avoid their creditors in case an earthquake threw them together in an indiscriminate mass. Their predictions came true at precisely 12:36 by the City Hall clock, which had gone to sleep an hour earlier.

Several days ago the flying machine was "spoken" near Sandusky, O., and it was observed then that she was headed for Cincinnati, with a look of get-there-or-bust in her electric eye. She got there. And she did not bust.

Suddenly there appeared in the clear, quiet, sky a small, brilliant, light moving at a rapid rate toward the south, and flying about half a mile above the level of the Ohio. It increased in size, and, almost before the astonished on-lookers could determine what they were gazing upon, it passed over the city, its great wings flapping silently in the air, its speed at least thirty miles an hour, and the sound of a triple expansion engine came from its vitals. As the thunderstruck and excited Cincinnatians looked up they all heard voices above them, and laughter and songs were also wafted down to the inhabitants. Then the great ship of the air was gone....

[lengthy and facetious stories by named persons follow--
"a huge champagne bottle as big as a house," "like a tray...
There was a steam calliope aboard," etc.]

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 18)

[Jokers sent up hot air balloons at Muncie, Ind., at 9:30 p.m., April 17. The jokers were not identified, however.]

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 19)

THAT AIRSHIP AGAIN.

This Time It Is Seen by some Upper Sandusky Young Men Who Were Going Home Early in the Morning.

18

Special to the Plain Dealer.

UPPER SANDUSKY, April 17.--What appeared to be an airship of huge dimensions was observed by E.T. Kenan, clerk in Supervisor Shineman's office, at an early hour this morning.

Mr. Kenan, with a party of other young gentlemen in this city, attended a country dance and were on their way home. One of the party on looking to the northwest at a shooting star was thrilled by the sight of a brilliant object in the heavens. The party was alarmed at the sight. Finally Mr. Kenan suggested an airship and the party at once felt at ease.

The object was watched for fully half an hour as it seemed to gradually approach them. When it got near enough the lights were of very bright purple, yellow and green. The night was rather cloudy, but by the time the young men reached town the moon was shining and the outline of the huge airship could be traced. It was about forty feet in length, of the shape of an auger and had huge wings like a sixteenth-century windmill. At one time it made a dive to the earth but soon recovered itself and passed to the north and was soon lost in the darkness. It is the talk of the town today and but for the young men's standing in the community would not be believed.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 18)

SAW THE AIR SHIP.

A Motorman Who Made an Examination through a Beer Glass.

A motorman on the Main street electric line is the latest Akronian to describe an air ship. He claims to have seen this aerial wonder last Saturday night and made a careful microscopic investigation through the bottom of a beer glass. He states that contrary to universal opinions the body he saw in the heavens has the shape of a monster sea serpent and the light that glows from it is the fire spouted from its mouth. He claims to have made 16 examinations in 16 minutes...

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 20)

UP IN A BALLOON!

WENT THE THOUGHTS OF A COUPLE WHO CAUGHT SIGHT OF THE MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP.

Honest In-gin the Great Monster Has Been Sighted from Morrow County by Two Who Never Tipple.

At about 8 p.m., on Saturday, three weeks since, there was seen in Gilead township something, call it what you may, that is strange. The witnesses are reliable, responsible people, who are farthest removed from anything sensational, or superstitious, or excitable.

They are sensible, everyday farmers who, for fear of even the little notoreity that would come with their names being connected with a report of the airship, request their names withheld. But that they saw something on that night out of the ordinary there can be no doubt. Whether it was an airship or not they do not even profess to say. All there was to be seen was a great light high up in the air with several lesser ones in the rear and traveling in a northwesterly direction. "When we first saw it," said they, "it was seemingly very high up. It looked more like the headlight of a locomotive than anything else we could think of. While we watched, it came down until it seemed not much higher than the treetops. It acted as a balloon does on coming down. The big light was very red, and the smaller ones not so bright, and seemed hung out behind the large one. It must have been far off and I said to my wife that it might not even be in Ohio. There was no quick motion to it at all, but was of slow, easy motion like a balloon. The lights were all we saw. The neighbors have joked us a good deal about it but," said the man, "I shall always think that it was something unusual. It was certainly no star nor meteor, but something beside that."

This is what they saw about what they saw. The wife saw it first when out taking some clothes in. Without going in she called for her husband who came out without a coat on. The evening was quite ~~XXXX~~ cool and he watched for some time, until chilly. He went in to get his coat on and on coming out it was out of sight. Take it for what it is worth this is a plain, unvarnished account of the sight. Was it an airship or not? Who will answer?

(MT. Gilead Union-Register, May 12)

19

TALKED

With the Airship Man, But He Would
Not Answer Them--Latest Chroniclers

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

LEXINGTON, KY., April 18.--George Alverson, a butcher, and Alex Oxford and Charley Hunter, railroad men, claim to have seen the much heralded airship and to have conversed with its lone occupant. They say that they were walking on Manchester street, near the Cincinnati Southern trestle, last night, when they were startled by a strange whirling noise overhead. It was near 9 o'clock. Through the darkness the machine made a rush earthward, settling in a vacant lot about 200 yards from where they stood. They hurried toward the vehicle of the clouds, but were met by a stranger some 40 years old. He had just emerged from the machine and had in his hand a bucket, which was filled with water from the springs near which his machine rested on the blue grass. Supplied with water, he re-entered the car, and then, declining to answer any of the questions put to him by the three men, he sailed away in the direction of Richmond. Alverson describes the machine as looking like a huge, winged spider. The body was cigar shaped and had a dull lead color.

The three men were reputable citizens, and their stories were so generally believed as to cause those who heard them last night to sit up later than usual, hoping that the airship might return.



BOTH SAW IT

And Both Are Certain That It Was an Airship.
SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

PADUCAH, KY., April 18.--Mr. George Langstaff, Jr., member of the firm of Langstaff & Orme, lumber dealers, and one of the most prominent men of the city, stated tonight to THE ENQUIRER correspondent that he and his wife and Mr. Isaac Quigley, one of the best known lawyers in the state, saw the airship last night at 9:30. Editor Starks, of the Metropolis (Ill.) Journal, has also written a description for THE ENQUIRER correspondent of the ship which he saw last night an hour later below Metropolis. Both are gentlemen of unquestioned integrity and both say that by no possibility could it have been a star.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 19)

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COOLVILLE...

Some of our reputable citizens, Saturday night between nine and ten o'clock, claim that they clearly and distinctly saw the air-ship which according to the "dailies," has attracted the attention of hundreds of people throughout the west. This was in a northerly direction from our village and looked to be of an immense size, three different colored lights being easily distinguished. It no doubt, is the same as has created such comment throughout other states.

(Athens Messenger and Herald, April 22)

Wonderful Capers of That
Mysterious Airship About Ashland.

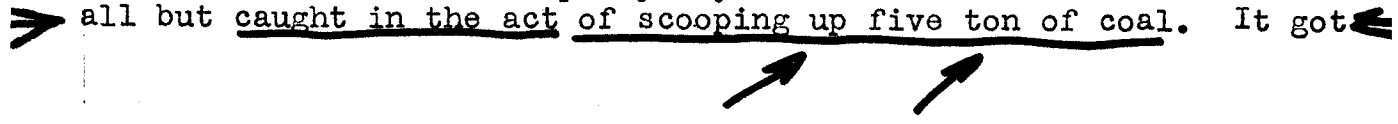
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It Swoops Down Into a Coal Yard
and Steals Five Tons of Coal.

--

Well, at last the wonderful air ship which has been seen shooting through the heavens on a great many localities throughout the country has been witnessed right here in Ashland besides having been seen from various other places in the county. Indirectly the GAZETTE reporter has got particulars from the party who claims to have seen the wonderful thing but by request we do not mention the name, for fear people might think he had imbibed too freely of spirits, something he tells us he very seldom does, in fact never or hardly ever. From the report we find the ship appeared about eleven o'clock Saturday night and was seen coming in this direction from the north-west. It was about a mile high and appeared spiral or snake-like in form with six green lights emanating from it. It swung south rapidly when only straight above town and seemed to sink down towards the earth about three miles away. It was lost sight of for a few moments but was gradually seen to arise and wheel about, taking a northeasterly direction when it appeared almost due east again from the town it again gradually settled to the earth, after which time nothing more could be seen of it.

The latest report now comes from a small town just north-west of here where the air-ship rapidly descended to the earth and was all but caught in the act of scooping up five ton of coal. It got



away with the coal however and the manner in which it did it is said to be pretty smooth. Attached to its tail was a large grapple fork, operated by a series of ingeniously arranged pulleys, which swoops down and takes what it wants. The apparatus is said to look like a large reptile of the snake species, the mouth being the grapple fork. Several miles south of here the ship was seen by a fellow in that vicinity who says it descended onto a neighboring farmer's straw stack where it was observed sucking eggs from a nice big Easter nest. East of Rowsburg again it is reported to have been seen milking a man's Jersey cows. From a circular dropped there and picked up by the fellow, it stated that "this airship is a remarkable success and is on its way from San Francisco to New York and return by way of Texas, all to be accomplished this Saturday night. The details of the invention will be made public in a few days by the inventor."

(Ashland Gazette, April 20)

Alliance persons claim to have seen the air ship.

(Canton Repository, April 20)

Mrs. Eleanor A. Woodruff, a highly connected lady, of Findlay, has gone crazy over the reports of the airships published in the papers. She went to a neighbor's and requested him to make her an airship after her own plans so she could navigate it. In the evening she went into the street and stopped all passers-by and pointing to the evening star claimed it was her ship coming to take her and her friends on a long trip. She became violent and will be taken to the Toledo insane asylum.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 20)

CRAZY ABOUT AIRSHIPS

A Widow Imagines That She Has Built a Flying Machine.

...Mrs. Eleanor A. Woodruff, a widow of good family, recently appealed to a neighbor to build her an airship, saying she had all the plans in her head, and if he would build it for her that day she would navigate it that night.

She was put off with an evasive answer, but at night she became wild, and, going out into the street, stopped all passersby, and, pointing to the western heavens, wanted to know if they didn't see her airship. She pointed directly to the bright evening star and said it was the light of her ship, in which she would take them all around the world.--Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, May 4)

[Mrs. Woodruff said to be "large and powerfully built" since "it required four men to place her on the train to Toledo."]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 20)

AIRSHIP LANDED

Took Coal and Water at East Side Pumping Station.

22

Its Dimensions and Shape Accurately Described by Water Works Employes--Did Latham Hog the Ship?

...The first time that the air ship was seen in this vicinity was last Sunday morning, and the unfortunate gentleman to feast his eyes upon it was Thomas Morris, an engineer in the employ of the Columbia Gas Manufacturing company. He caught a glimpse of it just over Steelton, and described it accurately the same day. When last seen by Mr. Morris it was going towards Cincinnati. Later that day the members of the Columbus base ball nine got a glimpse of the machine while en route to Cincinnati to play the famous Reds of that city. Latham left the train at Springfield and took a trip across country to land the machine. When he joined the players at Cincinnati he refused to say whether he caught the machine or not, but Pete Daniels said he did.

*

At all events the machine was not heard of again until Tuesday morning. This information was received by The Press from the East Side pumping station by telephone. The story from the pumping station is vouched for by the following employes: Levelis, Charles Wright, John Goodrick, George Mettles and Charles Shouder. They all agree in the statement that the air ship landed there at 4 o'clock Tuesday morning and took on both coal and water, and that the machine was in charge of a man who wore a base ball uniform. The ship remained on terra firma about 20 minutes and then started south. They say the machine is 40 feet and 7½ inches long, about 7 feet deep, by 13 feet wide. It is shaped after the fashion of an Easter egg, the egg shaped part being painted black, with the exception of the tips, which are dyed a brilliant red.... it is rumored on the streets that Latham was the man in charge of the machine and that he will have it on exhibition at the ball park when the opening game of the exhibition is played.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 20)

THE AIRSHIP
SEEN NEAR MARIETTA.

Capt. W.E. Roe, of the Barnsdall, was interviewed by the Register, Just Before Going to Press, and the Story Speaks for Itself.

"About eight thirty, last night, (Sunday) when lying at Sistersville, a light was seen by myself and others high in the air and apparently right over the river below us, though no one could tell just how far. Nothing could be seen but a large white light, too white for a gas light and not quite white enough for an electric light. It had somewhat the appearance of a small search light on a steamboat. At times there could be seen a smaller light, of the same nature, just back of the big light. The light seemed to be moving

Galton, Ill., April 20.--Aaron Watson, one of Douglas county's old pioneers and a man whose word is truth, says he was out burning brush on the night of the 19th, and all of a sudden heard a whirring sound. Looking up he saw an airship. It was sailing very low, not more than a hundred feet from the ground. The ship is about fifty feet long and twenty feet wide. He could plainly see the people in the ship, for it was sailing very slowly. He saw them dancing and could hear the music very distinctly. He said two men were standing on deck. He heard one of them say: "I wonder who the gentleman is burning brush."

They then threw out an apple which fell close by where he was at work. The apple is on exhibition at the store of J.P. Woolford, in Galton.

DANIEL STORY.

(London (Ohio) Times, April 29, quoting the Chicago Inter Ocean, April 26)

HOVERED OVER THE TOWN

23

Citizens of Cochransville, O., Make Affidavit That They Saw an Airship.

Special Dispatch to the Commercial Tribune.

SISTERSVILLE, W. Va., April 19.--Since the newspapers have been chronicling the movements of a mysterious airship the people of the oil metropolis have been watching for it. Tonight about 9 o'clock a mysterious light was seen approaching from the northwest, gliding along until directly over Cochransville, O., when it slackened speed and rested, flashing lights, red, white and green.

An examination with strong glasses left the impression of a huge cone-shaped arrangement 180 feet long, with large fins on either side. The lights seemed to be in only the one end.

After standing twenty minutes, it floated away to the southwest.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 20)

in a generally northwesterly direction, at other times retracing its course. The streets of Sistersville were crowded with people watching it. Nearly midnight it disappeared over a hill to the westward."

For so much the captain will vouch, but as to what carried the light he could not say. The same story was told by Elmer Hardy, watchman, and Litus Kinnard, engineer, who also witnessed it for some time, though the Register was unable to interview them.

(Marietta Daily Register, April 19)

24

Seen at Cutler.

The air ship was seen at Cutler, last night, by a rising young physician of that place, who recognized it at once. According to his account, it is about the size of a steamboat, with enormous wings. It had a big search light on its bow and gave forth a noise very similar to that of the gas engines at the Power House. It was moving in an easterly direction and very rapidly. It was apparently about 1000 feet above the earth.

The object was also seen by Ed Curtis and George Shearer, of this city. There are others.

(Marietta Daily Register, April 20)

Parkersburg, W. Va., April 20.--(Special.)--Seven responsible citizens have declared that they seen the mysterious air ship passing over this city again Monday night. The description of each of the queer vessel all correspond with one another, and as this is the second time the ship has been seen in this section much credence is given to the former reports. The description also tallies with those of the people who have seen the mysterious craft at other places.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 20)

OVER HARMAR HILL.

--
No More Doubt About the Air Ship--It was
Seen, Last Night, by a Prominent Res-
ident of Ohio Street.

--
If there has been any doubt as to the genuineness of the air ship stories they must vanish now. Mr. Pat Highland has seen it and stands ready to make affidavit that it is a reality. In speaking of it to a Register man, this morning, Mr. Highland said that his experience with the strange apparition took place last evening about half past eight o'clock. He was standing in front of his place, on Ohio street, looking at the sky and trying to determine whether or not there would be a frost, when suddenly just over the hills back of the Argand Refinery a brilliant light shot into view. It was moving at a very rapid rate and although at a considerable distance off, Mr. Highland had an excellent opportunity to study it. Mr. Highland said it appeared to be a sort of double light of a somewhat whiter color than ordinary lights. As soon as it got over the top of the hill it swooped down as if it was going right into the river, but when within one hundred feet of it veered off horizontally and soon began to rise and the last he saw of it was when it was disappearing behind the dark

Virginia hills. The whole space of time in which it made the flight described, could not have exceeded two and a half minutes.

Mr. Highland at the time had not heard of the famous air ship which had been attracting attention all over the county and he was at a complete loss to explain the wonderful phenomenon which he had just witnessed....

(Marietta Daily Register, April 20)

25

TOOK ON COAL

Did the Air Ship at Marietta.--Have the Proof of it.

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Some small boys, last night, about nine o'clock, sent up a white paper balloon, from the Point near the Nye Foundry. This morning there were a great many Marietta people willing to make oath that they saw the air ship, and it was seen by some of them distinctly enough to describe it accurately. To some it appeared the shape of a sea-devil from the New Hebrides; to others it had the appearance of a Chinese dragon; others thought it egg shaped with wings and some believed it egg shaped without wings, but with tail and claws.

Messrs. Weber and Stewart both say they found coal missing from their respective yards this morning and this is taken as sure proof that the "ship" loaded up with fuel here at Marietta.

(Marietta Daily Register, April 20)

IT'S NO JOKE.

--

The Air-Ship Is Said to Have Been Observed Here Last Night.

--

Last night as the GAZETTE reporter was on his way home from council meeting he met two gentlemen who showed conclusive signs of excitement and it was soon found they had witnessed what they claim was the airship, so much read about of late. William McNabb and Seth Green are the gentlemen who actually claim they saw at about half past ten o'clock what appeared to them to be an air ship, and they were in dead earnest about it and willing to swear their statements. They were on Orange street at the time mentioned and suddenly they observed an object coming from an easterly direction and high up in the air. It looked like a rapidly moving street car with a strong head light upon it. Although high up it seemed to pass just over the spring bed shop on Orange street and on directly west. A brilliant light flashed from it at intervals.

When asked if the object might not have been a meteor they said it was not and had no resemblance whatever to one. The reporter was sorry he did not get the chance to see the so-called ship, but went on his way home, thinking pretty hard about the matter and scanning the heavens over and over again in an endeavor to get a glimpse of probably another ship.

Of course people will naturally be slow to believe the reports about seeing an airship until they witness the object with their own

eyes, but from the earnestness of the two reputable men above mentioned we are inclined to believe they either saw the so-called airship or some phenomenon closely resembling it.

(Ashland Gazette, April 20)

OHIO'S OWN AIRSHIP.

Message Dropped and Reward for
Its Delivery to Edison.

26

Special Telegram to the Blade.

Massillon, O., April 22--The plain people of Massillon are now wondering whether the cloud of witnesses who declare that they saw the airship here on Tuesday, have been swept off their intellectual legs or whether after all there is in fact some mysterious craft now flying through space. Since Tuesday not less than fifteen persons have come forward testifying in all earnestness that they saw this machine, and Frank Reed supplements this information by showing a letter addressed to Mr. Edison that he picked up on his premises, reading as follows:

"On Board Airship, Bound for Cuba,

"April 20, 1897.

"To the finder:

"Please mail enclosed letter and send your address to Mr. Edison, who will reward you.

"WILLIAM R. HARRIS."

(Toledo Blade, April 22)

AERIBARQUE.

That's It's Official Name.

A Lancaster Gentleman
Saw the Airship.

And Had a Talk with Its
Chief Engineer...

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

LANCASTER, OHIO, April 24.--A gentleman who is prominent in this city and well-known throughout the state but who positively declines to permit the use of his name, lest his friends should accuse him of "hitting the pipe," stated to THE ENQUIRER correspondent today that he had not only seen the much-bruited airship, but had pretty thoroughly inspected it, as well as conversed with one of its occupants.

His story, which he told in all seriousness, is a remarkable one, and argues either that he saw what he describes or possesses an imagination which ought to insure any one a fortune.

"A few evenings since," said he, "I was on my way home between Baltimore, in the northeastern part of the county, and this city. It was between 8 and 9 o'clock. My horse, a very quiet one, suddenly exhibited signs of both fear and distress, and became greatly ex-

cited. On looking about for some explanation of the animal's unusual conduct, I saw slowly descending onto a field nearby, an object which looked as large or larger than a full-grown elephant. Fore and aft it carried brilliant white lights, which illuminated the country for considerable distance like a pair of electric globes.

"By this time I had become as badly rattled as my horse, and from the whirring, hissing noise of the descending object I had expected to hear a terrific crash when it struck the ground. You can judge of my further surprise when I saw it come to the ground not a hundred yards distant without concussion or even a jar. In the scintillating lights, which still continued as brilliant as when I first noticed them, I saw the forms of two men, and heard them conversing in

AN UNKNOWN LANGUAGE.

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"To my startled and abnormally enlarged vision, the aerial visitor, as it stood in the open field, looked as large as a barn. My first impulse was to whip up my horse, which had quieted down somewhat, and get out of the neighborhood. On further reflection, however, I concluded not to do so. Instead I drove to a near turn in the road beyond a thick growth of underbrush, where, out of sight of the machine, I securely tethered my horse, climbed the fence and went back to reconnoiter.

"I must confess it was with considerable trepidation I approached the thing, and was soon face to face with the airship and its occupants, and in conversation with them. One of them was clearly a foreigner, and it struck me that he was a Japanese, or belonged to some other Oriental race.

"He was apparently willing to talk, but his language was unintelligible to me. The other was an American, or, if not, then an Englishman, judging from his accent and pronunciation. He talked excellent English, at all events, and evidently explained to his companion that I could not understand him. At all events the foreigner addressed me no further, but from time to time asked the other a question and once or twice seemed highly

AMUSED AT HIS ANSWERS.

"The American talked freely enough, but gave me no real information. He wanted to know just where they were, and what the people and newspapers were saying about the object which stood before me. Happening to have a copy of THE ENQUIRER containing several dispatches concerning the airship in my pocket, I gave it to him to read it at his leisure. He was profuse in his thanks, and said that newspapers had been a rather scare article for some time, and that he was rather anxious to see what they said about it.

"'But why are you sailing around in this mysterious way?' I inquired. 'Why don't you let the world know what you are doing?'

"'That's easily explained. We have discovered the principle, but there are, doubtless, many applications of it, if we were to appear in public, even after patenting our principle and discovery, with the appliances we now have, it would only be a little while until other men would probably discover better forms of application and we would be compelled to divide the benefits of our discovery. We are on a tedious voyage of experimentation, and have been for more than six months. We often mingle with the world, but our discovery is hidden away, as it can be in a small compass, and no one suspects who or what we are. We pass as tourists among our fellow men.

"We are constantly making improvements. As soon as one is worked out we descend in some secluded spot, go to a town or city, and have the necessary mechanism made from drawings, adjust it and go on with further tests and experiments. At these times we are probably looked on as harmless cranks trying to

INVENT PERPETUAL MOTION.

28

Six months hence we will probably have reached the limit of possible improvement. Then we will patent it in every country, and then in every manufacturing center they will turn out the aeribarque, which will revolutionize the world."

"Do you call this concern an aeribarque?"

"That is what we call it. The name is exactly descriptive of the object."

"Will you permit me to inspect it?"

"He turned to his companion, and after a short conversation, replied:

"In a general way only. But I will explain nothing to you. If you can reckon out how it ascends and descends, or is propelled, well and good, but I shall answer no questions. Look it over and draw your own conclusions."

"The contrivance itself was a strange piece of mechanism, and stood from 12 to 15 feet high. The lower half, or car, was an oblong square 8 by 5 feet. The upper half, an elongated globe, apparently 8 feet at its greatest diameter, gradually diminishing and terminating in rounded points, its extreme length being 15 to 18 feet. The frame appeared to be a wire net work, only the wires were of an immense size--an inch in diameter on the bottom and sides of the car, growing smaller as they ascended, until at the top of the elongated globe they were not more than a quarter of an inch.

"They were joined together at close intervals and in both directions across the bottom, and ran up perpendicularly 5 or 6 feet, then curved inward

TILL THEY NEARLY MET.

Then outwards, upwards and over, till they formed the complete circle of the outer frame of the elongated globe or cigar-shaped apparatus spoken of in the papers. Inside of this upper net work was a bag or balloon, just fitting it and partially inflated.

"A very little testing convinced me that the supposed wires were tubular contrivances composed either of steel or aluminum or some new metal, clearly of great strength and exceeding lightness. A series of these tubes ran horizontally around the lower part of the car at close intervals, joined into the upright tubes, to a height of three feet. They were safety or guard rails. At the forward end the uprights were turned abruptly right and left at the height of 18 inches, and then brought together at the upper half, forming an entrance and exit to the car something like two feet wide. At this end the guard rail came no higher than the abrupt angle of the uprights, while at the other end they were uniform with the sides. At every point of contact these tubular wires were inserted into each other, while one nearly an inch in diameter, coming up independently from below, was inserted into the lower part of the balloon centrally.

"Thrown on the bottom of the car were several Oriental rugs, while all sorts of luggage, blankets, coats, canned goods and the like were stowed away at convenient points, or suspended overhead.

Near the rear end of the car was a small box-like table on the top of which were a number of knobs or buttons, very like the appliances we see in

ELECTRICAL [?????].

29

"As I was not permitted to enter the car, nor even thrust my hand inside, I could only guess as to the purpose of this table. It seemed clear, however, that it was the motor or controlling principle of the aeribarque.

"The gentleman with whom I had been conversing, seated himself at the table and said:

"'Take hold of the cross bars and lift the aeribarque or turn it over, if you can.'

"I made the attempt, but failed.

"'You are weak and excited. Calm yourself and try again when I tell you.'

"He touched one of the points on the table, and there was a hissing sound like escaping steam or compressed air. He touched another, and a tremor ran through every part of the machine, and the balloon expanded perceptibly.

"'Now try it again.'

"I grasped the cross bars and threw all my weight into the effort, but this time, machine, men and baggage didn't seem to weigh a pound. With one hand I could tilt it above my head. I begged him to tell me how the attraction of gravitation had been overcome, but he paid no heed to me, except to say:

"'Wait till the proper time comes.'

"He touched a third button and the lights disappeared, a fourth and they reappeared. One a vivid green, the other white; then he alternated them with other colors. In the meantime I discovered that he was changing the temperature of the tubular frame from temperate to extreme cool and then to 200 degrees or above.

"Just below the points of the elongated globe I had noticed what looked like two folded window shades of different sizes or shapes depending from metallic projections. He touched two buttons at once. The forward one unfolded into a rudder, the rear one into

A FAN-LIKE PROPELLOR.

"'Explain to me, my dear sir,' I said, 'these remarkable mysteries.'

"'Wait a moment.'

"He touched a series of buttons in rapid succession. There was the hiss of escaping air; the tremor through every line of the frame work; the balloon filled with a hissing sound, till it budged through the metallic network, and the aeribarque rose like a startled bird.

"'Good night.'

"This was called down from a height of a thousand feet; the propellor expanded; the rudder dropped into place and swung around, changing the ship's course at an acute angle instantly, and more quickly than it takes to tell it it had disappeared in the direction of Newark."

"And what conclusion do you draw?" asked THE ENQUIRER man.

"Why, sir, some one has got on the inside of nature at last. Don't you know that this thing is constructed on the principle of a bird, in every essential? The frame of a bird is a combination of

(115)

light, strong tubes, or bones and quills. The strongest and longest flyers have the largest proportionate bones and quills.

"We know, as a general principle, that a bird is capable of expelling all the atmospheric air from its bones and quills, or tubes, and supplying, in some unknown way,

30

A VOLATILE SUBSTANCE.

"This overcomes the attraction of gravitation, and enables it to rise in the air, with the aid of its wings, and fly away at will.

"When it wants to descend it ballasts with atmospheric air the tubes from which it lately excluded it. Kill a bird instantly on the wing and it drops perpendicularly, if the wind is not blowing. Wound it seriously and it falls at an angle. In the one instance the attraction of gravitation becomes ascendant instantly-- in the other gradually, hence the angling float.

"I am convinced that this airship not only embraces all the principles of flight of birds, but another more wonderful, and incomprehensible. The expulsion of the air from the tubular framework, supplying its place with some volatile substance; the expansion of the balloon compartment, with probably the same substance, and the lifting factor; the light, the heat, and the motive power for the machinery, I am convinced, all come from the same source, and are produced and modified at will.

"Whether this be electricity or some more subtle or powerful principle in nature, I have no idea. But seeing what I did leaves not a single doubt in my mind as to the feasibility as well as the reality of the airship. It is really less improbable than the telephone and Edison's discoveries were a score of years ago. The men I saw have evidently unlocked one of nature's ~~XXXX~~ profoundest secrets."

W.A.T.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 25)

STILL SEEING THE AIRSHIP

Reports From Towns Where It Appeared Yesterday.

According to the telegraphic reports received over the Commercial Tribune's special wire last night from places where the airships and other impossible phenomena are seen frequently, this bright, particular April bird of the imagination, conspicuously adorned with all of its unheard-of paraphernalia, was observed yesterday by "prominent citizens" in or near the following named cities and towns: Jacksonville, Fla.; Massillon, O.; Batavia, O.; Newport, ~~the~~ Ark.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 21)

THAT AIRSHIP...

...A DEMOCRAT reporter accompanied by a notary, started out today to get the affadavits of John Hoagland, Ralph Hogan and other North Side residents, who reported that they had seen the supposed air ship two nights ago. At first the young men were inclined to stick to the story that they had seen the aerial thing of mystery, but when asked to raise their right hands and swear to a written statement, they admitted that they had been joking.

Those who saw the strange lights last night implicitly believe that they were carried by an air ship.

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[Same issue has Hoagland report--John, Robert, and Ralph Hoagland, Clarence Baker and R. Gilletz(?)--corner of N. Howard and Lods St.--Tuesday night around 10 p.m.--heard a whirring noise--saw air ship moving westward.]

(Akron Times-Democrat, April 21)

A BRIGHT STAR.

The Brilliant Display Venus Makes in the Western Heavens--Mistaken for the Airship.

...For several months Venus has been a remarkable object in the western sky during the early evening. First appearing in the south-west, it has moved around until now it shines low in the northwest soon after the sun sets. About the first of April it attained its greatest brilliancy...

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 20)

It is asserted by Carl Browne that Anarchists have six airships two finished and four under way, and when all is in readiness show-ers of bombs and chemicals will descend upon the sinful, while those of the true faith will be advised in time to reach the mountains. After the weeding out process is completed the Anarchists will rule according to their schemes.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 22)

Carl Browne has received a silver medal, given him by a firm of patent attorneys in recognition of his ingenuity in planning an air ship, one that presents feasible points. Browne had hit upon some method of utilizing a vacuum for lifting purposes.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, May 13)

[Chicago preacher believes that the airship is Jesus Christ coming again.]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 21)

THAT AIR SHIP
Was Thought to Have Been South of the City Last Evening.

Last evening the people residing in the southern part of the city were surprised to see in the southern sky a monstrous light and as it gradually rose above the horizon now flickering, now soaring high into the air, visions of the air ship passed across the good citizens' minds. Frightened children scurried home and sought the seclusion of their mothers' aprons. Dogs and horses barked and whinnied as they saw the light. One over bold citizen started out to investigate and found that it was a huge Chinese lantern attached to the nether extremity of a kite.

(Bucyrus Evening Telegraph, April 22)

32

[Also at St. Joseph, Missouri, what was thought to be an airship turned out to be a hot-air balloon attached to a kite.]

(Ashland Press, May 6)

The latest report from the air ship is to the effect that it stopped at the Calamity Oil Co.'s well at Cutler, last night, and took on a supply of oil to lubricate its bearings.

(Marietta Register, April 22)

Willard Herbert got the airship scare started in this city on Wednesday night of last week, by sending up a paper balloon, supplying it with gas from a burning ~~KOHNOON~~ turpentine ball. People around here would not believe in an air ship now if one should settle down in Court street.

(Washington Court House Cyclone and Fayette Republican, April 22)

WHAT WAS IT?

--

It was a Remarkable Phenomenon if It Was
Not an Airship.

--

There is no disputing the statement this time that some strange phenomenon was observed last Wednesday night in the heavens southwest of Ashland at between eight and nine o'clock. The attention of many people was called to the sight but what it was and whither it went no one is able to tell satisfactorily. The object, or whatever it was, appeared in the south when first seen and the light was very bright; its course was westward and it grew more faint as it ~~got~~ west until finally it disappeared entirely from sight. What could be seen from here was simply a vertical line of light several hundred feet long. Of course it did not look like an air-ship but the people naturally called it that since there has been so much talk about such sort of sailing vessels of late. Whatever it was there remains the fact that it was a rare sight and a wholly unaccountable phenomenon. Nothing like it has ever been observed before. It might have been some sort of aurora borealis, yet no other lights in the north or anywhere else could be observed excepting the stars.

(Ashland Gazette, April 23)

(21A)

Muncie, Ind., April 22.--Special Telegram.--George Haskell, a farmer who lives east of this city, reports that while he was milking the cows last night the airship lit in his barnyard. One of the occupants stepped from the car attached to the ship and asked for some milk. He said that they had been without a supply since leaving Evanston, Ill. The farmer handed the aeronaut a pailful and was rewarded for his kindness by seeing the balloonist step into the airship, pull a cord, and sail away. The airship took a northerly course. Haskell is now wondering where he will get pay for his milk. He says he can prove what he says, and he will show the cow which gave the milk, if anybody doubts his word.

(Photo)

(London Times, April 29, quoting the Chicago Inter Ocean, April 26)

AIRSHIP AT MOXAHALA.

It Drops a Big Cargo in Wiggins' Wheatfield.

34

Moxahala, O., April 22.--(Special.)--For the last three nights there has been hovering over this part of Ohio something that the oldest inhabitants cannot explain. Three lights as it is seen flying, but at times when it seems to pause and take notes one red and one green light apparently the eyes of the monster (for such it appears to be) are only seen and then seem to be the head of--well what is it?

This phenomenon has been witnessed by reputable parties there and they will readily endorse this statement.

If I had the time and the inclination to "Baron Munchausen" I might send you a wonderful tale, but what I send you now is strictly true (nit).

LATER.

⊗ ("The airship" stopped here for coal from Post's bank at 9:45, but not finding it of the right quality they dropped the entire cargo in Scott Wiggins' wheat field.)

(Columbus Evening Press, April 22)

THE OHIO AIRSHIP

A Judge Beholds It and Gives His Testimony.

Special Telegraph to The Blade.

Elyria, O., April 23.--Among other well known citizens who saw the airship Wednesday night was Judge E.H. Hinman, of the probate court. The judge makes the following statement: "About 2 o'clock in the morning I got up to feed my baby, and upon looking out of the window I saw what I suppose is the famed airship. It was shaped like a 'Pittsburgh stogie,' and appeared in lights. I should say it hovered over Elyria for at least ten minutes, at an altitude varying from 1,000 to 3,000 feet. The lights were intense and glistened and glittered. If I am not mistaken it had a short blue tail, with a brass ring around it. I went to call my wife to enjoy the sight with me, but it disappeared while I was awaking her. It is truly a wonder."

(Toledo Blade, April 23)

MORE NEWS FROM THAT AIRSHIP.

An Alleged Message is Found at Lorain and Something Was Seen in the Air Near New London.

Special to the Plain Dealer.

→ { LORAIN, April 24.--The Times tonight prints a letter, alleged to have been found by a "prominent townsman," giving out some interesting points in connection with the much talked about airship. On the outside of the envelope was written the words: "Aboard the Airoia, April 22, 1897." ←

In the letter the writer stated that the ship was built in an obscure place near Santa Fe, N.M., from which place the journey began. "We have hovered over every state in the union," continued the writer, "fished in the great lakes, crossed the plains and settled on mountains and valleys." He states that the ship is eighty-two feet in length and nineteen feet wide, supported by a balloon thirty-five feet in diameter. A wheel at the stern, he states, is propelled by means of a storage battery, the wheel having eight paddles. He claims that himself, wife and child are the only persons aboard the ship.

The hull of the air craft is a wire netting covered with thin but strong oiled silk, through which neither air nor water can pass, and in shape resembles a cigar. "During a rain," continues the navigator, "we rise above the clouds and are perfectly dry." In closing the writer says they will return in a few days to New Mexico, where a larger boat is under construction, with which he hopes to cross the sea. He signs the name of William R. Harris.

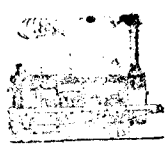
(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 25)

35

NOT AN AIRSHIP.

--
Westerville People Discover a Peculiar Light in the Heavens.

--
It Traveled Over the Town and Then Took Its Course Eastward.



--
Special to the Ohio State Journal.

Westerville, O., April 23.--Last night about 8 o'clock the people of the village, living on the West Side, were attracted by a strange light which appeared in the air in the western sky. The light appeared as a very large star, only it was duller than that of a star. It seemed to be several miles away, but not at a great height. After some time the position changed and the light began to approach the village. As it came nearer a rapid sweep carried it far southward. By this time hundreds of people were watching it. Speculation as to what it was has been rife. The distance and the height of the object, and the progress over the town completely evaded all examination by spectators. By 10 o'clock the light had retreated to the eastern part of town and every person in the village had seen the strange sight but none seemed able to explain. One party of men called at Professor Wagoner's to have him notice it, but owing to sickness he could not go out.

Dr. Haywood, the venerable astronomer, was called out, but the motion and the distance precluded his examining it with a telescope. Professor Guitner was called out and could offer nothing satisfactory.

Most people believed it to be one of the airships of which some of the papers have told the last few days, and as supporting this a large number of skyrockets were sent up as a signal to the occupant of the ship if such it could be. Others believed it was a balloon, but this was soon out of mind, for the wind at that time would have carried it directly north, while the object was moving eastward. The kite theory was proposed, but it is impossible to

ford Alum creek and if it were a kite the carriers would have been compelled to cross the creek. And besides it would seem impossible to fly a kite with a lantern attached at so great height as this object appeared.

For fully an hour longer the object kept its eastward course and finally growing dimmer, disappeared from sight, hidden either by clouds or trees.

(Ohio State Journal, April 24)

36

AIRSHIP TERROR

--

Dumbfounds the Staid People of Westerville.

--

Westerville, O., April 23.--(Special.)--The Westerville people were very much excited here Thursday evening at the appearance of a red light, moving about high in the air. Many suppositions were given as to what the light was, but the general opinion seemed to be that it was the air ship, which is reported to be traveling about in the heavens at night.

The light was anchored above Westerville for about one-half hour then took a southerly direction toward Columbus and returned in the direction of Pittsburg.

Signals were given here with different colored lights and were answered by those in the air ship by moving in order the green, red and white lights.

The appearance of the ship compared very closely with the description given in THE Press. It was witnessed by hundreds of people between the hours of 9 and 11.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 23)

WHAT WESTERVILLE

People Say About Airship's Visit There
Thursday Night.

--

Westerville, O., April 24.--(Special.)--A general exchange of opinions has been going on in our village since the appearance of a presumable airship over the town on last Thursday evening. The excitement has even run so high that many are reported to have been badly disturbed in their slumbers by serious reflections in regard to the queer light darting its rays in a threatening manner over the excited people of the town. Your correspondent has made a careful investigation of the facts pertaining to the event and has interviewed a large number of reliable business men of the town. The following gentlemen witnessed the sight and have given their names for publication: Miles Weibling, a prominent hardware man; W.O. Knox, the shoe dealer; Francis Rank, the postmaster; Bookman Bros. grocers W.M. Bonebrake, a jeweler; Levi Williams and others. All the above gentlemen saw the phenomenal appearance in the sky and hold to the opinion that it is a good representation of the airship described in the newspapers.

They were not able to make positive statements as to what the queer object really was, as the machine did not descend to earth

for inspection. They mutually agreed that if the thing observed is a fake and not the much-talked of airship the man who made the representation is a genius.

...opinions in the affirmative are substantiated by ³⁷ several letters having been found and bearing evidence of being written in the airship. Two letters were found by Cyrus Riggle and one by Cleve Boyer on Friday morning after the notable event.

The one letter found by Mr. Riggle contained shot so that it would readily descend to the earth and was directed to Arthur Burr, of Columbus. At the time the letter was written, as stated in the letter, the altitude was 2134 feet. The reading matter in the letter was a description of the journey through the ethereal realms, 40 degree parallel at 9:30 p.m. The writer seemed to be a personal friend of Mr. Burr and recalled many associations of their past lives. He also stated that the ship would go in the direction of Baltimore, thence eastward and around the globe. Signed Jim McC. The other letter was enclosed in a brass cylinder and attached to a card, directed to Walter Hartrum, of Westerville. The tone of this letter corresponded very closely with the one above described. The altitude at which the letter was written was 34 feet, nearer the earth than at the time the former was written. The letter found by Cleve Boyer and bearing his own address was enclosed in a tin box weighted with chunks of lead. The writer of this letter was evidently in the airship for it was an acknowledgment of having seen the signal lights as sent up by Mr. Boyer and kindly thanked him for so doing.

Mr. John Haywood, professor of astronomy, viewed the bright light through his telescope and stated that the object was very phenomenal in appearance, that it looked like a large bright disk, but he was unable to give any opinion in reference to its outlines as he could not determine anything other than a large disk....

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

[see Lazarus ad]

(Columbus Evening Press, April 24)

[Advertisement for Lion Coffee has airship]

(Toledo Blade, May 10)

Headlines:

The Airship Seen by Press Correspondent. He Claims to Have Approached the Aerial Cruiser and Interviewed Captain De Falamath, the Officer in Command of the Atmospheric Vehicle. Said to be Manned by Twelve Sailors and Carries Besides Them, the Commander, His Brave Wife, Two Children, His Father and a Maiden Sister. His Description of the Fast Flying Vessel.

→ [Seen by Glouster journalist at Mine No. 8 after 10 p.m. April 22 as it landed to take on coal and water.]

(Columbus Evening Press, April 23)

BALD-HEADED FAKE.

Special to the Ohio State Journal.

Glouster, O., April 24.--The story published in a Columbus paper Friday evening to the effect that the airship was seen in his vicinity and its captain interviewed by a correspondent when it was taking on coal, is one of the most bald-headed fakes that was ever sent out of Athens county. It has made the paper in question a laughing stock in this vicinity.

(Ohio State Journal, April 25)

38

THE AIR SHIP AGAIN.

It Appears to a Number of People in Washington.

The mysterious air ship was seen in Washington, D.C., Friday morning. It came down the Potomac and gradually disappeared from view over the hills of Virginia. It was plainly seen by the officers and soldiers at Fort Meyer, by the attaches of the Analostan boat club and by hundreds of other reputable citizens who are willing to make oath that it was the genuine thing. To the naked eye it seemed like an oblong balloon floating along its side, with a slight pitch in the direction in which it was going. Those who were fortunate enough to have glasses declare that it was a double-barrelled arrangement, shaped like a catamaran, hanging vertically, rocking from side to side, and often shifting its position as if it was drifting in the atmosphere. Sometimes one of the ends would be toward the observers and then they would see it fall broadside. No smoke or smokestack or wings or other means of propulsion could be detected-- nothing more than the two cylinder-like objects that were coupled to each other fore and aft.

*

(Harrison County Democrat, April 28)



That "Air Ship."

...A Leader dispatch dated Calla, O., April 24, says:

The air ship has passed over Mahoning county. It was seen by people six miles west of here, and Frank Rogers and Scott Ebert, both reputable men, claim to have seen the air ship going northwest about half a mile west of here at an early hour yesterday morning. They say it had the appearance of a cigar, with fan-shaped apparatus on the sides, and brilliantly lighted.

Though previously skeptical, people hereabouts think there must be something in it. They have the utmost confidence in the above named gentlemen.

(Norwalk Daily Reflector, April 26)

And now the airship has been seen at Zanesville. Supt. J.B. Rhodes of the B.Z.& C. railroad, together with a half dozen shop men state that they saw the ship pass over that city Friday night. Dennis Carl and Ed. Neff, two Zanesville firemen, claim to have seen the ship also.

(Caldwell Journal, April 29)

(26A)

NO MISTAKE THIS TIME

Reputable People See the Airship.

Was Probably a Balloon, But It Dropped
Mr. Remme a Message.

39

The airship that has visited several states and has startled people all over the country passed over Newport, Ky., Friday night at 8:30 o'clock and was plainly seen, so declare several reputable citizens. Not only was the ship plainly seen, but its passengers communicated with the citizens, a message being dropped from the clouds and found in the rear yard of Mr. Charles Remme's residence, at 22 West Third street. The message was written on a small linen bag, which was filled with sand, and was as follows:

"Airship Pegasus, April 23, 8:30 p.m.--Passed over Newport, Ky., at 8:25 p.m., traveling at the rate of forty miles an hour, due west. Aerometer recorded 200 miles since 4:30 p.m. Expect to arrive at Nashville, Tenn., at 3 a.m. Sunday.

"CAPTAIN PEGASUS."

The message was displayed yesterday on the streets of Newport by Mr. Remme, who is a manufacturing jeweler and a brother of Captain Edward Remme, of the German National Bank. Mrs. G.T. ~~Am~~ Pillings, of 20 West Third street, stated that she was sitting on her front porch Friday evening when she saw a light in the west that seemed to be moving about, but she thought nothing of it until it began growing nearer. She says she watched it until it passed over her house; that once or twice she started in the house to get a pair of large field glasses, but she was afraid it would be gone before she could get back. She stated it was the shape of a cigar and was very long.

Mr. Ezra Van Duzen stated that he saw the light coming from the west, but did not suppose that it was an airship, but kept watching it until it came near enough to be seen very distinctly. He then called for Mrs. Remme and her daughter, Miss Lucy Remme. They, too, with Mr. Van Duzen, watched the light until it disappeared over their house, when they ran through the rear yard to again watch it. Just as they got into the rear yard they heard something heavy drop near them, but in the darkness they could not see what it was, but spoke of it among themselves. The statement made by Mrs. Pillings and Mr. Van Duzen was corroborated by several other persons. Mrs. Remme arose early yesterday morning, and remembering what she had seen the night before, went out in the rear yard to see if anything had fallen, and there found this bag of sand and the message. There was a small break in the bag in two places, showing evidence that it had fallen a great distance. The seeing of the airship and the communication received from the aerolists was the sole topic in Newport yesterday.

--
DROPS THINGS NOW,
--

Does the Mysterious Airship
--More Queer Antics.



The airship discoverers from out of town districts have taken a new steer. The heavenly travelers, according to those veracious chroniclers, have taken a turn of a sudden to dropping things from their lofty aeromotor. This propensity, like the original man story, has come from all quarters simultaneously, and is enumerated in detail with such remarkable accuracy as to leave no doubt in the minds of any as to its truth or falsity.

*

Dupont, O., reports a man who followed the vessel of the air, and came up with it just in time to see it rise and fly away. But he found a note from the crew saying they had traveled 4,000 miles and were going to find the North Pole.

Despite their assertions the atmospherical bugbear is next seen at Newport, south of Dupont, although in the meantime Lorain, O., gets a glimpse of the thing and finds a note giving a detailed statement of the origin, navigation and destination of the bird. It would seem that for North Pole voyagers the navigators have either lost their compass or success has turned their heads.

And from Loraine [sic] yesterday the next stop in the North Pole journey was Chattanooga, where some of the good people gifted with second sight and things, saw the cigar-shaped monstrosity late yesterday evening making for the North Pole in a due so-sou-west direction as if the helmsman thought the longest way 'round was the shortest way home.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 25)

40

THE AIRSHIP MYSTERY

Call for Information.



The airship seems to be an accomplished fact, and the question is "Where is it from, and how is it constructed?" Conceding that the inhabitants of Mars or some nearer planet have succeeded in overcoming the force of gravitation, it is impossible that human life could be sustained while making the voyage to the earth. It must be the work of man, and of some one who inhabits this earth. While marvelous, it is not any more so than many other things which custom has led us to consider ordinary matters. Whoever has succeeded in inventing the airship should give the world the benefit of it. Air navigation, many think, is a question of the near future.--Memphis Commercial Appeal.

(Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, April 22)

IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS
Cabeza del Rey Don Pedro, 9 - (2.º B)
41004 - SEVILLA (Spain)

DROPPED FROM AIR SHIP.

New London, April 24.--(Special.)--The people of Fitchville, a hamlet four miles west of this place, were in a state of excitement Friday night over the appearance of an object sailing in the air. It traveled slowly and was going in a southeasterly direction. Those who saw it say it was huge and shaped like a fish. Others say it was a large balloon. It could be seen for nearly two hours.

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

41

[airship lands for repairs Friday night--exact shape of a shad, minus head and tail--aluminum bound around with strips of shining steel--two wings--passenger car made of split bamboo and aluminum. Prof. Charles Davidson invented the airship--built in Wilmington SC, landed in Chattanooga TN.]

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

HE SAW IT.

Minstrel Billy Barber is the Only Man in Town Who Saw the Air Ship.

Billy Barber, the minstrel man, is probably the only man in town who claims to have seen the air ship Friday night, and he acknowledges it without blushing. He said it was nearly midnight when he saw a dark object carrying two red lights high up in the air. It was headed toward New Boston and disappeared in that direction in a few minutes, as it travelled very fast--faster than a man trying to dodge a bill collector.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 24)

...Something Was Seen in the Air Near New London.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 25)

AIR SHIP OR BALLOON

Causes a Lively Fire in East End Saturday Night.

Although it has been asserted time and again that the stories about the airship were all fakes, the people of the east end, especially those residing in the neighborhood of Mr. S.W. Beebe, No. 1096 Franklin avenue, are paying a high premium for stock in stories about the mysterious vessel, which, for the past few weeks, has been causing universal consternation.

...the aerial monster tried to pass over Mr. Beebe's fine residence about 7 o'clock Saturday evening... the captain of the vessel that traverses only the air tried to "speak" to Mr. Beebe, and in doing so he lost control of it. It came to the ground and fell with a "dull,

[1024 Franklin Ave?] — according to other sources

heavy, sickening thud" in the alley in the rear of Mr. Beebe's house. * The ship's beam end lights set fire to Mr. Beebe's barn--at ← least it nearly did. It set fire to a lot of paper and rubbish just outside of Mr. Beebe's barn door. An alarm of fire was immediately turned in.

→ ...the airship has been burned, for the firemen could not find anything but ashes when they got in the alley in the rear...

...There are good reputable citizens living in the east end who are willing to testify they saw something fall from the skies. This something had all the appearance of an airship.

(Columbus Sunday Press, April 25)

42

The bursting of a meteor and a fragment from it caused a fire in some refuse in the barn of S.W. Beebe, at Columbus. The damage was slight. The noise of the fragments flying through the air attracted a number of people before any permanent damage was done.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 26)

SAY THEY SAW THE AIRSHIP

--
Two Reputable Residents of Toledo are Willing to Make Affidavit to That Effect.
--

Special to the Plain Dealer.

TOLEDO, April 27.--Howard Warn of the office of Southworth & Co. and his father, M.S. Warn, both reputable citizens, are willing to make affadavits that they saw the airship on Saturday night. Howard states that he rode his bicycle home through a light shower, about 11 o'clock at night, and after slightly cleaning his wheel he stepped to the door to see if the rain was continuing. His attention was at once attracted to bright lights of different colors moving rapidly toward the southwest.

Mr. Warn states that at that time the clouds were breaking slightly, and were very near the earth. The lights were attached to a cigar shaped object, moving close to the lower line of the clouds, and in the opinion of the observer the whole affair was not to exceed 500 feet above the earth, although it was much farther away from the point at which he stood. Warn called to his father, and they watched the lights until they disappeared finally into heavy clouds to the southwest.

Both gentlemen agree as to the size and general shape of the airship, and say that there was nothing to indicate the use of wings or propellers, neither were they able to see any human beings on board. Owing to the newspaper jokes that are being passed upon airships the Warns were reluctant to tell the story until today.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 28)

→ Farmers residing in the vicinity of Stout's run, near Buena Vista, are terrorized over the apparition of a wild man, who has been seen for nearly a week in the woods in that vicinity. A young son of Peter Tracey was caught by the creature some distance from home and severely beaten. Thirty armed men started out to hunt the wild man, but have not returned.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, April 28) 43

...He is barefooted and hearily nude, wears no hat or shirt and only a pair of tattered pants.

[Tracey's son was caught and struck a blow on the head which caused a gash Saturday morning--probably a lunatic.]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, April 27)

A Wild Man.

A great deal of excitement has been occasioned at Rome, Adams Co., in the past week by the report that a wild man has been roaming about in the woods near there. Searching parties have been out after him but have so far failed to catch him. One man who claims to have seen him says the wild man is very tall and almost naked and can run like a deer.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 28)

WILD MAN SEEN AGAIN.

He Wears Nothing But Hair, Which Is Long and Curly.

The wild man who created so much terror among the inhabitants near Rome, O., several weeks ago by his strange actions has again been seen. Charles Lukins and Bob Forner, while cutting timber a few miles from Rome, claim they encountered a wild man [on May 26] and after a severe struggle say they were able to drive the gorilla-like object into his supposed retreat among the cliffs.

They describe the terror as being about six feet tall and his only covering, apparently, a mat of long, curly hair. From their description of the supposed wild man he is undoubtedly the same seen a number of times several weeks ago.

Women and children are now more thoroughly frightened than ever and are afraid to venture from their homes lest they meet the wild creature. A posse of determined men will scour the country now until the terror is located and captured or killed.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 27;
Marietta Register, June 7)

FAIRY STORY.

A SUNBURY EDITOR TAKES A PHOTOGRAPH.

Snaps at a Flash of Lightning and Catches an Alleged Airship.

Rossville, Ill., April 25.--Special Telegram.--George Smith, a prosperous young farmer living west of this city a few miles, saw the airship this morning about 5:30 o'clock. It was high in the heavens and traveling very rapidly in an easterly direction. The sky was clear and the sky was brightly shining. His wife and employes also saw it and bear testimony to its existence. Rossville people have refrained telling about seeing it at night, but now our whole population will swear that said airship does soar in the starry heavens. Mr. Smith has always borne a first-class reputation for truth and veracity, and your correspondent can assure the Inter Ocean readers that there "do be something new under the sun."

(London Times, April 29, quoting the Chicago
Inter Ocean, April 26)

Special.

Sunbury, O., April 27.--Citizens of this place have read much in the newspapers concerning the airship, which, it was claimed, had been seen in different localities of the United States. Our people did not give much credence to these reports, however, believing them to be newspaper fakes. But something which occurred Sunday evening has fully demonstrated the truthfulness of these stories, or at least the most of them. 45

On the evening in question, Mr. W.F. Whittier, the editor of the News-Item, our local paper, and who is also an enthusiast in photography, wished to take the photograph of a flash of lightning, as the evening was a very stormy one. For this purpose he set his camera in the window of the second story of the printing office. The first flash after the camera was placed in position was very sharp and bright, lighting up the whole sky and seemingly so near that Mr. Whittier was not a little shocked by it. But closing up his camera he returned home, confident that he had acquired an excellent reproduction.

Monday morning he developed the negatives and was surprised beyond measure to find something besides the flash of lightning and far more wonderful, the much-talked-of air ship, in fact. He commenced at once finishing up the photos, and as fast as he finished them he sold them to the citizens, who were much excited.

Although there was such a great demand for the pictures your correspondent succeeded in getting one. The photo shows the flash of lightning, the clouds, and the outline of the supposed air ship, high up in the heavens.

(Dayton Daily Journal, April 28)

→ A FLEET OF AIRSHIPS

Passes Over Columbus Early Monday Evening.

Seen and Described by Ladies and Gentlemen Whose Veracity is Unquestioned.

The air ship or rather a whole fleet of airships visited Columbus Monday evening and was seen by reputable and representative citizens, who will vouch for the account of the visitation given here.

This fleet was seen about 8:30 in the evening and when first sighted was not more than 960 feet above the earth's surface. At the hour mentioned Mr. Samuel W. Six, a grocery keeper at 227 West Broad street, finished reading The Press and as he has quite a nice garden patch just back of the grocery, he was interested in the state of the weather likely to be visited upon the city during the night. The weather indications were the night would be clear, and as the temperature had fallen several degrees since dark, he concluded to step out and take a survey of the heavens. If the weather was cloudy then he knew there would be no danger of frost during the night. Mr. Six had hardly entered the yard when he heard a terrific loud noise in the heavens such as would be produced by the passage of a flock of pigeons. So loud and piercing was the sound that he was startled at

first and was about to re-enter the house. He could not, however, resist the temptation to look aloft, and look he did. Imagine the surprise of the gentleman when he beheld floating gracefully and with ease through the air, what he at first thought to be a monster war vessel. He could hardly believe his own eyes. He had been ⁴⁶ reading the different accounts of the airship as they appeared from day to day in the public prints, but like a great many others had doubted their authenticity. He took another glance at the air monster and was even more surprised than before when he noticed that the large ship was followed by four others, but of a smaller size. This was a poser and he determined to have witnesses to the story he would have to tell of his first sight of the air ship. He entered the grocery and called his wife and the clerk, Mr. Frank Daymuth out to take a glance at the "thing."

The parties came to the door and were rewarded with a sight of the fleet. When first sighted the fleet was coming in a northern direction, just a little northwest of Arlington, and then turned gradually to the south, passing directly over the cemetery at Camp Chase, where the bones of the confederate dead repose, and when the last glimpse was had of the fleet it was sailing rapidly in the direction of Grove City, but without the slightest appearance of being disturbed. The fleet was also seen by Mr. and Mrs. John Speece, and Mr. and Mrs. John L. Schlasman, of Lowden and Oakley avenues; Charles Birmingham of 567 Lathrop street, Willie Barton and several others. They all unite in saying that while the ships were all egg shaped, they differed greatly in dimensions, the one in front being considerably larger than the smallest one in the rear. The largest was about 80 feet long, while the smallest would measure probably 25 feet. They were all rigged out in the latest and most improved styles of sailing rigging and were painted a pure white. Judging from the amount of noise made by the ships on passing it is presumed that the supply of goose grease had been exhausted. One of the above named gentlemen says that the controlling power is electricity, and he backs this assertion by the statement that the lights attached to the ships were turned on and off at very regular intervals and that the globes surrounding them were of different shades. At times when all the lights were turned on the outline of the different ships were plainly visible. All the parties quoted are persons of unquestionable veracity, and that the ships were seen by them will not be questioned by persons who know them. A telegram was sent to Grove City Tuesday morning, but at time of going to press no answer had been received giving further details as to the movements of the fleet.

(Columbus Evening Press, April 27)

Airship Riddle Solved.

It is believed by many in this city that a solution of the famous airship, which has been going about the country for the past two weeks, has been found. For the past several nights residents near the south end of the city have been gazing at a large bright light, which to the stargazer appeared to be high in the heavens. The attraction which held their attention, and also their eyes, moved about horizontally, but it appeared to travel through the same plane con-

tinually, and those who witnessed the strange object entertained a strong belief that the airship was hovering about, being somewhat undecided just where to land. The question as to what the strange lights were was settled on Monday evening when Dr. Chas. E. Stroud, lieutenant of the signal corps of the sixteenth regiment, announced that the supposed airship was a signal kite, which had been raised by a member of Co. B. The kite is known as the Hunter kite, and when it was noticed by people who had read about the airship, the doctor was simply experimenting. If you see strange lights hereafter you will know it is not the airship, but that the signal kite is out for a little practice.

(Sandusky Register, April 28)

47

THE AIR SHIP

--
Is Now Cruising in the Atmosphere of the
Ohio Valley.

A LETTER FROM THE CLOUDS...

The airship which has been creating so much excitement in the West has at last reached this state, and is causing people to look skyward in hopes of catching a glimpse of the new wonder...

...recent events seem to prove that the air ship passed over this city last night. This morning when Agent Hughes, of the C. & O. came to his office he noticed an envelope lying on the paved street near the sidewalk. It was tied around with string and had a weight attached. He picked it up and taking it into the office opened and read it. The contents were as follows:

ON BOARD ELECTRIC AIR SHIP "BUCKEYE." NO. 5.

April 23rd, 1897.

To the people of Portsmouth: We passed over your city about 1:30 this morning at an altitude of 500. We are en route to Washington D.C. and want our friends to know that we are all well.

(Signed)

CAPTAIN AIR SHIP NO. 5.

P.S. Please hand this to some paper so that our friends will be sure to hear from us.

CAPT. "BUCKEYE."

Mr. Hughes was dumbfounded as he read this note. He had read of the air ship but had always believed it a hoax. Now that he was reading a letter from the captain of the strange craft he felt a strange thrill. He knew that if the air ship was a reality that the days of the F.F.V. and other fine trains of our great railroad systems were numbered, and that soon he and all other railroad agents would be out of a job.

The original of the letter from the mysterious air ship is now on file at this office, and to any one who doubts this story the letter will be shown as an evidence of good faith.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 28)

WHO SAID "AIRSHIP?"

The Critter Shows Up in Earnest
--Five Hundred People Saw It and can
Swear to It.
--

48

The airship has arrived!

The notice to Agent Hughes yesterday morning was not for nothing. Many people who yesterday scoffed at the story of the letter found on Market Street, last night were fully convinced that they had made themselves foolish. They saw the airship with their own eyes and this morning can read information by the yard about it.

This airship very obligingly called early in the evening. It was first seen at about half past seven, and it very soon attracted the attention of many people. A big crowd at Second and Jefferson took a square look at it, as did another at Market and Second, another near the postoffice, and still a larger crowd at Offnere and Ninth, besides a score of observation parties scattered all over town. When first it began to attract attention, it had apparently lodged on the Kentucky hills south of town. Various parties were soon found, however, who had seen it hovering over the hills north of town earlier in the evening, and over the Adams' residence in the East End, and over the postoffice.

The theory seemed to be that it had started south after inspecting this city, and had failed to reach a sufficient altitude to clear the South Portsmouth barricade and lodged there. It was almost directly opposite the foot of Market street when seen last. It was a brilliantly lighted affair, at least a score of lights being visible. The sharp eyed among the crowd declared they could see its cigar-shaped outline, and could see men moving about, apparently repairing the machinery.

A party from the West End started to cross the river to get a nearer view of the creature, but before they got to the ferry it had disappeared, and which way it went they were unable to say. There is a theory afloat that the air-ships that are becoming so common are the work of a secret organization, and are being manufactured for use in dropping dynamite and consternation in Havana.

Whatever the purpose may be, many who saw the visitor last night are thrilling with local pride to-day, to think that Portsmouth has not been left nor lost in the shuffle in this matter. We are usually up to date here, and if there are any airships afloat they can't miss us.

(Portsmouth Blade, April 28)

(3)

SAW THE AIR SHIP.

--
"Jud" Wickham Says He Saw the Phenomenon at the Corner of Willson and Euclid Avenues.

49

--
"Jud" Wickham, cashier in the county clerk's office, declares he saw the air ship Tuesday night. He told the story at the court house Wednesday and he was still laboring under the excitement of the strange thing.

"I was standing near the corner of Willson and Euclid avenues about 10:30 o'clock last night," said he, "when I happened to look up at the heavens and saw what at first looked like a headlight on a locomotive. If I had been drinking anything stronger than soda water I would have thought I had 'em sure. At first all I could see was the blinding glare and then it slowly turned around and I could see the shaft of light across the skies. Of course I thought of the air ship which the papers had been telling about. Finally I could dimly discern the body of the thing. It was shaped like a cigar and right above it was a balloon shaped affair. It seemed to be stationary for quite a while, and then it moved slowly off to the southeast.

"You fellows may think I am kiddin,' but I am giving it to you straight. I saw the air ship."

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, April 29)

THE AERIAL WANDERER

--
MANY CLEVELANDERS BEHOLD THE AIRSHIP.

--
Cleveland, O., April 29.--The Leader of this morning prints the following regarding the mysterious airship:

"The mysterious aerial wanderer that has been seen in all parts of the country east of the Rocky Mountains during the past month, hovered over Cleveland for a short time last evening. It was first seen about 7:30 o'clock, in the western heavens at an elevation of about 45 degrees. It was moving slowly eastward, and in fifteen or twenty minutes it had reached the zenith, from which position it drifted toward the eastern horizon. It was apparently a thousand feet above the surface of the earth.

"Among those who saw the strange object was a Leader representative. He, with the others, thought at first it was a comet, but all soon came to the conclusion that it must be the mysterious 'airship.' At first it appeared like a bat of light. It was perpendicular, and, to the human eye, seemed about two feet in length. As it came nearer it assumed the form of a huge kite, with lights on the perpendicular part of the frame, and at each of the outside corners. As it hung in the zenith it appeared less brilliant, being more like a collection of small lights shining through a haze. There was nothing to indicate the balloon form or the cigar shape that has been described by those who claim to have seen the 'airship' in various parts of the country. At the time the atmosphere was as clear as it ever gets in Cleveland in the early evening, and there was little or no wind.

(31)

"If this is the same thing that has been seen in other places, it is easy to understand the amazement of the people, for there is something mysterious about it--something which has not yet been explained."

(Toledo Blade, April 29)

50

Willard Herbert got the airship scare started in this city on Wednesday night of last week, by sending up a paper balloon, supplying it with gas from a burning turpentine ball. People around here would not believe in an air ship now if one should settle down in Court street.

(Washington Court House Cyclone and Fayette Republican,
April 29)

BEAST RESEMBLING A MAN.

--

Two Indiana Farmers Shoot at a Strange
Animal Which Runs on Its Hind Legs.

--

LA GRANGE, Ind., April 30.--The farmers living near Sailor, northwest of here, are considerably aroused over the appearance in the woods of a strange animal which resembles a man. It has been reported for the last two years that a mysterious animal was inhabiting the woods, but the reports were never credited until yesterday, when Adam Gardner and Ed Swinehart, two well known farmers, reported that the animal was seen and that shots were fired at it. The men report that the beast walked on its hind feet and had every appearance of a man, save the body was covered with hair. The height was that of an average sized man. When the animal saw the men approaching it jumped and started for the thick portion of the woods upon its hind legs, but afterwards dropped on its hands and disappeared with rabbitlike bounds. Gardner shot at the animal and thinks he hit it, as the animal seemed lamed. A searching party is being organized to hunt for the mysterious animal.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 1)

SAW THE AIRSHIP.

--

What a Prominent Mt. Vernon Citizen
Thinks.

Special to the Ohio State Journal.

Mt. Vernon, O., April 30.--W.P. Bogardus, president of the city council, reports that he saw the "air ship" last night. He is of the opinion that it is an arrangement floated in the air by means of small balloons, the darkness giving the effect of great distance. Others who saw the same thing are convinced that it is a "sure enough" airship.

(Columbus Ohio State Journal, May 1)

THE AIR SHIP AGAIN.

--
Attention to It was Attracted by a
Dog's Barking at Munroe Falls--
Was Seen at 9.

51

--
C.N. Gaylord, proprietor of the creamery at Munroe Falls, heard his dog barking furiously at 9 Thursday night, and went out to see what the cause was.

About a thousand feet above the earth Mr. Gaylord saw what appeared to be an air ship, moving westward at a rapid rate. The dog was barking at that object. Mr. Gaylord called the attention of his family to the strange sight.

(Akron Times-Democrat, May 5)

CINCINNATI AIRSHIP

--
A Policeman Saw It and Describes Its
Appearance.

Cincinnati, O., April 30.--Officer John Ringer, of the First District, has been enrolled among the men who have seen the airship. He said last night: "I was standing at the corner of Eighth and Walnut streets at 10 o'clock, when my attention was called to a string of lights moving across the sky. I could see one large light in front, like the headlight of an engine, only smaller, while behind this was a long row of little lights, but much bigger than stars, and one right behind the other.

"It was so high up that I could see no outline, and nothing but the lights. They moved rapidly in a southwesterly direction, and I watched them until they disappeared. Half a dozen citizens were standing near me, and they also saw the moving lights. I believe it was the air ship."

(Toledo Blade, April 30)

THAT AIR SHIP

--
It Is Traced to Its Lair (or Liar)

--
HOME NEAR SAVANNAH

--
Owner Locks His Pegasus in the Barn of
Days and Rides It to His Elyria Farm
o' Nights.

--
Perhaps the most conclusive testimony yet given as to the existence of an air ship was received by the Leader yesterday in the following letter from Mr. John S. Chamberlain, of Shiloh, O., under the date of May 4:

"The so-called airship that has caused so much excitement in this vicinity can now practically be accounted for.

"It is supposed to be the work of an ingenious man living some twelve miles east of here, near the town of Savannah. He is wealthy and owns considerable property in the West. He has lately returned

from Nebraska and since his return his neighbors affirm that he has been experimenting with an airship. 52

"It is known that he has been planning a vessel of this kind for some years. He has a large barn on his property which he keeps carefully guarded, allowing no one to enter except two strangers who came with him from the West.

"Last Friday night after 12 o'clock he experimented with it and his vessel was seen by myself and a number of his neighbors. It set the town in a commotion, and the people have watched his premises closely ever since. He keeps his barn well guarded, and when accosted concerning the airship, has nothing to say. The people of that town do not doubt that he is the inventor of it. It is supposed that he has been testing it after night, taking it back and forth between Savannah and a farm that he owns near Elyria, and that his invention having been seen and his design suspected, he since keeps it concealed.

"Last Friday evening on my road home, rather late at night, in company with a friend of mine, Mr. Hopkins, I had the startling pleasure of seeing this vessel. When first seen it was close to us and not very high in the air. It was well lighted and revealed its outline quite plainly. As it appeared to us, it was supported in the air by a narrow, oblong, cylindrical-shaped vessel, which looked to be inflated. Underneath this part was balanced, by the attachment of ropes, the machinery of the invention.

"Although sailing at an angle against the wind, the upper inflated part was turned lengthwise parallel with the wind. Queer small sails were attached to the lower part and there appeared to be several small propellers rotating at a high rate of speed and bearing directly against the wind. The upper part was about seventy feet long and the lower part much smaller and swung beneath. It labored heavily with the wind and imitated somewhat the tactics of a sailing vessel.

"When we first saw it, it was moving slowly, but the sails were suddenly changed, and it arose high in the air and was driven back some distance by the wind. After rising to a high altitude it started off in a southerly direction at a great angle to the wind. It sailed at a good rate of speed against the brisk wind, gradually descending. After having passed, perhaps, twelve miles to the south, and almost below the hills, it again rose high in the air and took a northwesterly direction, angling against the wind, and passed some five miles ahead of us. Here it again repeated the operation of rising in the air, and passed west of Greenwich beyond our sight.

"Although this vessel did not look to be safe nor practical, still it must be said that it is the best of its kind, and will win fame and perhaps fortune for its inventor."--Cleveland Leader.

(Ashland Press, May 13)

SAW THE AIRSHIP.

--

Officer Will Ries Gets a Good View
of the Mysterious Airship.

--

Officer Will Ries was telling the C. & E. men this morning of the good view he got of the airship last night. It was coming from

(31)

the East and passed within two hundred yards of the C. & E. depot. Ries says its was shaped like a huge cigar and had a bright red head light. It probably intended to stop at the C. & E. and take on coal but seeing the officer's brass buttons was scared out and changed its course.

(Kenton News-Republican, May 3)

MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP

53

--
Edison Denounces It as a "Pure Fake"
--Thinks It Absurd.

...
"When an airship is made it will not be in the form of a balloon. It will be a mechanical contrivance, which will be raised by means of a very powerful motor, which must be made of very light weight... Their success may come. I am not, however, figuring on inventing an airship. I prefer to devote my time to objects which have some commercial value. At the best, airships would only be toys."

(Bucyrus Evening Telegraph, May 5)

[Arkansas to present clause in state commerce law to include taxation of airships that have been reported.]

(Cincinnati Enquirer, May 5)

If airships become real facts we may have some trouble about collecting tariff duties. Smuggling would simply be out of sight.

(Mt. Gilead Union-Register, May 19)

The South and West are greatly stirred up over a supposed airship or aerial machine of some kind that has been seen in the heavens. Excitement is useless. It may only be a stray postmastership or other federal appointment looking for a place to light.

(Marion Daily News, April 12)

That "western air-ship" is probably only the last remnant of McKinley's majority of last fall sailing away to the empyrean regions where the ancients supposed the pure element of fire existed.

(Zanesville Daily Signal, April 14)

Kenton Dem.: Farmers in the vicinity of Wolf Creek are considerably excited by the existence in the woods of that locality of what is thought to be a wild cat. The animal has been seen several times and an attempt made to kill it. It is a ferocious looking animal, and dashes about in an alarming manner, and when come upon suddenly, sounds terrible cries and rapidly disappears. A diligent hunt is being made. It may soon be killed.

(Bluffton News, May 6)

A PANTHER

Attacks Farmers Who Venture Out
After Night--Hunting Parties After
the Beast.

54

Special Dispatch to the Enquirer.

CARROLLTON, OHIO, May 4.—The residents of the peaceful valley of Perry Township, south of this city, are terrorized over the appearance of a large panther which had been killing sheep, hogs and cattle and frightening the people until they have adopted the good old pioneer style of wearing arms and a frightened look. Arms of all descriptions from the heirloom musket to corn cutters are carried by the badly frightened residents...

At Lamartine Emanuel Hendrick Jr., a young farmer of that section, was returning home from that town, and while passing through a small wood he was confronted by what he thought was a dog which uttered a piercing screech and made a leap for the now thoroughly terrorized young man, who defended himself with the whip and a large knife. Numerous applications of the whip kept the panther at bay after several unsuccessful attempts to leap into the carriage. Whipping the frenzied horses into a mad run he was pursued over three miles before the panther was outdistanced.

Heavily armed hunting parties are scouring that part of the country in search of this animal, which has so terrorized the good farmers who have neglected their spring labors.

(Cadiz Sentinel, May 9, 1895)

MORE AIRSHIPS.

Another One Was Seen Last Evening by Two
Reputable Citizens--They May Have
Been Paper Balloons.

Another airship has been seen.

L.M. Woolwine, a traveling man of Nashville, Tenn., was standing on the corner of Seneca and Superior streets at about 7:45 o'clock last night when he espied two exceedingly bright lights proceeding through the heavens in a southwesterly direction. He immediately called the attention of several passers by to the phenomenon, and they unhesitatingly pronounced it to be the airship. The outline of the ship was not visible, owing to the darkness, but the light at each end indicated its position. Mr. Woolwine stated that the ship seemed to be floating along at about four or five miles an hour, although the distance might have made the speed appear less than it really was. Mr. S.B. Sloss, proprietor of the Hotel Imperial, also saw the ship, his story coinciding with Mr. Woolwine's.

Several bright geniuses throughout the city have lately sent up paper balloons and the like, and an epidemic of airships will probably follow if the practice keeps up!

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 5)

STILL ANOTHER WITNESS.

George W. Edmondson Declares He Also
Saw the Airship Tuesday Night--
His Description.

55

--
In addition to the testimony of L.M. Woolwine, the traveling man, and Mr. S.B. Sloss, proprietor of the Hotel Imperial, in regard to the airship seen Tuesday night, Mr. George W. Edmondson, the well known photographer, tells of the appearance of two very bright lights in the western sky, which, he says, were making their way with uniform rate towards the southwest. He says that at first he could see only one light, but that gradually two lights were disclosed as one swung around from behind the other. He further states that the lights took a sudden dip, as if the ship pitched violently and the fact that they went with the same velocity and took exactly the same path in the air persuades him that they were not ordinary balloons. Mr. Edmondson was walking past the Public library at the time.

This statement exactly coincides with the story of Woolwine and Sloss. As there is no possibility for collusion and as Mr. Edmondson is such a well known and respected citizen, the affair remains unexplained.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 6)

AIRSHIP

--
Said to Have Been Seen Passing Over
This City Last Night.

--
A number of people on Garfield place saw the airship last night about 9 o'clock, and are willing to make affidavit that they have sighted the mysterious navigator that has been creating so much excitement over the country. Dr. Louis Domhoff, 112 Garfield place, made a drawing of the light, which he describes as egg-shaped, red in color and appearing as though a portion of it was covered with a curtain, the rays escaping in the center and at each end.

It came from the direction of Price Hill and passed in a southeasterly direction, disappearing in about five minutes, and, so far as he was able to approximate, covered a distance of about 20 miles in that time, moving in a zigzag course, first up, then down. Conductor J.C. Gaupel, on the Monmouth-street car line, also saw it. W.J. Klein, an attorney in the Mitchell Building, and Fred Porter, of the Methodist Book Concern, and a number of others say they saw and watched the curious aeronaut.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, May 5)

WILD ANIMAL

--
Prowling About Chillicothe Routs
Dogs and Scares Many People.

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE ENQUIRER.

CHILLICOTHE, OHIO, May 7.--The west end of this city is greatly alarmed over the presence of some sort of wild animal which makes his home in the thickets along the Scioto, and which has been seen

prowling around the edges of town. A number of employees at the driving park have seen it, and describe it as being about four feet long, low, large head, short legs and big feet and light brown or yellowish in color.

Dogs sent after the animal come back bleeding and torn, and will not follow it again. The horses at the park snorted in terror and sweated with fear at night. Small animals have been killed and some people are afraid to go out at night.

(Cincinnati Enquirer, May 9)

THE AIRSHIP.

56

--
"Jud" Wickham Has Described Its Identity--A Toy Balloon with Lanterns Attached.
--

"Jud" Wickham, cashier in the county clerk's office, has solved the airship mystery. Late Wednesday night, by the light of the moon, he was at work in his pansy bed when he happened to look heavenward and observed a one-eyed monster directly above his head. Of course the first thing "Jud" thought of was the airship, and he rushed into the house to get his field glasses. With the help of these he was able to study the thing very thoroughly.

The airship proved to be a toy balloon of large dimensions. A lantern with a reflector was attached to the base of it. On both sides of the balloon were large conical shaped affairs, which, through the powerful glasses, appeared to be constructed of some flimsy material, probably tissue paper. At the apex of the balloon was a small flag and all along the conical shaped side attachments were smaller balloons. The "airship" was traveling with the wind, rising, falling and moving rapidly and slowly, according to the velocity of the breeze. The affair was high up in the air.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 7)

AN AIRSHIP ROMANCE.

--
Workmen in the Waterworks Tunnel Credited with Having Seen One.
--

The airship has been seen once more. At least employees of the waterworks department say the men working on the tunnel saw it sink into the lake a few nights ago.

It was time for a new shift to go down. As the force stood at the top of the shaft the cigar shaped mechanism, brilliantly lighted was seen in the distance. Frank Kosterling, tunnel inspector, is charged with being the first to notice it.

According to the story told in the city hall Thursday the ship descended gradually from the sky to the water's surface, then floated off and disappeared in the distance or was submerged. Kosterling denies the soft impeachment and came down to tell Supt. Kingsley it was all a joke. He does not believe in airships and thinks no one else saw this one.

Waterworks employes tell all sorts of airship jokes. Kosterling claims they did so in this instance and will make it warm for the originator.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 7)

57

AN EXPLANATION OF THE AIRSHIP.

...were toy balloons which alleged jokers have been sending up for the last few nights, having attached to them Japanese lanterns..

...It is fair to presume that no airship exists. Indeed no letter of patent has been issued from the Washington patent office on such an invention during the last few weeks....

...They have seen, through a trick of the brain, the progress of science, crowned in this latter day of the century, by the realization of aerial navigation.... they have seen the airship as a result of what is known to psychologists as auto-suggestion.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 9)

SAW THE AIR SHIP.

Two Reputable Citizens of the Falls

See it...

Correspondence of Beacon and Republican.

CUYAHOGA FALLS, May 6.--The air ship has been seen at the Falls and by people of the highest integrity and veracity. William J. Rattle and R.H. Lodge both claim to have seen the aerial travellers and it is said that some of the patients at the sanitarium have seen it several times.

(Akron Beacon and Republican, May 6)

[facetious account of landing at Cardington with occupants on Thursday]

(Mt Gilead Union Register, May 12)

THE AIR SHIP.

--

Cincinnati People Say They Saw it Saturday Night.

--

CINCINNATI, May 8.--(A.P.)--About 8 o'clock tonight what is supposed to be an air ship sped across this city from the southeast to the northwest at a great height and with incredible speed. It showed a brilliant light. Some who saw it are unable to describe its form, and others say it was cigar-shaped. It was observed by reputable citizens in East Walnut Hills, Mount Auburn and from the Esplanade and other places in the city. The speed was not less than 100 miles per hour. This is no fiction. Some strange object passed over the city high in the air.

(Canton Repository, May 9)

THAT 'ERE SHIP.

Several Norwalkians saw the supposed air ship Sunday evening about 8 o'clock, or at least they saw a mysterious bright light and what appeared something like a balloon, sailing through the air, in a northerly direction. We would advise those that saw it, though, not to wager anything that it was an air ship, for perhaps it was a large paper balloon which some of Norwalk's practical jokers contemplated sending up that evening.

(Norwalk Daily Reflector, May 11)

58

THAT AIRSHIP AGAIN

Two Norwalk Young Men Claim to Have Seen the Mysterious Aerial Navigator.

Special to the Plain Dealer.

NORWALK, May 10.--The famous airship was seen passing over this city last night. Mr. Abe Parker, a well known young man of this city, says he saw it, and he describes it as follows:

"It appeared to be but a little higher than the Glass block, and was moving very slowly. It was about 8 o'clock when I saw it moving along. The lights were very bright and must have been of an electrical origin. They were of two colors, white and red. As well as I can remember, there were ten or twelve of them. Although I could not hear the sound of music, there were those standing near me who claimed they heard the musical sounds most distinctly. As well as I can judge, the aerial visitor was in sight about ten minutes."

Another young man who saw it corroborated Mr. Parker's statement. He gives a description of its shape as follows:

"Newspaper accounts describe the airship as cigar shaped, but they are way off; at least, the one I saw is not of that shape at all, but round, like a huge ball. After the ship crossed Main street I followed it over a mile. Part of the way it led me through a field. We were so far from the street lights that it was quite dark. Whatever be the nature of the light carried by the airship, it is very powerful, for it cast a shadow, which I saw distinctly and repeatedly. Now, if the airship is cigar-shaped, the shadow naturally would be cigar-shaped, but it was not. It was round."

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 11)

THINK IT WAS AN AIRSHIP.

Balloon with Light Attached Attracts Attention of Penitentiary Guards and Prisoners.

EXCITEMENT CAUSED...

There was considerable quiet excitement about the Penitentiary Monday night owing to the fact that several of the officials of the prison, the prisoners and a number of guards saw what is believed by some of the witnesses to be an airship. The object was seen far in

the southwest by the parties, and it was watched as it swiftly flew from the southwest to the northeast and disappeared, about 20 minutes after being first sighted, in an easterly direction. Several of the observers are firmly of the opinion that the object seen is a veritable air schooner and are ready to give reasons for the faith that is in them. The object was sighted far in the west at a considerable elevation, variously estimated at from 300 to 1000 feet, and it resembled the planet Mars in its peculiar color of fiery red, but unlike the planet Mars, it twinkled after the manner of a fixed star. It was this fact, and the further fact that it lay in a different quarter from that which would be occupied by Mars at this season, that aroused the suspicions of at least one observer. The object came swiftly nearer and nearer and the light became more fiery red and at last took on an elongated shape similar to the outline of an acorn, as nearly as could be determined. The object passed swiftly and steadily from the southwest to the northeast, skirting the West side of the city, and seemed to be rocking, thus obscuring the light occasionally for an instant. The balloon appeared in sight for 36 minutes, when it disappeared behind the volume of smoke in the northeast which hovered over the region of the Panhandle shops.

Some of the prisoners were excited over the affair and one of them would make a sworn affidavit that he saw the door of an oven swing open and that he saw coal or coke shoveled into it, after the manner of a railroad engine. Others claim they saw two of the objects, but others still assert that the second was only a second sight of the one. The balloon, for such it appears to have been, was noticed by persons in various parts of the city and was probably sent up by some one to direct attention on account of the craze over the fake stories about airships.

(Ohio State Journal, May 11)

THE AIRSHIP AGAIN.

59

--
It Is Seen by Many Imaginative
Citizens--What It Was.
--

Mr. Frank Grant, of 134 West Second Avenue, reported Tuesday morning that he saw what impressed him as being an air ship Monday night, supposed to be the one seen by the O.P. guards and convicts the same evening.

Just. Wright, at 165 Vine street, also saw the ship. He is sure it could not have been a balloon, or a kite, because it moved rapidly and changed directions.

Several convicts in the state prison also saw it and thought they could make out the form of the ship.

Nevertheless these people were evidently deceived. Mr. C.C. Philbrick, of the American Press association, and Secretary Neville Williams, of the city board of health, saw the alleged "air ship" when it left the earth. It was a paper balloon and was sent up from a saloon near Goodale park. The ascension was very successful, and the gentlemen watched the little balloon while it described the very same course told of by those who saw the air ship. A little imagin-

ation will make an air ship out of a vigorous fire fly.

(Columbus Press, May 11)

60

THE AIR SHIP.

John F. Hopley Sees This
Modern Invention

AT SANDUSKY CITY.

He Says That It Is Not a
Fake and That

HE REALLY SAW IT THERE.

He Examined It Through a
Glass and Writes About It to
Our Readers.

Special to the Telegraph.

SANDUSKY, O., May 11.--At ten this morning a number of people claimed the air ship was in sight. As a "Doubting Thomas" I went up to the Park, a hundred feet from the office, and after some difficulty located it. Far away to the west, about one-third of the way to the zenith, was a fleecy white bulk floating in the air, sometimes lost to sight, but again re-appearing. Having observed it closely through a strong field glass, I could see it was neither a kite nor a bird nor yet a balloon, but it was something. Then I went across the street to the weather bureau where Observer Thompson another air ship doubter, got his glass.

By this I saw an object like a bird. You could see the same fleecy white centre, while on both sides stretched long black wings. It is difficult to say how far off the object was, but if it was a bird, it must have been a mammoth edition of the roc left over from the fabled ages. To me, it looked as if though the white centre were about six inches in diameter, and each of the black wings ten inches to a foot in diameter. The white centre was on a level with the black wings.

What it is I do not know, but it will be wise for people not to criticize too freely the air ship myth until more is found out. In my opinion, although like a bird, it was far too distant to be a bird, for it would be harder to believe a bird exists at least sixty to eighty feet from tip to tip than to believe in the air ship. Whatever it was, judging from distance, it was something floating in the air, a mile or two high and twenty mile distant, that was at least sixty to eighty feet in size.

As I never drink and have not believed in the air ship, my opinions are not biased.

JOHN E. HOPLEY.

(Bucyrus Evening Telegraph, May 11)

Airship in Ironton.

Ironton Register.

It may not be generally known that an airship is building in Iron ton. There is. It is not merely a photograph, but the genuine article. A Register reporter has been admitted to the sacred precincts of the workshop where the hand of genius is molding its mysterious shape, and has gazed upon its strange form. The airship is not a new idea, but the development of years of study, and the one now building is being most carefully constructed, after numerous experiments with mechanism and materials. And what is more, the inventor has the evidences of ultimate success, for recently, in the quiet hours before day, he took his machine, or rather, a rude model of it now being improved upon, to the old fair grounds, and there alone, at daylight, soared in the air for a hundred yards, twenty feet from the ground, and while in the air, turned about and returned to the point of starting. With this much attained, the inventor gathered up his model and retreated to his workshop, encouraged to proceed with the larger and stronger machine which he is now making, and upon the wings of which he hopes some day to fly away to fame and fortune.

(Bellefontaine Republican, May 14)

A PASTURE FULL OF FISH.

61

Farmer Living Near New London Makes a Surprising Discovery.

Special to the Plain Dealer.

NEW LONDON, May 15.--After one of the heavy storms of the week Mr. George Yarker, a farmer living near New London, described that a part of a field near the house was covered with fish. The field was used as a pasture, and on a space covering nearly an acre of ground were found hundreds of fish, all of one variety, what are commonly called 'bull-heads,' ranging in length from one to six inches. Yarker lives a mile from any stream. The occurrence is explained by the fact that a ~~XXXX~~ large waterspout burst over the field.

(Cleveland Plain Dealer, May 16)

[Facetious account of an airship landing near Bellefontaine--men from Mars get out, who turn out to be George Washington, Patrick Henry, Roger Sherman and Anthony Wayne--they said they had come back to see how the government they had framed was doing--account signed A DELIGHTED RUSTIC.]

(Bellefontaine Republican, May 14)

[Editor declined publishing airship stories until he found some that were true.]

(Canal Winchester Times, May 19)

STRANGE ANIMAL.

Farmers in Hocking County Annoyed by a Wildcat or Panther.

Logan, O., May 25.--The farmers in the southern part of this county are excited over the appearance of a strange animal. Numerous sheep and lambs have disappeared. Several pioneers who have heard the cry of the

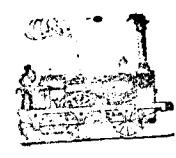
(4c)

beast at night say it is a panther, while others say the cries resemble those of a wildcat.

(Akron Times-Democrat, May 26)

62

IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS
Cabeza del Rey Don Pedro, 9 - (2.º B)
41004 - SEVILLA (Spain)



IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS

Cabeza del Rey Don Pedro, 9 - (2.º B)
41004 - SEVILLA (Spain)



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→ Igualmente:
Algunas de estas referencias son del archivo de Enrique y del de Antonio, y vienen de Ti. De cualquier modo aquí hay items que tal vez no tengas. Indícamelo y te los paso

1.980

ANGIE'S CLOSE ENCOUNTER ...

(H)

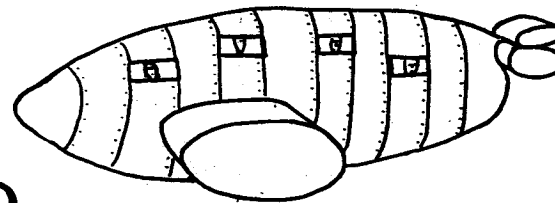
ACCORDING to a report in the *Bournemouth Advertiser* of January 26, 1984, a young girl, Angie Till, has revealed that four years previously, when living at Coleshill in the county of Dorset, she had seen a huge cigar-shaped object glide past the window of the lounge. Accompanied by her parents, David and Susan Till, she rushed out of the house but the object had vanished.

She said: "I was looking out of the window when this big object glided by at about walking speed. It was the size of a bus, and very close. Four purple bearded occupants were looking at me. My younger brother Chris was in the room, taking a book off a shelf, but when he turned round it had gone. I don't know what it was, but I believe there is life on other planets."

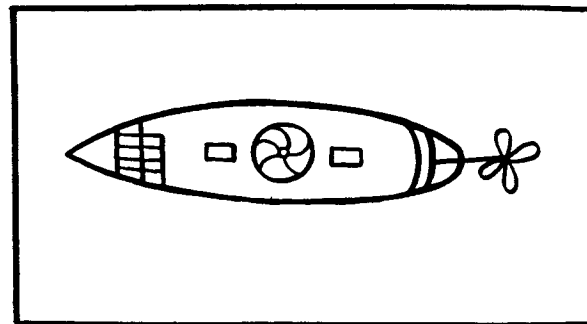
Her mother commented: "She seems convinced about it, and she's normally pretty level-headed".

The newspaper went on to mention another UFO that occurred some seven years earlier near Leigh Lane, Coleshill, about a quarter of a mile from the home of the Till family. A Mrs Val Newman (now Mrs Hanney) and her late mother, Mrs Edith Guildford, said they heard a humming noise outside the house. The following day, they found a 20-ft.-wide flattened circle in the grass of the field behind their home, with four holes sunk in the soil at the perimeter.

(Credit and thanks to FSR reader Mr. F. Turner of Cheshire.)



(H) Angie Till's father, David, made this sketch from her description of the UFO.



A newspaper reporter's sketch of an airship which passed over Nashville, Arkansas, late in April 1897.



FSR VOL 34N #4
ANO 1987
MES JN

L'Airship, cet ovni qui annonça la soucoupe volante

Etude sur la vague de faux dirigeables de 1897, aux états-Unis, à partir de 1.200 cas d'observation sur lesquels ont été sélectionnés 129 incidents précis.

Il n'est pas inutile de revenir sur la vague de 1897 aux Etats-Unis, loin de là, en effet, Jean SIDER nous apporte ici une documentation absolument unique, dont nos lecteurs apprécieront le contenu.

"Quand vous avez éliminé l'impossible, ce qui reste, même improbable, doit être la vérité."

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *Le Signe des Quatre*, 1889.

Les ufologues de la nouvelle vague, qui ignorent bien souvent leurs classiques, ont tenté vainement ces dernières années, de nous proposer des hypothèses intéressantes certes, mais pêchant par de nombreux défauts.

Disons que ce sont en général des chercheurs jeunes, qui, à l'époque des premières observations d'ovnis signalées par la presse, en été 1947, soit n'étaient pas encore nés, soit usaient leurs culottes courtes. Loin de nous l'idée de leur en faire le reproche. Il n'y a pas d'âge pour s'intéresser aux ovnis. Regrettons seulement que parmi eux, certains semblent se moquer éperdument de nombreux faits établis de par le monde, et paraissent même ignorer quelques uns des aspects inhérents au "phénomène".

Parmi les grosses faiblesses notées à propos de leurs hypothèses, lesquelles font appel à des arguments fumeux, ambigus, décousus, évanescents, quand ils ne sont pas absurdes, nous avons relevé celles-ci :

- Absence de références à un nombre important de schémas développés par le "phénomène". Seul l'accent est mis sur certains aspects servant la proposition avancée, tandis que ceux qui la déprécie sont sciemment passés sous silence.

- Ignorance ostensible de nombreux "cas forts", qui réduiraient à néant l'hypothèse présentée.

- Limitation dans l'espace et le temps pour ce qui concerne les cas cités à l'appui de l'argumentation soutenue.

- Insouciance vis-à-vis des sources. Beaucoup de ces personnes ne se fient qu'aux revues et livres spécialisés, éléments contenant pas mal d'erreurs de retranscription, de datation, voire de traduction.

D'une façon générale, les chercheurs qui ont avancé des solutions à partir d'un modèle socio-psychologique, d'un inconscient collectif, d'un phénomène psycho-physique, et autres théories nébuleuses du même style, se sont référés essentiellement à des événements s'étant produits après 1947, et ont négligé, à tort, ceux ayant pris place avant cette date, et quand c'est le cas, nous avons immédiatement constaté qu'ils ignoraient l'essentiel de leur sujet.

Nous n'irons pas jusqu'à citer des noms. La revue qui nous fait l'amitié de nous publier préfère que nous n'entrions pas dans ce genre de détails. Mais les vieux routiers de l'ufologie les connaissent bien et ils pourront se passer d'une telle énumération :

Nous verrons ensemble grâce à cette modeste étude, que le "mythe" du phénomène ovni n'est pas aussi moderne que l'a prétendu le grand psychologue suisse Carl Jung, nous nous faisons fort de le démontrer, en faisant appel à des témoignages émanant de personnes qui appartenaient à des sociétés différentes, des nôtres, et dont le mode de pensée, les processus de raisonnement, ainsi que la notion de l'univers, furent parfois diamétralement opposés aux concepts de nos contemporains.

D'autre part, nous démontrerons que toutes les affaires citées entrent tout à fait dans certains schémas développés par le phénomène ovni de notre époque, relevant d'une forme de gnose apparemment identique.

Nous allons donc vous proposer un parallèle entre le passé et le présent, à presque un siècle d'intervalle, en vous soumettant des "schémas"

L, EN - Feb - 83

que développèrent les "airships" de la fin du siècle dernier. Le lecteur est averti que nous nous sommes arrangé pour obtenir la totalité des versions originales actuellement disponibles, auprès de nos divers correspondants américains. L'étude ci-après a été établie à l'aide d'une sélection opérée sur 1.200 cas environ que nous avons mis en fiches. Il nous en reste encore 500 non encore traduits, et notre principal correspondant aux U.S.A. continue de fouiller les bibliothèques et les collections de journaux, dans une prospection qu'il poursuit depuis sept ans.

Afin de ne pas allourdir ce texte déjà très chargé, nous avons choisi de ne pas citer des cas de notre époque. Le lecteur assidu auquel s'adresse cette prose, n'en a nul besoin, et il pourra très facilement établir le rapprochement avec des affaires de notre temps, compte tenu de l'abondante littérature qui leur a été consacrée jusqu'ici.

Ce parallèle que le lecteur fera de lui-même à partir de ses propres connaissances, lui permettra de se rendre compte très facilement combien il est naïf et puéril d'imaginer de nos jours que de tels événements puissent être imputables à des facteurs psychiques, mythiques ou parapsychologiques. Ces théories ont peut-être présenté quelque intérêt, mais à partir du moment où elles ne s'appliquent pas à Tous les faits établis et qu'elles ignorent délibérément la plus grande partie des "schémas" qui font la particularité des phénomènes ovnis, elles n'ont pas la moindre valeur sur le plan scientifiques pur. Du reste, les solutions présentées jusqu'à maintenant, représentent davantage des exercices intellectuels plutôt que des hypothèses scientifiques, relevant d'une sorte de "philosophie du machin", faisant partie d'un folklore très en vogue depuis quelques années, et qui ont tendance à nous éloigner du mystère au lieu de nous en rapprocher.

A noter que pour ce qui est de 1897, les ouvrages de langue française ne leur consacrent que quelques pages représentant au bas mot une cinquantaine de cas, Michel Bougard ayant été le plus courageux dans ce domaine dans son livre "La Chronique des Ovnis", J.P. Delarge, Paris, 1977.

- Ce qui rend caduque toute étude à partir d'un aussi petit nombre d'affaires constituées, d'ailleurs, de grossiers canulars pour la plupart !

Schéma conditions météo :

L'airship de 1897 fut souvent associé à Vénus par les scientifiques et certains journalistes, ou

encore à des corps célestes tels Alpha d'Orion; Mars, des météores ou autres bolides, etc... Cette explication fut à la base de la négation du phénomène. Et pourtant...

12 AVRIL, Soir, Baraboo, Wisconsin :
"Des cheminots ont signalé avoir vu l'airship à Baraboo... Le ciel était complètement bouché, il pleuvait à verse et aucune étoile n'était visible" (*"Chicago-Times-Herald"*, Illinois, 14 Avril 1897, page 2)

12 AVRIL, Soir, Haughville, Indiana : "...
Lumières extrêmement brillantes, ... Ciel couvert d'épais nuages... Aucune étoile en vue... Seule, la lumière mouvante fut visible..." (*"The Evening-Republican"*, Columbus, Indiana, 13 Avril 1897, page 4).

13 AVRIL, Soir, Davenport, Illinois : "*Les passagers du ferry-boat venant de Davenport ont été affirmatifs. Ils ont vu l'airship peu après 20 h 00 hier soir... Comme le ciel était complètement bouché par les nuages cela rend impossible une confusion avec une étoile... Après quelques évolutions erratiques, la lumière s'éleva soudainement et disparût à grande vitesse*". (*"The Rock-Island-Argus"*, Rock-Island, Illinois, 14 Avril 1897, page 5).

13 AVRIL, Soir, Cabery, Illinois : "*L'airship a été vu cette nuit vers 21 h 30. Il se déplaçait très vite dispensant une lumière rouge... L'idée que cela pouvait être un corps céleste est à exclure, car le ciel était couvert, et aucune étoile n'était visible...*" (*"Galveston-Daily-News"*, Galveston, Texas, 17 Avril 1897, p. 2).

Schéma "forme géométrique"

L'airship de 1897 fut souvent décrit comme étant de la forme d'un cigare. C'est le schéma de forme majeur. Mais d'autres formes furent signalées. A noter que nous n'avons pas pu trouver une seule description pouvant être rapprochée du vaisseau imaginé par Jules Verne dans "Robur-le-Conquérant", dont la version anglaise fut publiée aux Etats-Unis en 1886. Désolé, mon cher Bertrand Meheust, mais l'association que vous avez faite dans votre livre "Science-Fiction et Soucoupes Volantes" est inappropriée en ce qui concerne ce point. La forme cigaroïde fut le schéma majeur des appareils vus à très basse altitude. Haut dans le ciel, on voyait souvent... autre chose, jugez-en plutôt :

- 10 Avril, soir, Marshfield, Wisconsin : "... A travers des jumelles, sa forme conique fut discernée, se déplaçant à belle vitesse..." ("Milwaukee-Sentinel", Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 11 Avril 1897, p. 1).

- 11 Avril, midi, Bloomington, Illinois : "... Il se trouvait à haute altitude, de forme plate, un peu comme un gros morceau de toile jaune..." ("Bloomington-Pantagraph", Illinois, 12 Avril 1897).

- 11 Avril, soir, Decatur, Illinois : "... Il se déplaçait à un degré élevé de vitesse, et ressemblait à deux cigares monstrueux munis de trois brillantes lumières..." ("Evening-Republican", Decatur, Illinois, 12 Avril 1897)

- 11 Avril, soir, Emporia, Kansas : "... Il se déplaçait rapidement contre un vent fort, et sa lumière avait la forme de la lettre "A"..." ("St-Louis-Republic", St-Louis, Missouri, p. 10)

- 11 Avril, soir, Lacon, Illinois : "... Il ressemblait à une baleine volante..." ("Marshall-County-Democrat", Lacon, Illinois, 15 Avril 1897)

- 12 Avril, soir, Moline, Illinois : "... Certains déclarèrent avoir pu discerner ses contours en forme d'entonnoir... Il semblait se déplacer à un grand degré de vitesse..." ("Moline-Dispatch", Illinois, 13 Avril 1897).

- 12 Avril, matin, Moline, Illinois : "... Il décrit l'objet comme étant de la forme d'un entonnoir... se déplaçant à haute altitude au-dessus de Rock-River..." ("Moline-Mail", Moline, Illinois, 12 Avril 1897)

- 12 Avril, soir, Williamsville, Illinois : "... coque cigaroïde ailée avec une verrière sur le sommet comme la vitre d'un magasin d'alimentation..." ("Chicago-Times-Herald", Illinois, 14 Avril 1897).

- Mi-Avril, soir, Seattle, Washington : "... Wagon aérien vu volant majestueusement dans l'espace..." ("Times of Warsaw", Warsaw, Indiana, 22 Avril 1897, p. 3). La même source cite l'observation du même "wagon aérien" vu au-dessus de Portland, Maine, peu après qu'il eut été vu au-dessus de Seattle.

- 16 avril, minuit, Bay-City, Michigan : "... Nuage volant de forme conique muni d'une lumière rouge à chaque extrémité..." ("Saginaw-Courier-Herald", Saginaw, Michigan, 16 Avril 1897)

- 19 Avril, soir, Cochranville, Ohio : "... Appareil en forme d'énorme cône muni d'ailes et d'une lumière à l'une de ses extrémités... Puis l'engin survola une partie de la Virginie de l'Ouest." ("Buckhannon-Knight-Errant" Virgini de l'Ouest, 22 Avril 1897, P.1)

- 20 Avril, minuit, Louisville, Kentucky : "... il aperçut une colonne de feu dans le nord du ciel se déplaçant perpendiculairement à l'horizon... Parmi les témoins : un fonctionnaire de la Protection Civile, un cheminot, un lieutenant de police..." ("Louisville-Courier-Journal", Louisville, Kentucky, 22 Avril 1897, p. 9).

- 21 Avril, soir, Ashland, Ohio : "... il s'agissait d'une barre verticale de lumière d'une trentaine de mètres de long qui se déplaçait vers l'ouest..." ("Askland Gazette", Ashland, Ohio, 24 Avril 1897).

- 22 Avril, soir, Westerville, Ohio : "... airship vu progressant contre le vent... John Haiwood, professeur d'astronomie au Collège Otterbein put l'observer à travers son télescope, et il distingua un **GRAND DISQUE ROUGE** très brillant." ("Sunday-Morning-Press", Columbus, Ohio, 25 Avril 1897).

- 24 Avril, soir, Lacoste, Texas : "... Un airship fut vu au-dessus de la gare, puis il s'éleva et fila à grande vitesse. Il faisait 40 pieds de long environ, en forme d'acutangle (Triangle à trois angles aigus)..." ("San-Antonio-Daily-Express", San Antonio, Texas, 27 Avril 1897).

- 28 Avril, soir, Cleveland, Ohio : "... Le phénomène apparut sous la forme d'un trait vertical de lumière..." (Cleveland-Plan-Dealer", Cleveland, Ohio, 29 Avril 1897).

Toutes ces formes se retrouvent à notre époque, et parfois dans un passé encore plus reculé, non pas en "vagues" mais épisodiquement. Le lecteur aura noté la "colonne de feu" qu'on peut même trouver... dans la bible !

Schéma "fenêtres" :

Les détails dépeignant des "fenêtres" sont

couramment employés par les témoins d'observation de nos jours. Pourquoi les guillemets ? Parce que ces "fenêtres" n'en sont peut-être pas. Une technologie du genre de celle déployée par le phénomène ovni doit pouvoir se passer de véritables fenêtres pour permettre à d'éventuels occupants de voir. Il s'agit donc probablement de tout autre chose.

- **1^{er} Avril 1897, soir, Wesley, Iowa** : "... *Airship ayant l'apparence d'un cône muni de fenêtres sur le côté, avec des lumières et ne se déplaçant pas aussi vite que les météores... Au moment où il atteignait la ville, il prit de la hauteur...*" ("Algona-Republican", Algona, Iowa, 7.4.1897).

- **7 Avril, soir, Wolf-Creek, Iowa** : "... *Long et étroit bâti en forme de carton à corset muni de fenêtres à travers lesquelles on distinguait une lumière étincelante...*" ("Illinois-State-Register", Springfield, Illinois, 11 Avril 1897).

- **9 Avril, soir, Wesley, Iowa** : "... *retour de l'airship à Wesley, toujours muni de fenêtres, et mesurant de 30 à 40 pieds de long, une lumière rouge à chacune de ses extrémités...*" ("Times-Republican", Marshalltown, 13 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- **13 Avril, soir, Orangeville, Illinois** : "... *étrange objet en forme de château muni de lumières à ses nombreuses fenêtres, se déplaçant à une vitesse extraordinaire d'un mouvement marqué d'oscillations...*" ("The Dallas Morning News", Dallas, Texas, 15 Avril 1897, p. 4)

- **14 Avril, soir, Peoria, Texas** : "... *objet noir ressemblant à un wagon de chemin de fer pour voyageurs (Donc muni de fenêtres), brillamment éclairé, muni d'un énorme projecteur, filant à une vitesse très rapide...*" ("The Dallas Morning News", Dallas, Texas, 18 Avril 1897, p. 7)

- **17 Avril, nuit, Ladonia, Texas** : "... *Vu par l'Attorney R.M. Rowland, un étrange objet paraissant être entouré d'un léger brouillard lumineux. En se rapprochant, le brouillard disparût et fit place à une brillante lumière, se déplaçant rapidement. Elle paraissait être émise des fenêtres d'une cabine, et des ailes furent remarquées...*" ("The-Dallas-Morning-News", Dallas, Texas, 19 Avril 1897, p. 5)

- **21 Avril, soir, Atlantic, Iowa** : "... *il ressemblait à un nuage noir très épais, légèrement*

éclairé, et à certains endroits, la lumière semblait sortir d'ouvertures comme des fenêtres, et quelqu'un le compara à un "château aérien". Un grondement accompagnait son déplacement, faisant vibrer les maisons..." ("The Atlantic-Telegram", Atlantic, Iowa, 22.4.1897).

Vous aurez noté que certains de ces cas pouvaient entrer dans le paragraphe précédent, voué aux "formes" (Cône, carton à corset, "château", wagon...)

Schéma "lumières"

Nous vous ferons grâce des nombreux cas où des lumières de couleur furent remarquées. Nous nous en tiendrons seulement au comportement de ces sources lumineuses.

- **8 Avril, soir, Mont-Pleasant, Iowa** : "... *une lumière blanche... qui devint rouge foncé, puis redevint blanche, se déplaçant lentement dans le ciel...*" ("Illinois-State-Register", Springfield, Ill., 11 Avril 1897).

- **10 Avril, soir, Keokuk, Iowa** : "... *Une grosse lumière au moins deux fois plus grosse que la plus brillante des étoiles de nos cieux... qui se changea en lumière rouge, puis verte...*" ("Nauvoo-Rustler", Nauvoo, Illinois, 13 Avril 1897).

- **11 Avril, Chicago, Illinois** : "... *C'était une lumière... qui changeait de couleur par instants : du blanc, elle passa au rouge, puis au vert...*" ("Chicago-Times-Herald", Illinois, 12 Avril 1897).

- **12 Avril, Macomb, Illinois** : "... *A un moment donné la grosse lumière s'éteignit pour se rallumer peu après, comme si quelqu'un, à bord, avait manoeuvré un commutateur... Cela se produisit une 2^e fois, plusieurs témoins l'affirmèrent.*" ("Macomb-Journal", Macomb, ill., 13 Avril 1897).

- **13 Avril, Rock-Island, Illinois** : "... *Dans un ciel nuageux où aucune étoile n'était visible, cette lumière, qui se déplaçait à grande vitesse, de rouge, devint bleue, pour redevenir rouge avant sa disparition...*" ("Rock-Island-Union, Rock-Island, Illinois, 14 Avril 1897).

- **13 Avril, Aberdeen, Sud-Dakota** : "... *La lumière se montra successivement sous une cou-*

leur verte, rouge, puis jaune en alternance..." ("Aberdeen-Daily-News", Aberdeen, Sud-Dakota, 14 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- 15 Avril, Middleville, Michigan : "... Durant son déplacement, les lumières dont l'objet était porteur, changèrent de couleur : rouge, bleu, vert..." ("Lansing-State-Republican", Lansing, Michigan, 16 Avril 1897).

- 20 Avril, Natchitoches, Louisiane : "... Alors que l'objet se rapprochait de la ville, la lumière qui l'illuminait s'affaiblit, comme mise en veilleuse, et ne redevint à son intensité initiale qu'une fois la ville passée..." ("The Austin-Statesman", Austin, Texas, 23 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- 24 Avril, Hillsboro, Wisconsin : "... La lumière progressa de façon régulière jusqu'à ce qu'elle atteigne le village où elle marqua un arrêt semble-t-il, puis repartit en tournant vers l'est avec une grande rapidité..." ("Hillsboro-Sentry", Hillsboro, Wisconsin, 29 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- 25 Avril, San-Antonio, Texas : "... Sous une épaisse couverture de nuages, un objet porteur d'une douzaine de sources lumineuses fut distingué, dont un groupe de lumières vertes sur le côté du vaisseau faisant face à la ville, et un autre groupe d'énormes lumières rouges à l'arrière, indiquant une origine artificielle... L'objet effectua un très net virage sur la droite, et dans son mouvement il y eût des changements de couleur dans les lumières ne laissant aucun doute dans l'esprit de ceux qui le virent : c'était bien un airship..." ("San-Antonio-Daily-Express", Texas, 26.4.1897).

S'il y a encore des lecteurs pour voir dans ces "jeux de lumières", les facéties de Vénus jouant à cache-cache avec les nuages, alors nous ne pouvons plus rien faire pour eux...

Schéma "Projecteur"

Nous possédons une centaine de cas où il est question d'un, ou de plusieurs projecteurs portés par l'airship de 1897. Nous en citerons quelques-uns parmi les plus intéressants :

- 5 Avril, soir, Wilmington, Nord-Caroline : "... Masse flottante progressant rapidement dans les cieux... il semblait avoir une sorte de projecteur dirigé vers le sol..." ("The Wilmington-Messenger", Wilmington, Nord-Caroline, 6 Avril 1897).

- 8 Avril, soir, Dixon, Illinois : "... Sous une couverture nuageuse, l'objet émit quelques flashes de lumière, disparaissant et réapparaissant comme s'il s'agissait d'un projecteur orientable, qui aurait été dirigé dans plusieurs directions..." ("Dixon-Telegraph", Dixon, Illinois, 10 Avril 1897).

- 10 Avril, minuit, Crete, Illinois : "... Le faisceau d'un énorme projecteur a été vu dans le ciel du nord. Il ressemblait à celui qui est utilisé par les bateaux à vapeur..." ("Pike-County-Democrat", Pittsfield, Ill., 13.4.1897).

- 12 Avril, soir, St-Louis, Missouri : "... De l'objet, partait un rayon de lumière ressemblant au pinceau d'un projecteur électrique, qui allait et venait dans une sorte de balayage qu'auraient entrepris les voyageurs aériens pour arroser la surface de la terre de rayons lumineux, tout comme le font les navires de guerre sur mer pour localiser des cibles..." ("Beardstone Entreprise", Beardstone, Illinois, 15 Avril 1897).

- 16 Avril, soir, Dallas, Texas : "... M. Griffin, qui s'était installé sur le toit du Palais de Justice avec une lunette d'approche, a vu l'airship. Il avait la forme d'un cigare mexicain, large au centre et mince aux deux extrémités, munis d'ailes, et brillamment illuminé par l'éclat de DEUX puissants projecteurs..." ("The Dallas-Morning-News", Dallas, Texas, 18 Avril 1897, p. 7).

- 17 Avril, soir, Metropolis, Illinois : "... C'était quelque chose d'autre qu'une étoile, qui projeta les rayons d'un projecteur sur le pont d'un bateau sur la rivière, montrant l'équipage au travail..." ("The Paducah-Sun", Paducah, Kentucky, 19 Avril 1897, p. 1).

- 19 Avril, nuit, Atlanta, Texas. "... L'objet descendit vers le sol à une grande vitesse... puis s'arrêta brusquement, comme un corps chutant qui aurait été arrêté par une corde l'ayant retenu en suspension, après quoi il se déplaça vers la ville... et il projeta un puissant rayon de lumière blanche qui fut dirigé vers le sol depuis l'avant du vaisseau à un angle de 45°, éclairant un cercle d'environ 30 pieds de diamètre, plus brillant que le soleil en plein midi. Cette forte lumière d'une formidable intensité, devait être celle d'un projecteur selon les témoins..." ("The Houston-Daily-Post", Houston, Texas, 1897).

- 22 Avril, soir, Lynchburg, Virginie : "... Le fils aîné du directeur de l'usine d'engrais R.T.

Craighill, M. Casey vit dans un ciel pur comme du cristal, un étrange nuage isolé qui s'avéra être, en se rapprochant du zénith, un objet qui dispensa les rayons pénétrants d'un gros projecteur en direction du sol de ses milliers de pieds de haut. Des lumières sur le côté faisaient ressembler l'objet à un wagon de chemin de fer éclairé quand il traverse le pays de nuit. Des ailes furent distinguées, et ce formidable spectacle plutôt ahurissant n'est pas près d'être oublié par ceux qui le virent, le jeune Casey ayant alerté toute sa famille qui sortit pour contempler l'intrus. Alors qu'il s'éloignait, il prit l'apparence d'un nuage blanc..." ("Lynchburg-News", Lynchburg, Virginie, 24 Avril 1897).

- 22 Avril, soir, Flatonia, Texas : "... M. Albert Mott et sa famille ainsi que de nombreuses autres personnes, ont vu le mystérieux airship... De 2000 pieds il descendit à 200 pieds du sol, et à ce moment-là, la puissante lumière d'un projecteur fut allumée, éblouissant tous ceux qui voulurent la fixer des yeux..." ("San-Antonio-Express", Texas, 25.4.1897, p. 12).

- 25 Avril, Nuit, Dull-Creek, Texas : "... Trois jeunes gens qui campaient au bord du lac, furent réveillés vers 03 h 00 par une pluie battante. Ils durent sortir pour consolider les attaches de leur tente et ils aperçurent l'airship. Il dardait les puissants faisceaux de SES projecteurs à intervalles réguliers de quelques secondes. La lumière était quatre fois plus forte que celle des lampes à arc..." ("The Austin-Statesman", Austin, Texas, 26 Avril 1897, p. 3).

A noter le cas de Lynchburg du 22 Avril, où il est dit que l'airship prit l'apparence d'un nuage blanc en s'éloignant. Nous avons d'autres récits où cette apparence de nuage est citée à propos d'airships, mais la phraséologie employée ne permet pas de dire si l'airship était camouflé en nuage ou dans un nuage, ou s'il fut d'abord confondu avec un nuage, en fonction de l'éloignement et de la relative obscurité. Néanmoins il y a souvent l'observation de "nuages" plus ou moins lumineux et plus ou moins mobiles qui reviennent dans les récits d'airships. Par prudence, nous préférons ne pas créer un paragraphe spécial leur étant consacré, car le lecteur aurait été en droit de nous accuser de dénaturer les faits et d'en donner une interprétation abusive.

Schéma "Progression"

C'est certainement le schéma le plus proche des ovnis de notre époque. Le lecteur ne manquera pas d'être surpris par la similitude qu'il peut y avoir entre la façon de progresser de l'airship et

de la "soucoupe volante". Les témoins d'après-1947 n'ont donc rien inventé, TOUT de ce comportement fut déjà observé au moins CINQUANTE ANS avant qu'ils ne fassent connaître leur témoignage !

- 3 Avril, soir, Independence, Kansas : "... L'airship se déplaça d'abord en fonçant droit devant lui, puis vira brusquement au sud... Il était très bas lorsqu'il fut repéré la première fois, mais prit de l'altitude lorsqu'il survola la ville à grande vitesse, pour en perdre après l'avoir dépassée, et après avoir marqué un arrêt parfait durant cinq minutes. Sa progression suivante fut marquée de zig-zags et d'ondulations verticales." ("Nonpareil of Council-Bluffs", Council-Bluffs, Iowa, 5 Avril 1897, p. 1).

- 8 Avril, soir, Marinette, Wisconsin : "... L'objet paraissait faire des crochets vers le haut et vers le bas, puis il fila brusquement vers l'ouest." ("Marinette-Daily-Eagle", Marinette, Wisconsin, 10 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- 8 Avril, soir, Northwood, Iowa : "... Une lumière deux fois plus grosse qu'une étoile qui se déplaçait en zig-zags..." ("Marshalltown-Times-Republican", Marshalltown, Iowa, 9 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- 8 Avril, soir, East-Carroll, Illinois : "... Une lumière aussi grosse que la lune, qui se déplaçait dans un mouvement de vagues..." ("Dixon-Telegraph", Dixon, Illinois, 12 Avril 1897).

- 8 Avril, soir, Evanston, Illinois : "... parcours erratique d'un objet porteur de quatre lumières : une grosse blanche à l'avant comme celle d'un projecteur, suivie d'une plus petite verte, à l'arrière une troisième, verte elle aussi, et une quatrième blanche. Plus de 800 témoins dont d'importantes personnalités firent des témoignages ayant plus de poids que les déclarations du Professeur Hough qui prétend que les gens furent abusés par l'étoile Alpha d'Orion..." ("Chicago-Times-Herald", III., 10.4.1897).

- 8 Avril, soir, Wausau, Wisconsin : "... L'airship vu à Nebraska-City (Nebraska), fut aperçu une demi-heure plus tard à Wausau, autrement dit il a couvert les 430 miles qui séparent les deux villes à 860 miles de moyenne horaire. Et pour autant que nous en sachions, il a accompli cette performance sans le moindre signe de défaillance..." ("Marshalltown-Times-Republican", Marshalltown, Iowa, 10 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- 9 Avril, soir, Britt, Iowa : "... L'airship se déplaçait en une course ondulatoire, quelquefois lentement, quelquefois aussi vite qu'un train, changeant l'orientation de sa progression comme s'il avait un gouvernail." ("Marshalltown-Times-Reporter", Marshalltown, Iowa, 10 Avril 1897, p. 3)

- 9 Avril, soir, Norman, Oklahoma : "... Long et sombre objet qui se déplaça sur un trajet erratique, en zig-zags, et produisant occasionnellement des éclairs rouges sur ses flancs..." ("Enid-Daily-Wave", Enid, Okl., 15.4.1897)

- 11 Avril, soir, Warsaw, Indiana : "... L'airship fut vu se déplaçant en zig-zags..." ("Indianapolis-News", Indianapolis, Indiana, 12 Avril 1897, p. 8)

- 10 Avril, Nuit, Anderson, Indiana : "... Lumière de forte taille vue faisant des cercles dans les airs, qui descendit vers le sol puis remonta à la verticale très haut dans le ciel pour s'éloigner ensuite vers le sud..." ("Indianapolis-Journal", Indianapolis, Indiana, p. 4).

- 11 Avril, soir, Holland, Michigan : "... Grosse masse sombre porteuse de lumières électriques, qui marqua un arrêt pendant plusieurs minutes, et parut sous parfait contrôle même quand elle progressa en zig-zags..." ("Grand-Rapids-Evening-Press", Grand-Rapids, Michigan, 12 Avril 1897).

- 11 Avril, soir, Menomonie, Wisconsin : "... Brillante lumière blanche accompagnée d'éclairs rouges et verts par intermittence, progressant dans une direction générale Nord-Ouest, avec des écarts sur la droite et sur la gauche à des angles aigus, et ce à une telle vitesse, qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'une étoile ordinaire..." ("Dunn-County-News", Menomonie, Wisconsin, 16 Avril 1897, p. 5).

- 12 Avril, West-Superior, Wisconsin : "... Un airship a été vu faisant des cercles au-dessus des lacs..." ("Dallas-Morning-News", Texas, 16.4.1897).

- 13 Avril, soir, Harrison, Nebraska : "... L'appareil qui volait à une vitesse extraordinaire, ralentit, et se mit à faire des cercles pour stopper et demeurer immobile pendant plusieurs minutes comme s'il était suspendu par une corde..." ("Omaha-Wordl-Herald", Omaha, Neb., 14 Avril 1897).

- 13 Avril, soir, Bemidji-Lake, Minnesota : "... L'objet, qui déploya différentes lumières de couleur, montait et descendait apparemment à la volonté de ses occupants. Il fit deux cercles complets au-dessus de la partie supérieure du lac. Il avait la forme d'un entonnoir..." ("Bemidji-Pioneer" Bemidji, Minnesota, 22 Avril 1897).

- 14 Avril, soir, Hope, Arkansas : "... Un opérateur du télégraphe prétend avoir été frappé de plein fouet par le rayon du projecteur de l'appareil. L'airship accomplissait un parcours fait de zig-zags..." ("The Dallas Morning News", Dallas, Texas, 18 Avril 1897, p. 7).

- 15 Avril, soir, Russelville, Kentucky : "... Un étrange "croiseur aérien" tourna autour de la ville pendant 10 minutes avant de s'éloigner vers l'ouest." ("Paducah-Daily-Sun", Paducah, Kentucky, 16 Avril 1897, p. 1).

- Semaine du 18 au 24 Avril, soir, Eureka, Kansas : "... C'était une brillante lumière placée sous une sorte d'arcade constituée d'autres plus petites lumières de couleurs. Ces lumières se déplaçaient de façon erratique et TOURNAIENT TOUJOURS A ANGLE DROIT." ("Topeka-State-Ledger", Topeka, Kansas, 30 Avril 1897, p. 2).

- 20 Avril, nuit, Natchitoches, Louisiane : "... La progression de cet airship était unique en son genre, faite d'un mouvement ondulatoire..." ("Austin-Statesman", Austin, Texas, 23 Avril 1897, p. 3).

- 20 Avril, jour, Denver, Colorado : "... L'objet CULBUTA sur lui-même à plusieurs reprises... On aurait dit qu'il roulait sur lui-même, et cette impression était donnée par le fait qu'un de ses côtés, qui était blanc, émettait une sorte d'éclat, comme si le soleil frappait un corps métallique..." ("Rocky-Mountains-News", Denver, Colorado, 21 Avril 1897, p. 8)

L'expression "tourner à angle droit", ou "à angle aigu", ne figure que dans les deux cas repris ci-dessus. Bien que nous ayons une ribambelle de récits d'observations où il est questions de lumières ou d'objets "tournant brusquement" dans une autre direction. On peut donc supposer que parmi ces affaires, des lumières ou objets observés effectuèrent des changements de trajet à 90° et moins. Il ne nous a toutefois pas paru nécessaire d'en citer dans ce texte, afin de ne pas trop le charger davantage, car il est suffisamment pesant comme cela !

Schéma "Intérêt apparent"

Il s'agit ici de cas dans lesquels le phénomène observé semble avoir porté un intérêt à des trains et des voies de chemin de fer :

- 8 Avril, soir, Burlington, Iowa : "... Des rapports d'aiguilleurs en poste sur la ligne qui va de Burlington à West-Liberty, appartenant à la Northwestern Co., indiquent que le voyageur céleste a été visible par intervalles le long de cette voie... L'appareil semblait suivre la voie de chemin de fer, ce qui explique que les témoins furent si nombreux. En effet, ils eurent la possibilité d'être prévenus à l'avance du passage probable de la machine. (par le biais des opérateurs du télégraphe en poste dans chaque gare-N.d.T.-) **Il ne s'agit pas d'une psychose qui se développa chez les télégraphistes, car des journalistes, ainsi que des personnalités connues firent des rapports circonstanciés qui ne peuvent être taxés de fraude quelconque...**" ("Rock-Island-Argus", Rock-Island, Illinois, 9 Avril 1897).

- 12 Avril, matin, Lisle, Illinois : "... Le mécanicien envoya un télégramme... pour indiquer qu'à bord du train qu'il conduisait, en sortant de Chicago, il avait vu un airship dans le ciel progressant dans la même direction que son convoi, puis le dépasser. Compte tenu que son train roulait à 70 miles/heure, il estima que l'airship devait faire du 150 miles/heure..." ("Galesburg-Evening-Mail", Galesburg, Ill., 13 Avril 1897).

- 14 Avril, soir, Portal, Nord-Dakota : "... Après avoir passé au-dessus de Portal et franchi la frontière Canadienne, le vaisseau aérien sembla suivre la voie de chemin de fer de la Canadian Pacific Railroad. Sa vitesse put être calculée de façon approximative compte tenu des heures de signalisation depuis Portal : une distance de 185 miles fut parcourue par l'appareil à une moyenne de 365 miles/heure..." ("Minneapolis Times", Minneapolis, Minnesota, 15 Avril 1897).

- 15 Avril, soir, Jewells, Louisiane : "... Le convoyeur et le serre-frein d'un train de la Texas & Pacific Railway ont vu l'airship. Il était muni d'un énorme projecteur et sa lumière balayait différentes directions. Sa vitesse était supérieure à celle du train..." ("Dallas-Morning-News", Dallas, Texas, 17 Avril 1897, p. 8).

- 15 Avril, soir, West-Alton, Missouri : "... L'airship fut aperçu filant à vive allure parallèlement au train, peu après qu'il eût quitté St. Louis... Selon les passagers, qui étaient surexités, la grosse lumière allait plus vite que le train..." ("Alton-Sentinel-Democrat", Alton, 17 Avril 1897).

- 15 Avril, soir, Perry-Springs, Illinois : "... La course de l'airship fut d'abord parallèle au train et nantie d'un mouvement ondulatoire, le faisant aller de bas en haut et de haut en bas... L'objet se plaça ensuite devant le train... et stoppa sa course lorsque le train stoppa la sienne à Versailles (Illinois), et la reprit quand ce dernier repartit. Tous deux se maintinrent côte-à-côte jusqu'à Hersman, puis l'airship bondit en avant brusquement à une vitesse fulgurante, laissant en quelques minutes le train loin derrière lui... Le chef du train et tous les passagers furent témoins du spectacle..." ("Quincy-Whig", Quincy, Illinois, 16 Avril 1897).

Nous avons encore plusieurs récits de ce style, et en citer d'autres ne servirait pas à grand chose. Nous avons aussi passé outre sur certains commentaires émanant de témoins crédibles, dont des hommes d'affaire, des officiers, des fonctionnaires, etc... et qui ne font que répéter ce que nous avons résumé en quelques mots ou phrases, et aussi exprimer leur ferme conviction d'avoir été confrontés à un vaisseau aérien.

Schéma "Bruits"

L'airship cigaroïde ailé ou non fut généralement silencieux. Mais des relations font état de bruits divers. En voici quelques exemples :

- 4 Avril, jour, Iola, Kansas : "... Deux amis en train de pêcher furent soudain mis en émoi par une sorte de bruit de grondement au-dessus de leurs têtes. Levant les yeux, ils aperçurent l'airship aussi bien qu'on peut voir une maison située à 300 ou 400 pieds. Il était en forme de cigare muni d'une énorme roue de turbine à l'arrière..." ("Larned-Eagle-Optic", Larned, Kansas, 7 Mai 1897, p. 3).

- 6 Avril, soir, Belle-Plaine, Iowa : "... Le sifflement de l'airship fut entendu, et il se déplaçait avec des oscillations en une progression faite d'allées et venues, de plongées et de remontées subites, toutes ces manoeuvres étant effectuées avec facilité, l'appareil paraissant sous parfait contrôle..." ("Chicago-Times-Herald", Illinois, 8 Avril 1897).

- 15 Avril, soir, Muncie, Illinois : "... Bruit de crissement fait par un airship estimé se déplaçant à au moins 100 miles par heure de moyenne..." ("Danvill-Weekly-Press", Danville, Illinois, 21 Avril 1897).

- 15 Avril, soir, St-Louis, Missouri : "... L'airship émettait un bruit de bourdonnement..."

("Alton-Evening-Telegraph", Alton, Ill., 16 Avril 1897).

- 16 Avril, soir, Tioga, Texas : "... Le témoin prétend que l'airship émettait un bruit de ronflement..." ("The Dallas-Morning-News", Texas, 18.4.1897).

- 20 Avril, Nuit, Sabinal, Texas : "... Son passage dans l'air était accompagné d'un bruit de ronronnement, et non pas de bourdonnement comme le font les moteurs électriques..." ("Galveston-Daily-News", Galveston, Texas, 23 Avril 1897).

- 23 Avril, jour, Burton, Michigan : "... Terrible bruit de grondement puis de bourdonnement, émis par un objet sombre qui volait dans les airs à une rapidité foudroyante..." ("Saginaw-Globe", Saginaw, Michigan, 26.4.1897).

Ce n'est là qu'un échantillonnage sur un lot de récits plus nombreux. Bien que l'airship silencieux ait été plus souvent observé. A ces bruits "classiques", il faut en ajouter un autre :

- 11 Avril, soir, Pavilion, Michigan : "... Deux témoins virent un appareil illuminé à ses deux extrémités passer dans le ciel à grande vitesse. Une explosion fut entendue puis l'objet disparut. Le bruit de projectiles fendait l'air suivit celui de l'explosion. M. et Mme Wallace, autres témoins de ce violent bruit prétendirent que le lendemain, ils trouvèrent à deux miles de la maison d'un certain Scott, dans le même secteur, un rouleau de fil épais (ou une bobine) ainsi qu'une pale d'hélice quel que peu fondue objets censés appartenir à l'airship qui émit l'explosion le soir précédent. Dans le village de Comstock, non loin de là, et à proximité de Kalamazoo, trois hommes occupés à couvrir le toit d'une grange, affirmèrent que le matin suivant l'incident ci-dessus décrit, ils découvrirent la partie du toit qu'ils avaient mise en place la veille, recouverte de minuscules fragments métalliques dont certains avaient pénétré dans la couverture du toit et parfois dans les bardeaux du dessous." ("Chicago-Times-Herald", Chicago, Illinois, 14 Avril 1897, page 2).

La bobine de fil et la pale d'hélice n'ont pas obligatoirement un lien avec l'explosion, mais pour ce qui est des petits fragments dans le toit, il semblerait que si.

Schéma "Mothership" : Schéma très rare en 1897. Nous n'avons que deux cas :

- 17 Avril, soir, Elmer, Missouri : "... Une procession de source lumineuses suivant un corps porteur de la principale lumière a été signalée par un habitant d'Elmer... Déjà, précédemment, trois lumières avaient été aperçues sur cette ville, lumières qui se fondirent en une seule." ("Linneus-Bulletin", Linneus, Missouri, 21 Avril 1897, page 8)

- 20 Avril, soir, Bartlett, Texas : "... Des habitants de Bartlett ont vu l'airship hier soir... C'était une très grosse boule, comme une boule de feu, qui lâcha trois boules plus petites... spectacle qui émut beaucoup la population noire au point que ses représentants tiennent maintenant réunion sur réunion, parlant de la fin du monde par le feu" ("The Houston-Post", Houston, Texas, 25 Avril 1897, page 5).

Dans le premier cas, des engins semblent avoir rejoint le vaisseau-mère. Dans le second, ils en sortent.

Shéma "Vol groupé"

Bien que très rares, des formations d'airships paraissent avoir été observées :

- 12 Avril, soir, Duluth, Minnesota : "... Un des observateurs a pu voir distinctement TROIS airships déployés comme un vol d'oies sauvages..." ("St-Paul-Pioneer-Press", St-Paul, Minnesota, 13 Avril 1897)

- 14 Avril, soir, Orange, Texas : "... La femme du marshall Ed. M. DAVIS a vu ce qui lui parût être une comète munie de brillantes lumières à l'avant, suivie d'une procession de plus petites, de plus faible intensité, et ce sur plusieurs centaines de pieds de longueur. Le phénomène, dans sa progression, garda constamment une trajectoire rectiligne... Il y eut d'autres témoins qui confirmèrent ce qu'avait vu Mme Davis..." ("Galveston-Daily-News", Galveston, Texas, 22 Avril 1897, page 4).

- 16 Avril, midi, Danvers, Illinois : "... De nombreux habitants ont vu l'airship, et il est question d'un engin suiveur se trouvant très près du premier, mais beaucoup plus petit. Comme l'observation eût lieu en plein midi, il y eût de nombreux témoins... Les objets semblaient être faits d'un matériau ressemblant à de l'aluminium..." ("Boomington-Pantagraph", Bloomington, Illinois, 17 Avril 1897, page 5).

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1896-97 JEAN SIDER

L'Airship, cet ovni qui annonça la soucoupe volante

(2 - Suite)

Etude sur la vague de faux dirigeables de 1897, aux états-Unis, à partir de 1.200 cas d'observation sur lesquels ont été sélectionnés 129 incidents précis.

Schéma "Effets secondaires"

Ce sont bien entendu les réactions animales qui sont les plus intéressantes, car, cela, nous doutons que les témoins de 1897 aient eu l'idée de l'inventer :

- 4 avril, soir, Wolf-Creek, Iowa : "... Le fermier Dick Butler rentrait chez lui en voiture hippomobile... quand il demeura saisi de stupeur à la vue d'une masse noire éclairée d'une lumière étincelante posée au sol dans un champ de blé lui appartenant, alors qu'il était presque rendu à destination. Il n'eut guère le temps de pouvoir détailler l'objet davantage, car les chevaux devinrent subitement fous au point de précipiter le fourgon dans le fossé. Le temps que M. Butler se dégage, voilà l'engin qui décolle et s'éloigne vers le sud sur une trajectoire à 45°..." ("Cherokee-Democrat", Cherokee, Iowa, 14 avril 1897, p. 8)

- 15 avril, soir, Hillsboro, Texas : "... L'homme de loi J.S. Spencer a aperçu l'airship alors qu'il conduisait sa voiture à cheval. L'animal se serait emballé, effrayé par l'apparition... Le témoin devait déclarer au Juge J.M. Hall et à l'Attorney W.E. Spell que son cheval, très agité, s'était mis à reculer, tremblant comme une feuille..." ("The Dallas-Morning-News", Dallas, Texas, 17 avril 1897, p. 8).

- 15 avril, nuit, Paris, Texas : "... Un gardien de nuit de l'usine appartenant à la Paris Oil and Cotton Co, au cours d'une ronde, vit un nuage de brouillard lumineux qui se rapprochait du lieu où il se tenait... En compagnie d'un noir terrorisé qu'il avait réveillé pour la circonstance, il distingua bientôt un navire aérien. Nuit claire avec une belle lune. Alors que l'appareil arrivait au-dessus des témoins, le chien du gardien se mit à pousser d'étranges gémissements qui durèrent jusqu'à ce que l'étonnant visiteur soit perdu de vue..." ("The Dallas-Morning-New", Dallas, Texas, 18 avril 1897, p. 7).

- 18 avril, soir, Columbus, Indiana : "... Le maître des postes RUSH, qui revenait d'Edinburg en diligence a vu l'airship et n'en a pas gardé un bon souvenir. L'appareil surgit si brusquement que les chevaux en furent effrayés au point de provoquer un accident. La voiture fut renversée et se brisa, et les passagers furent jetés à terre..." ("Columbus-Evening-Republican", Columbus, Indiana, 19 avril 1897, p. 1).

- 28 avril, nuit, Austin, Texas : "... M. Otte F. PORSCHE, grainetier, fut réveillé par les aboiements de ses chiens. Par sa fenêtre, il vit une lumière... Son plus jeune chien était épouvanté au point qu'il en bouscula son maître. Le vieux chien se tenait au milieu de la cour et aboyait vers quelque chose se tenant en l'air. C'était une lumière mobile aveuglante se déplaçant lentement au-dessus de la ville. Lorsque l'effet d'éblouissement disparut, le témoin discerna une forme à ailes battantes qui s'éloignait en augmentant sa vitesse..." ("Austin-Statesman", Austin, Texas, 29 avril 1897, p. 3).

Jusqu'ici, nous n'avons pas encore lu de livre consacré à la socio-psychologie des chiens et des chevaux, ni à l'inconscient collectif des animaux domestiques... A quand la théorie de la psychose

L'Airship de 1897

Contribution à l'étude socio-historique de la vague de dirigeables-fantômes aux Etats-Unis

Tel est le titre de l'ouvrage de Jean SIDER, qu'il m'a chargé de publier en souscription. Il s'agit d'une édition fabriquée artisanalement comportant 373 pages. Pour réunir cette documentation inédite, Jean SIDER a dû contacter de nombreux organismes spécialisés (Public Libraries, Muséums, Universités, etc...), et même payer des étudiants américains qui ont procédé à des fouilles dans divers journaux de l'époque.

La date ultime de souscription est fixée au 15 juillet 1987. L'ouvrage devrait paraître courant août. Son prix est fixé à 110 ff + 20 ff de port (soit un total de 130 ff).

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Thierry Pinvidic

LDLN,
MARZO - ABRIL 1983

chez les bêtes ? Les toutous et les dadas rêvent-ils éveillés ! Voilà des points que nos détracteurs inconditionnels feraient bien d'étudier...

Il est vraiment dommage que les voitures automobiles aient été très rares à cette époque. On se déplaçait surtout à cheval à la campagne et en bicyclette dans les villes, ainsi qu'en véhicule hippomobile. Nous n'avons donc pas de récit de mécanisme stoppé par le passage d'un airship à vous proposer. Ouais... Quoique en cherchant bien, nous avons pu dénicher un cas assez amusant, pas très évident certes, mais que nous ne résistons pas au plaisir de vous présenter avec les réserves qui s'imposent :

- **17 avril, presque minuit, Wabash, Indiana :** "... L'horloge de la ville s'est arrêtée à 23 h 51, samedi soir. Des personnes se trouvant tard dehors, déclarent avoir entendu un bruit particulier et insolite aux alentours de la coupole du Palais de Justice (où se trouvait l'horloge Ndt-). Et comme M. Janitor LINES est prêt à jurer que l'horloge repartit ce matin sans être remontée, on a pensé que l'airship était passé par là samedi soir, et qu'un des hommes à longs favoris s'était penché pour tripoter le mécanisme". (*"Wabash Plain-Dealer", Wabash, Indiana, 19 avril 1897, p. 3*).

Rien d'extraordinaire bien sûr, mais sait-on, jamais ? Nous n'avons pas trouvé d'effets secondaires sur témoins rapprochés, sauf un cas malheureusement entâché de quelques exagérations manifestes. Un fermier qui aurait perdu connaissance suite au passage d'un airship au dessus de son ranch. Mais comme il est dit que l'airship heurta et endommagea le bâtiment principal de la ferme, nous supposons qu'il ne s'agit que d'une blague.

Schéma "Odeur de soufre" :

Voilà qui va sûrement faire sourire de nombreux lecteurs. Pourtant, les vieux renards de l'ufologie ne rient plus depuis longtemps à propos de cette particularité que l'on retrouve à toutes les époques de notre histoire concernant des incidents inexplicables ou inexplicés s'étant réellement produits, pas forcément liés à un phénomène ovni, mais ayant une possibilité de relation avec l'Intelligence manipulant les ovnis et qui semble pouvoir manipuler bien autre chose que des disques volants, entre nous soit-dit...

- **14 avril, soir, Andalusia, Illinois :** "... L'air était si chargé de soufre, que la respiration en devenait difficile. Des bruits inquiétants provenaient des nuages au milieu desquels se trouvait le vaisseau, et certaines personnes superstitieuses se ruèrent chez elles pour s'y barricader, persuadées que le Diable en personne était présent dehors, effectuant un de ses voyages périodiques".

(*"Washington Court-House Cyclone", Washington Court-House, Ohio, 22 avril 1897*).

- **16 avril, soir, Salem, Illinois :** "... L'appareil était en forme de cigare, muni d'un phare de lumière rouge à l'avant et de lumières vertes à l'arrière. Il y avait une trainée d'étincelles dans son sillage et un témoin prétendit avoir senti une odeur de soufre quelques instants après le passage de l'appareil..." (*"Marion-Country-Republican", Salem, Illinois, 22 avril 1897*).

Curieux et amusant n'est-ce pas ?

Schéma "Nuts and Bolts"

Ce paragraphe va en réjouir plus d'un car il tend à démontrer que l'airship ne fut pas une "projection d'hologramme", ou une manifestation inconsistante du même type. Les témoins furent toujours convaincus, dans ces cas précis, d'avoir eu à faire à l'apparition d'un Véhicule tridimensionnel fait d'un matériau quelconque :

- **9 avril, Storm-Lake, Iowa :** "... L'appareil n'était pas très haut, ce qui permit à l'observateur de distinguer les contours d'un véhicule..." (*"Dixon-Telegraph", Dixon, Illinois, 10 avril 1897*).

- **9 avril, soir, Chicago, Illinois :** "... La partie inférieure du vaisseau aérien était étroite et faite d'une sorte de métal couleur blanc aluminium..." (*"Chicago-Journal", Chicago, Illinois, 10 avril 1897*).

- **10 avril, Jefferson-City, Missouri :** "... Par moments, il fut si près du sol qu'on put le distinguer de façon tout à fait correcte... C'était un long corps mince en forme de cigare fait de quelque brillant métal sur lequel les rayons de la lune scintillaient..." (*"Quincy-Whig", Quincy, Illinois, 1 avril 1897*).

- **12 avril, Jacksonville, Illinois :** "... Le vaisseau aérien ressemblait à un cigare fait de feuillards en fer blanc..." (*"Quincy-Herald", Quincy, Illinois, 13 avril 1897*).

- **26 avril, midi, Trenton, New-Jersey :** "... L'objet fut dépeint de forme conique... paraissant fait d'un matériau léger et brillant pouvant être de l'aluminium... Nombreux témoins, vu l'heure, dont certains qui purent observer l'appareil à l'aide de jumelles..." (*"Trenton-Evening-Times", Trenton, New-Jersey, 27 avril 1897*).

La grosse majorité des observations étant faites de nuit, les témoins n'ont donc pas pu donner de descriptions précises relatives à la "coque" de l'airship. La silhouette fut assez souvent dépeinte comme celle d'un cigare, parfois nantie d'ailes, et

porteuse de lumières diverses. Mais plus fréquentes furent les observations de sources lumineuses mobiles, sans qu'aucune structure ne soit aperçue, à cause de l'obscurité d'une part, et du fait que la lumière principale. (Du "phare" ou du "projecteur") était si éblouissante, qu'elle rayonnait au point de créer une sorte de "halo" de luminosité masquant l'objet porteur de cette source lumineuse intense, d'autre part.

Schéma "Fumées, condensations"

Ces cas sont d'une telle rareté que nous n'en disposons que de deux. Ils nous ont cependant paru intéressants :

- **15 avril, soir, Middleville, Michigan** : "...// avait la forme d'un grand ballon muni d'un habitacle... Une trainée de fumée s'effilochant fut observée derrière l'appareil." ("*Detroit-Free-Press*", *Detroit, Michigan, 16 avril 1897*).

- **27 mars, après-midi, Brenham, Texas** : "...Un météore flanboyant a été vu à environ 15° au-dessus de l'horizon, laissant derrière lui une épaisse trainée de substance blanche, qui n'était pas de la fumée, car en plus du fait qu'elle ne se dissipait pas, elle resta stationnaire entre 15 et 20 minutes... Elle ressemblait à un voile blanc de 6 à 8 pieds de long. Puis elle se contracta pour former une boule et descendit lentement dans la direction prise par le météore, lequel était caché par le sommet des arbres." (*The Houston-Daily-Post*", *Houston, Texas, 29 mars 1897*).

Schéma "réactions humaines violentes" :

Les êtres humains sont violents de nature. Et aux Etats-Unis sans doute plus qu'ailleurs, on a la "gachette facile". Les films de cow-boys "rois du revolver" ont certes exagéré la réputation des pionniers, mais l'histoire de la conquête de l'Ouest, d'une part, et celle des Etats-Unis en général, d'autre part, regorge de réglemens de comptes divers à grand renfort de "Winchester long rifles" et de "Colts". Alors quoi de plus "normal" si on tira sur l'airship ?

- **16 avril, soir, Granbury, Texas** : "...Une unité de tirailleurs de la milice locale a fait feu sur l'airship, qui avait fait son apparition... et disparut rapidement vers le Pic Comanche." ("*The Dallas Morning New*", *Dallas, Texas, 19 avril 1897, P.5*)

- **16 avril, soir, Cadmus, Michigan** : "...Un témoin, qui avait vu un airship qu'il dépeignit comme étant un dragon volant, tira dessus un coup de fusil..." ("*Adrian-Evening-Telegram*", *Adrian, Michigan, 17 avril 1897*).

- **24 avril, soir, Robinson, Illinois** : "...L'airship a été vu soit-disant samedi soir... Quelqu'un éprouva assez de malice jusqu'à décharger sa Winchester dessus..." ("*Robinson-Argus*", *Robinson, Illinois, 28-4-1897*).

Schéma "réaction des population analphabètes"

Peu de blancs manifestèrent de la peur en observant l'airship. Et quand ce fut le cas, il s'agissait de personnes revenant de réunions religieuses, très impressionnables, d'autant qu'il y avait toujours un révérend quelconque pour profiter de cette situation et évoquer l'arrivée du Diable à cause des péchés nombreux commis par les hommes !

C'est la population noire qui fut véritablement terrorisée, avec quelques exceptions.

- **12 avril, soir, Adairville, Kentucky** : "... Des reflets sur un corps métallique étaient visibles, et l'objet était muni d'un phare puissant comme celui d'une locomotive... A noter que les Noirs furent terrorisés par cette apparition. Beaucoup d'entre eux se mirent à crier, d'autres à prier, comme si c'était la fin du monde..." (*Louisville-Courrier-Journal*", *Louisville, Kentucky, 15 avril 1897, p.5*).

- **16 avril, soir, Stafford, Texas** : "Un vieux Noir nommé Mose FLETCHER a vu l'airship qu'il a appelé "monstrueuse vermine"... Il était allé dans son écurie pour apaiser ses chevaux qui s'agitaient, lorsqu'il aperçut l'objet brillant dans le ciel. Il en fût si terrifié qu'il se rua chez lui... Mose est un vieux Noir sans malice et illétre et paraît sincère dans ses déclarations." (*Morning News*", *Dallas, Texas, 19 avril 1897, P.5*)

- **18 avril, soir, Laurinburg, Nord Caroline** : "... Une sorte d'énorme panier muni d'ailes et diffusant une brillante lumière, a été vu dans le ciel... Des noirs furent à deux doigts de quitter la ville lorsque la lumière qu'il émettait éclaira le sol..." ("*Rockingham-Rocket*", *Rockingham, Nord-Caroline, 29 avril 1897*).

- **22 avril, soir, Comté de Comberland, Virginie** : "... Le monstre aérien a été vu par deux nègres du comté. Comme ce sont deux noirs plutôt crédibles, il ne serait pas honnête de ne pas accorder de crédit à leurs déclaration. Ils ne savaient rien du vaisseau, et ne pouvaient pas par conséquent, avoir été influencés par les comptes rendus faits par les journaux au sujet de pareils incidents... La descriptions qu'ils firent correspond à celles données par les journaux dans tout le pays..." ("*Lynchburg-News*", *Lynchburg, Virginie, 2 mai 1897*).

JEAN SIDER

"L'AIRSHIP"

Juba. Un deuxième témoin verra 3 occupants et les entendra chanter : "Plus près de toi, mon Dieu !!" ("The Dallas Morning News", Texas, 18 avril 1897). A Pine-Like, Michigan, un témoin livra des sandwiches à des occupants d'airship qui le payèrent en monnaie canadienne ! Ils réclamèrent même un tire-bouchon ! ("Lansing-State-Republican", Michigan, 17/4/1897).

A Chambers Creek, Texas, des aéronautes prétendirent venir du Pôle Nord et être les survivants d'une des dix tribus d'Israël renforcés par les descendants de différentes expéditions naufragées ! ("Dallas Morning News", 19 avril 1897). A Nora, Illinois, un cheminot qui aida des occupants d'airship à réparer leur appareil, reçut en récompense un perroquet noir vivant "parlant dans une langue étrangère" ! ("Warren-Sentinel", Illinois, 21 avril 1897). A Mc Kinney, Texas, on entendit un occupant s'exclamer : "Nom d'un chien, William J., il faut mettre la gomme" et prononcer une phrase où il était question d'une "couronne d'épines" !! ("Galveston-Daily-News", Texas, 22 avril 1897). A Winamac, Indiana, un occupant donna 15 dollars au témoin pour lui acheter une miche de pain et des rafraichissements ! ("Wimamac-Democrat-Journal", Indiana, 30 avril 1897).

A Conroe, Texas, les occupants d'un airship entrent dans un restaurant pour y prendre un repas ! ("Galveston-Daily-News", Texas, 24 avril 1897). Enfin, pour terminer ce tour d'horizon dans ce genre, la meilleure de toutes ces histoires : à Prairieburg, Iowa, le propriétaire d'un airship atterri effectua des démarches auprès d'hommes d'affaires en vue de la vente de billets valables pour une excursion sur la planète Mars !!! ("Central-City-Newsletter", Iowa, 22 avril 1897).

Afin de ne pas décevoir nos "supporters", nous leur soumettrons toutefois quelques cas pouvant à la rigueur entrer dans un certain schéma développé par les occupants d'ovnis de notre époque :

- Mi-avril, soir, Beaumont, Texas : "... Un reporter du "New-Orleans-Picayune" interviewa le rabbin A. LEVI, à propos de l'atterrissage d'un airship à Beaumont, Texas, l'autre jour. Il cite sa déclaration avec toute la solennité que lui confère sa position de ministre du culte et sa réputation sans tache... Le rabbin, qui habite Beaumont, a vu le vaisseau aérien d'une part, et a bavardé avec ses passagers d'autre part. Il a raconté ce qui suit : "Le vaisseau avait atterri sur un domaine situé près de mon domicile un soir il y a environ 15 jours. Apprenant la nouvelle de cette arrivée, je me rendis sur place où j'appris par des gens que le vaisseau était descendu pour refaire sa provision d'eau. Il faisait noir comme de la poix, et je ne pus le voir que difficilement, excepté ses contours. Il faisait 150 pieds de long... avec d'immenses ailes

sur les côtés. Il semblait fait d'un matériau léger... J'ai parlé avec l'un des hommes lorsqu'il vint au bâtiment principal de la ferme, et lui ai serré la main. L'engin fonctionne à l'électricité... J'ai bien entendu dire l'homme où il avait été construit, mais je ne me rappelle plus le nom de l'inventeur... JE SUIS ENCORE STUPEFAIT DE N'AVOIR PU LUI POSER UNE QUESTION INTELLIGENTE, et à cause de cela je ne peux vous donner que peu de détails..." ("Pike-Country-Democrat" Pittsfield, Illinois, 7 mai 1897).

Cette affaire ne semble pas liée à celle qui prit place au même endroit le 19 avril, dans laquelle un sieur LIGON aurait bavardé avec un occupant nommé WILSON, cas très suspect d'ailleurs.

Nous pensons que l'intelligence manipulant le phénomène ovni désire PAR DESSUS TOUT, ne pas être identifiée. A la lumière de ce que nous avons pu tirer comme enseignement à travers les différents événements relatifs aux R.R.3. qui prirent place dans le monde depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale, il nous est apparu clairement que cette intelligence solutionnait le problème des témoins d'atterrissages de deux façons :

- 1) Les témoins sont encore suffisamment loin permettant une fuite rapide afin de ne pas permettre à ceux-ci de livrer un témoignage comportant des détails précis pouvant faciliter une éventuelle identification.
- 2) Les témoins sont trop près pour permettre une telle manœuvre et il est pratiqué alors une occultation de leur cerveau (Effacement de souvenirs visuels, annihilation de la volonté parfois accompagnée de paralysie physique, etc... Le cas de Valensole -M. Maurice MASSE- étant un des cas extrêmement rares, où la faculté de penser du témoin ne fut pas totalement bloquée -il VIT et ENTENDIT deux petits êtres après avoir été paralysé-).

Ceci étant ETABLI par des preuves testimoniales multiples dont certaines sont d'une crédibilité indiscutable, du fait d'enquêtes très poussées. Il y a une troisième solution qui est proposée par des chercheurs sérieux : le leurre au niveau du mental des témoins. C'est tout à fait possible, mais à partir de là, n'importe qui peut raconter n'importe quoi. Nous préférons nous désintéresser de certaines affaires pouvant entrer dans ce schéma, plutôt que de risquer d'accorder du crédit à des récits imaginaires pouvant leurrer... les ufologues !

Nous avons quelques cas de "fuite d'occupants" :

- 17 avril, soir, Laketon, Indiana : "...L'airship a atterri sur la terre ferme près d'une pompe à

L'Airship, cet ovni qui annonça la soucoupe volante

(3 - Suite)

Etude sur la vague de faux dirigeables de 1897, aux Etats-Unis, à partir de 1.200 cas d'observation sur lesquels ont été sélectionnés 129 incidents précis.

Schéma "Enlèvements"

Nous avons trois cas d'enlèvement dans notre fichier. L'un est un canular manifeste monté par des jeunes gens. Le "Kidnappé" fait un certain parcours en airship et revient au pays le lendemain après avoir été déposé au sol à quelques dizaines de miles plus loin. La relation de cet incident contient trop d'éléments suspects pour la rendre crédible. Nous n'en parlerons pas. Par contre, nous avons obtenu une histoire ahurissante pour ne pas dire démentielle, et qui, malgré quelques interprétations fantaisistes du témoin, contient quelques facteurs pouvant entrer dans un certain schéma développé par les enlèvements de notre époque. Voici cette incroyable narration, livrée ici in extenso, sans perdre de vue le fait qu'il ne s'agit peut-être que d'une affabulation :

4 Avril, 14 h 00, St Louis, Missouri : "... Ce fut le dimanche 4 avril que Mr JOSLIN quitta son domicile sis au 1747 Mississipi Avenue, selon ses propres dires, avec l'intention de faire une promenade à pied à travers Forest Parck. Il prétend avoir atteint le parc vers 14 h 00, et une demi-heure plus tard, alors qu'il se trouvait cheminant sur Skinker Road il éprouva une étrange sensation. C'était comme si **des milliers d'aiguilles s'étaient mises à le piquer**, selon Mr JOSLIN, lequel **tomba à la renverse**, tellement la douleur était atroce.

"Au bout de quelques minutes, le mal s'évanouit et il put se relever. Comme il ouvrait les yeux **qu'il avait involontairement gardés fermés pendant la durée de son supplice d'une façon inexplicable**, il aperçut **une extraordinaire créature non loin de lui, étendue sur le sol**. C'était un énorme animal de forme bizarre, et complètement différent de ce qu'il avait pu voir jusqu'ici, ou appris par la lecture vu qu'il lisait beaucoup. Le seul animal qu'il put trouver comme point de comparaison fut le dragon chinois. Il faisait environ 100 pieds de long et était très large, de couleur rouge mat et muni de grandes ailes, comme celles d'une chauve-souris. Sa tête était hors de proportion avec le corps, et il avait six yeux, deux blancs, deux verts et deux rouges. La bouche était énorme, et au-dessus des naseaux noirs de la créature, de terribles cornes se dressaient.

"Mais le plus extraordinaire de tout, selon Mr JOSLIN, c'était les créatures qui s'activaient sur le sommet de cette monstruosité. Il s'agissait **de bipèdes, mais plus petits qu'un homme moyen**, et leur peau était d'un rouge prononcé, un peu comme celle de l'animal sur lequel ils se tenaient. Leur petite tête était noire et paraissait sans yeux, bien qu'ils eussent une attitude indiquant qu'ils observaient Mr JOSLIN. L'une de ces créatures sauta sur le sol en souplesse, s'avança vers lui et **fit un geste**. Mr JOSLIN eut l'impression **d'être hypnotisé** et suivit l'être, lequel resta à lui faire face tout en reculant vers le dragon. **Contre sa volonté**, Mr JOSLIN fut ainsi obligé de monter à l'arrière de l'animal. Puis, l'une des étranges créatures bipèdes parut donner un signal et tout à coup, le dragon étendit ses ailes énormes et prit son essor, laissant Forest Park loin derrière lui.

"Pendant près de trois semaines, Mr JOSLIN fut comme un prisonnier à bord de l'étrange appareil, et ses souffrances furent horribles, selon ce qu'il prétend. **Il fut fréquemment torturé** par les créatures, et fut incapable de résister vu leur nombre. Il estime qu'elles étaient au moins mille et qu'elles s'employèrent à le **brûler avec leurs mains qui étaient chauffées au rouge**. Mr JOSLIN a raconté beaucoup de choses sur son voyage et sur les étranges spectacles auxquels il assista, **mais il ne sait pas comment il revint sur terre**. La première chose qu'il apprit lorsqu'il sortit **d'une période d'inconscience**, fut qu'il se trouvait à l'hôpital de la ville, salle n° 9. Son cas a été mis sur le compte de l'alcoolisme." ("St-Louis-Globe-Democrat", St-Louis, Missouri, 23/4/1897, p. 12).

Nous avons souligné les passages qui pourraient laisser penser à un incident entrant dans le schéma que développent les enlèvements de notre époque. La description faite est naïve et relève d'un esprit simple, mais nous possédons d'autres cas où l'airship est décrit comme un "dragon volant". Le journaliste qui interrogea le témoin avoue en tête d'article qu'il eut beaucoup de mal à convaincre Mr JOSLIN de lui faire ses confidences. A noter que l'alcool fut rendu responsable de nombreux récits même moins "délirants" !

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Nous allons maintenant évoquer un cas assez délicat car il est relatif à un enlèvement apparemment sans restitution. Ca n'est pas dit textuellement, mais cela est suggéré. Il demeure intéressant, bien qu'altéré par quelques allusions malheureuses, mais émanant de Noirs, lesquels, à l'époque, n'avaient pas pour habitude de plaisanter avec ce genre d'événements. Nous vous le présentons dans ses grandes lignes.

18 avril, après-midi, Caldwell, Texas : "... Il y a eu une certaine agitation et de nombreuses discussions ici durant les quelques jours venant de s'écouler, concernant l'airship. On dit, de sources crédibles chez les Noirs, que l'airship a été vu dans les champs de coton des Brazos hier après-midi. Il fit son apparition dans le ciel et se posa sur les bords de la rivière pour faire une provision d'eau (!). Deux des marins du bord capturèrent un Noir qui sarclait des plans de coton non loin de là, et l'emmenèrent avec eux à bord du vaisseau parce qu'il travaillait un dimanche (!!). L'appareil fila vers l'est et fut bientôt perdu de vue. Le reporter du News n'a pas pu vérifier ceci, car il n'avait pas suffisamment de temps pour le faire, afin de retrouver des gens qui le virent... (Le reste est sans intérêt)" ("Galveston-Daily-News", Galveston, Texas, 20 Avril 1897).

Les explications données, et que nous avons ponctuées de points d'exclamations, sont des SUPPOSITIONS bien entendu, compréhensibles pour les Noirs de l'époque. Il est évident que nous ne prendrons pas ce récit pour argent comptant et que nous avons conscience qu'il peut être une cabale, montée par des Noirs qui en avaient assez de travailler le dimanche, "Jour du Seigneur". Il faut rappeler que les Noirs américains de cette époque, du moins ceux qui étaient évangélisés, étaient encore plus croyants que les Blancs ! (Ou plus naïfs diront les mauvaises langues !)

Voici maintenant un schéma encore plus "trapu", relatif à ce qui est dit "phénomènes connexes". Le cas que nous citerons pour l'illustrer est UNIQUE dans nos 1200 fiches actuelles sur 1897. Il est relatif à des "hommes volants", et les habitués des revues ufologiques savent que des cas d'hommes volants ont été enregistrés un peu partout dans le monde, même en France :

Schéma "Phénomènes connexes" :

1^è quinzaine Avril, Jour, Abbott, Texas : "... Un fermier, Mr Eugène APLING, prétend qu'un nommé BROWN, résidant à cinq miles à l'est d'Hillboro, lui a raconté une singulière histoire d'hommes volants vus par deux fermiers installés près d'Abbott, qui étaient en train de travailler dans leurs champs respectifs situés côte à côte. Les deux hommes auraient vu tomber du ciel des

corps, qui se posèrent sur le sol aussi gracieusement que des oiseaux. Il y aurait eu SEPT HOMMES VOLANTS, un homme d'âge mûr et six jeunes garçons. Ils atterrirent à 50 yards des deux témoins, restèrent sur place quelques secondes, puis repartirent vers les cieux. Le jour était clair, et le ciel sans nuages..." ("Dallas-Morning-News", Dallas Texas, 18 Avril 1897, p. 7)

Nous avons également un cas de bestiaux morts dans des conditions mystérieuses, mais comme il n'y a pas de descriptions détaillées des dépouilles, nous estimons insuffisants les éléments plaidant en faveur d'une divulgation. Il est aussi dit que des battues organisées par de nombreux chasseurs, en vue de tuer la "bête" responsable de ces tueries, ne donnèrent aucun résultat.

Schéma "crashes"

Mr Jacques Scornaux va encore se plaindre qu'ils ne prennent place qu'aux Etats-Unis... Mais 1897, ne concerna QUE les USA, et Mr Léonard STRINGFIELD, cette fois-ci, n'y est pour rien !

Nous savons que ce type d'informations est à manipuler avec précautions, mais nous ne les avons pas inventées, et si elles font partie d'un certain "folklore", nous sommes le premier à le déplorer.

Nous savons maintenant que le crash d'Aurora, Texas, qui fit couler beaucoup d'encre ufologique et remuer bien de la terre du côté du cimetière de la Ville, n'était qu'un canular. Nous éviterons donc d'en parler :

Début avril, ? Bethany, Missouri : "... Crash d'airship signalé à Bethany -Pas d'autres détails connus-" ("Clinton-Daily-Democrat", Clinton, Missouri, 8 Avril 1897 p. 2).

10 avril, ? Moberly, Missouri : "... On prétend que près de Moberly, Missouri, l'épave d'un airship vient juste d'être découverte, dans laquelle on aurait trouvé les restes méconnaissables et mutilés de deux hommes..." ("Rockford Republic", Rockford, Illinois, 12 Avril 1897).

10 avril, soir, Rhodes, Iowa : "... Une grosse foule se rassembla dans les rues lorsqu'apparut dans le ciel une très brillante lumière... L'objet semblait perdre de l'altitude, et il fut bientôt si près du sol que le bruit de sa machinerie put être entendu, au point de devenir aussi fort que celui d'un train. A un moment donné, le monstre aérien fit un brusque plongeon, et s'enfonça dans le plan d'eau de la Cie du Chemin de Fer, une sorte de lac couvrant environ 8 acres en surface. Aucune plume ne peut décrire ce qui s'en suivit. La lave écumante du Vésuve se précipitant dans les flots

peut seulement égaler ce qui se passa. La lumière était si grosse et produisait tant de chaleur, qu'un horrible sifflement se fit entendre quand le monstre pénétra dans le lac-réservoir, audible à plusieurs miles alentour et l'eau devint si chaude qu'on ne pouvait plus y plonger le bras sans se brûler. Aussitôt que le naufragé aura fait surface, un description de la machine sera envoyée. Signé : John BUTLER. ("Marshalltown-Times-Republican", Marshalltown, Iowa, 13 avril 1897, p. 3).

A noter que ce même 10 avril, un crash fut enregistré à Lanark, Illinois, mais il fut rapidement prouvé qu'il ne s'agissait que d'un canular perpétré par un employé du télégraphe.

12 avril, Winamac, Indiana : "... Un rapport Winamac, Indiana, dit que l'airship a atterri dans les marais de Pink Mink, à 300 pieds de 3 chasseurs, et aujourd'hui, 5 pieds de ce qui semble être une aile, dépassent du marais, montrant l'endroit où il s'est enlisé. "Parkersburg-Daily-State-Journal", Parkersburg, Virgine-de-l'Ouest, 14 avril 1897, p.4.

15 avril, Jefferson, Iowa : "... Un journal local de ce matin a publié une histoire corsée concernant un airship qui aurait été vu s'écrasant à terre au nord de la ville. Bientôt un nombre consistant de personnes devaient se rendre sur les lieux du crash présumé, pour voir le trou où l'objet avait disparu". ("Chicago-Times-Herald", Chicago, Illinois, 17 Avril 1897).

Nous vous laisserons le soin de décider si oui ou non toutes ces informations furent sérieuses, ou si quelques météorites capricieuses choisirent de se mêler à la "saga" des airships. Pour notre part, peu nous importe si ces chutes d'objets se produisirent et si elles concernèrent des engins. Il est beaucoup trop tard pour vérifier ce genre d'incident et ils ne resteront, pour la postérité, que de simples anecdotes.

Il n'en demeure pas moins vrai qu'il y a là un schéma qui s'est perpétué cinquante ans plus tard très exactement et de façon autrement plus convaincante si nous en jugeons par un document émanant du F.B.I. enregistré en mars 1950, faisant état d'une information obtenue par un agent de la célèbre agence auprès d'un agent des services de renseignements de l'U.S. Air Force, relative à la récupération par l'armée de l'air américaine, de TROIS soucoupes volantes écrasées, ainsi que de leurs équipages décédés, décrits comme de petits êtres humains de trois pieds de haut. Ici il ne s'agit plus d'un élément issu d'une simple rumeur, mais d'UN DOCUMENT OFFICIEL. Ce document a été obtenu par la voie légale, suite à des actions en justice, dans le cadre du "Freedom of Information Act" (FIOA), par Mr Bruce Maccabee, Directeur du Mufon pour le Maryland.



Pour en terminer avec le schéma "crashes", voici une histoire pratiquement inconnue de l'ufologie francophone, mise à jour en 1973, aux Etats-Unis (Agaçants ces Yankees avec leurs crashes, n'est-ce pas mon cher Jacques ?) et que Jérôme CLARK, ufologue qui est en train de retourner lentement mais sûrement sa veste, a identifié immédiatement comme étant un canular de belle trempe, car dit-il, "en ce temps-là, les journaux imprimaient n'importe quoi". Nous laisserons à Mr CLARK la responsabilité de son jugement hâtif et partial, pour passer à la narration de ce fait :

"Un bien étrange phénomène.

A peu près à 35 miles au nord-est de Benkelman, Comté de Dundy, le 6 Juin, s'est produit un phénomène qui a provoqué une vive émotion. Il semble que John W. ELLIS et trois de ses hommes étaient en train de procéder au rassemblement du bétail, lorsqu'ils furent soudain mis en émoi par un terrible bruit de ronflement au-dessus de leurs têtes, et en levant les yeux, ils virent un corps flamboyant tombant comme un trait vers le sol. L'objet chuta au-delà du point où ils se tenaient, en un lieu qui était caché à leur vue par une dépression de terrain. Le nommé WILKS se rendit à cheval sur les lieux supposés de la chute de l'objet céleste, et il prétendit avoir vu des fragments de roues dentelées et d'autres pièces de machinerie répandues sur le sol, éparpillées sur la trajectoire parcourue par le visiteur du ciel, rayonnant d'une chaleur si intense que l'herbe était grillée sur de larges portions de sol dans l'entourage immédiat des objets en question, et il était impossible de s'y approcher. Allant au bord du profond ravin dans lequel l'objet était tombé, l'homme entreprit d'examiner de quoi il s'agissait. Mais la chaleur était si élevée que l'air était carrément embrasé aux alentours et la lumière émise si aveuglante que les yeux ne pouvaient être gardés ouverts bien longtemps. L'intensité de la chaleur était telle qu'un cow-boy nommé WILLIAMSON tomba sans connaissance pour avoir voulu s'approcher de trop près du lieu où se trouvait l'objet. Son visage se couvrit d'ampoules et ses cheveux roussirent. Son état fut jugé si critique que l'homme brûlé fut amené chez M. ELLIS et soigné du mieux que l'on put. Un frère de la victime qui vit à Denver ainsi qu'un médecin, furent prévenus. L'objet se trouvait à 200 pieds du lieu où fut brûlé WILLIAMSON.

"Voyant qu'il était impossible d'approcher le mystérieux visiteur, les gens qui étaient avec WILLIS remontèrent la trace qu'il avait laissée sur le sol. Là où le corps flamboyant fit impact avec le sol, pour la première fois, la terre était sablonneuse et comportait des parcelles d'herbes. Le sable avait fondu dès l'impact, sur une épaisseur non déterminée et sur une surface d'environ 30 pieds sur 80, et un magma encore bouillonnant et fumant subsis-

tant. Entre ceci et le reste de la trace, il y avait encore d'autres endroits similaires où l'objet avait été aussi en contact avec le sol, mais aucun n'était autant marqué que le premier cité. Il fut impossible de faire de plus amples recherches à ce moment-là, et les curieux vinrent de tous les ranchs environnants pour contempler l'étrange spectacle ce soir-là. La lumière émise par l'objet était flamboyante, aussi flamboyante que les rayons du soleil, et trop forte pour être regardée par l'œil humain. Le 7 au matin, une autre visite fut faite pour satisfaire la curiosité locale. Parmi les gens qui se rendirent sur place, il y avait E.W. RAWLINS, Inspecteur des Elevages pour le district, qui se trouvait à Benkelman au moment des faits. Il procéda à une plus ample vérification de l'objet, et selon lui, les plus petits morceaux de la machine avaient refroidi et pouvaient être approchés, mais pas saisis. Une pièce de métal, d'environ 16 pouces de large, 3 d'épaisseur et 3,5 de long (Sic !) ressemblant à une pale d'hélice propulsive, put être ramenée à l'aide d'une bêche. La pièce ne pesait pas plus de cinq livres mais semblait aussi résistante et aussi compacte que n'importe quel métal connu. Un fragment de roue à bords crénelés, ayant un diamètre apparent de 7 à 8 pieds, fut également récupéré. Il paraissait être du même matériau et possédait la même remarquable légèreté.

"L'aérolithe ou quoi que ce soit, semblait cylindrique, faisant environ 50 ou 60 pieds de long, et peut-être de 10 à 12 pieds de diamètre. Une grande effervescence a pris place dans la contrée et le rassemblement du bétail est suspendu tandis que les cow-boys attendent que la merveilleuse machine refroidisse, afin de pouvoir l'examiner de plus près. Mr ELLIS se rendra au bureau du cadastre pour essayer d'acquérir le terrain sur lequel se trouve l'étrange chose de façon que sa découverte ne lui soit pas disputée. La région concernée par cet évènement est plutôt sauvage et accidentée, et les routes qui y accèdent sont davantage de simples traces qu'autre chose."

Nous allons vous mettre à l'aise tout de suite. Cette affaire ne prit pas place en 1897 et cela peut-être vaut-il mieux, car les éternels sceptiques auraient pu faire la moue et nous auraient proposé de la faire entrer dans le "schéma" réservé aux canulars qui foisonnèrent dans la période qui délimite ces évènements.

Nous aimons penser que les lecteurs sauront nous pardonner de l'avoir reprise dans le cadre de cette étude, mais à la lecture de cette prose extraordinaire, nous avons été incapables de résister au plaisir de vous la présenter. D'autant que l'incident se trouve isolé dans l'espace comme le temps.

Ce récit pour le moins insolite et qui rend compte d'un soi-disant crash, fut enregistré le 6 Juin... 1884 s'il vous plaît, et si vraiment c'est un canular, alors il faut élever une statue à l'homme qui l'a conçu. Car, à notre humble avis, il ne contient aucun élément démentiel pouvant faire déboucher toute cette affaire sur une affabulation. Les détails sont nombreux, et ce qui arriva au témoin "brûlé" alors qu'il se tenait à 200 pieds de l'objet, a un petit air de radiations. Un petit air nous disons bien. Mais avouez que cette narration est assez extraordinaire si on la place dans un contexte temporel qui nous ramène à presque un siècle en arrière !

Ce texte fut publié dans un petit hebdomadaire provincial, "The Nebraska Nugget", imprimé à Holdrege, et qui cessa de paraître au début de notre siècle, dans un numéro de Juin 1884. Il fut divulgué la première fois après la deuxième guerre mondiale, dans un numéro de Décembre 1973 de "Beyond Reality" à la fin d'un article de Hayden C. HEWES, consacré à la vague de 1897. Il lui fut envoyé par un certain E.S. SUTTON, habitant Benkelman, Nebraska, lors d'une campagne organisée par "Newsweek" et d'autres médias, sur l'initiative de HEWES, pour retrouver des témoins d'observations d'airship en 1897. Parmi les lettres que l'ufologue américain reçut, figurait celle de Mr Sutton qui lui envoyait une photocopie de l'article en question. Des recherches furent entreprises, et il s'avéra que l'unique collection du "Nebraska Nugget" existant encore ne possédait plus le numéro qui suivait celui reprenant cette information. D'autre part, le numéro qui venait après, publié 15 jours plus tard, ne parlait plus de cet incident.

Autrement dit, cette histoire ne restera qu'une simple anecdote, qui en fera peut-être rêver certains et sourire quelques autres. (Nous avons tenté, sans succès jusqu'ici, d'obtenir une photocopie du texte original).

En guise de conclusions :

Nous vous avons présenté dans ce texte, 129 références PRECISES relatives à des FAITS étonnants, s'étant produits ou, pour ne pas heurter la susceptibilité des personnes pointilleuses, s'étant soi-disant produits, dans une période comprise entre le 1er et le 30 avril 1897, si l'on excepte le cas de 1884 qui termine cette étude.

Ces 129 incidents représentent une sélection opérée sur un lot de 1.200 fiches établies à partir de documents ORIGINAUX n'ayant strictement rien à faire avec des livres ou revues consacrés aux ovnis. Tout a été prélevé AUX SOURCES, et sans le concours de MM. Robert G. NEELEY, de Decatur, Illinois, et George W. EBERHART, de Chi-

cago, Illinois, et de plusieurs librairies d'Universités américaines, jamais ces informations n'auraient pu être divulguées.

Nous avons également pris contact avec différents organismes d'état américains spécialisés parmi lesquels : la Smithsonian Institution qui abrite le National Air et Space Museum, la Federal Aviation Administration, l'U.S. Air Force, ainsi que des historiens en aéronautique tels que : Mr Merrill STICKLER, d'Hammondsport, New-York ; Mr A.D. TOPPING, de Slidell, Louisiane ; M. Henry PALMER, de Stonnington, Connecticut ; M. Robert H. STEPANEK, du Bradley Air Museum Windsor Locks, Connecticut, etc...

Grâce à ces organismes et historiens, nous avons pu réunir des informations formelles sur l'histoire du dirigeable aux U.S.A. jusqu'en 1897, et obtenir des précisions sur les travaux des chercheurs suivants : S. ANDREWS, S. CAIRN-CROSS, P. CAMPBELL, A. DE BAUSSET, T. EDISON, W. GUSTAFSON, H.J. HADDAN, H. HEINTZ, N. HELMER, A. KINSELLA, R.W. LAKE, F. MARRIOTT, J. MONTEITH, C.H. MORGAN, C.E. MYERS, G. PARKINSON, E.J. PENNINGTON, J.H. PENNINGTON, C.W. PETERSEN, R. PORTER, A. REICKERT, W.N. RIDDLE, C.F. RITCHELL, D.L. RHONE, S. SPAETH, C. SPIEGLER, E. STEPMAN, R. THAYER, J. WORMS, etc...

Tous ces documents tendent à prouver on ne peut mieux, et plusieurs lettres émanant d'organismes officiels américains le disent noir sur blanc, qu'en 1897 AUCUN DIRIGEABLE MOTORISE ET PILOTE NE VOLAIT. Seuls, trois inventeurs furent en mesure d'effectuer quelques courts vols à bord d'engins propulsés par la force musculaire : A.W. BARNARD (En mai seulement), Carl E. MYERS, et

Charles F. RITCHELL. De bien modestes apparens en vérité, et qui ne sortirent que de jour. Et il est très facile de constater en prenant connaissance des particularités propres à ces trois ballons, que de tels aérostats n'ont pu être à l'origine des multitudes d'observations qui furent enregistrées. A noter que Carl MYERS, qui vit voler un petit ballon affublé de courtes ailes qu'il actionnait comme des rames, se trouvait à l'œuvre dans l'état de New-York au moment de la vague d'airships, état qui n'enregistra aucune observation à notre connaissance, si nous en jugeons par les articles des journaux new-yorkais que nous avons dans nos archives et qui ne parlent que des cas s'étant produits dans d'autres états.

Ceci étant dit pour vous montrer que nous avons pris toutes les précautions nécessaires en vue d'assurer nos arrières.

Nous avons choisi de ne pas évoquer ici deux "schémas" qui n'auraient pas intéressé grand monde. L'un est relatif aux cas de "messages écrits", l'autre concerne des "inventeurs bidons". En fait, il ne s'agit ni plus ni moins que de mystifications dans lesquelles se mêlent aussi bien les plaisanteries, les canulars, les coups montés en vue d'escroqueries, et peut-être aussi quelques cas de "debunking" mis sur pied par des gens qui auraient subodoré quelque chose d'énorme, d'trop gros pour être accepté par les mentalités de cette époque. En effet, nous avons relevé des narrations fort bien conçues et assez équilibrées parmi le fatras de nouvelles de ce type qui fleurirent dans les journaux du Middlewest au moment des faits qui nous intéressent ici. On ne peut pas dire qu'il y eût une campagne d'intoxication, mais plutôt quelques efforts désordonnés et disparates - peut-être de religieux - visant à "banaliser cette situation".

(à suivre)



Courrier



Si l'ufologie doit être un domaine de recherche scientifique, il a ceci de particulier qu'il suscite (je le soupçonne), d'immenses réserves d'énergie et de passion qui jusque là, sommeillaient, semble-t-il, depuis longtemps peut-être, pour nous, depuis que le glas des grandes croyances religieuses, sous leur ancienne forme métaphysique, a été sonné en occident.

En tous cas, l'on peut constater que l'intérêt qu'on lui porte, coïncide pour nous avec une sorte de besoin "religieux" au cœur même de la réalité physique. Il est, en celà, à rapprocher de notre engouement pour les religions orientales, aussi

bien que pour les multiples sciences de l'homme et les politiques qui ont toutes en commun, d'essayer de nous faire atteindre par une approche systématique voire scientifique des réalités, un degré supérieur de réalisation, d'épanouissement de notre être physique, mental, social.

Le phénomène OVNI, lui, par ses manifestations multiples, allant du phénomène physique, brut, jusqu'à une apparence intelligente bien développée, constitue une mine de suggestions pour nous, dans le domaine du plus total inconnu.

Pour moi, son intérêt se situe justement en ce qu'il nous attire hors de nous-mêmes en quête d'une réalité tout à fait nouvelle, tant sur le plan purement scientifique par la recherche d'une interprétation de la réalité physique, différente, que sur le plan purement humain par ce qu'il nous suggère de possibilités enfouies en nous-mêmes, (mentales, intellectuelles) jusque dans nos comportements dont nous entrevoyons soudainement les limites présentes.

le phénomènes OVNI me semble précieux en ce qu'il permet de relativiser notre connaissance. Il nous révèle, en négatif, et de manière imaginative, l'étendue de notre ignorance, que la

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L'Airship, cet ovni qui annonça la soucoupe volante

(4 - Suite et Fin)

Etude sur la vague de faux dirigeables de 1897, aux Etats-Unis, à partir de 1.200 cas d'observation sur lesquels ont été sélectionnés 129 incidents précis.

Il y a enfin un "schéma" que nous avons gardé pour la fin, car il ne souffre d'aucune comparaison possible avec les ovnis de l'après deuxième guerre mondiale. Il s'agit du "schéma" **ailer battantes**. Il faut entendre par "ailer battantes", des ailer comme celles des oiseaux, non pas petites et rigides comme les minables "rames-ailées" de Carl MYERS, mais énormes, gigantesques, pour reprendre la terminologie employée. Ces ailer s'incurvaient, aussi bien dans un sens que dans un autre, exactement dans des ailer d'oiseaux. Nous avons de nombreuses fiches relatives à l'observation de ces ailer, moins cependant, où leur mouvement est précisé. Si vous vous reportez au croquis fait à partir d'un dessin publié dans un journal américain d'époque, vous aurez une meilleure idée de ce que furent ces ailer. A noter que la queue des airships fut également décrite assez souvent "comme celle d'un oiseau", "comme celle d'un poisson", "en éventails", "comme des nageoires", etc...

Nous pouvons donc conclure sans grand risque de choquer le lecteur ayant l'esprit largement ouvert à toutes les propositions, que le phénomène ou l'intelligence qui manipula les airships en 1897, semble s'être beaucoup inspiré de notre faune ailée, y compris l'exocet, et ne parait pas avoir puisé dans les structures mentales de l'homme pour se manifester.

Nous avons aussi noté au cours des opérations de traduction qui furent nécessaires pour la mise en fiche, qu'il n'y avait qu'un nombre pratiquement insignifiant de cas où une nacelle classique (suspendue par des cordages et maintenue par des haubans) était décrite. Nous pouvons même affirmer qu'ils furent rarissimes. Ceci est très important dans la mesure où tous les ballons libres et captifs qui purent être lancés au printemps 1897 répondaient à cette caractéristique, de même que les premiers dirigeables motorisés et pilotés qui apparurent aux Etats-Unis à partir de 1902.

D'autre part, nous pouvons vous affirmer de la façon la plus catégorique qui soit qu'aucun feu de position ou de signalisation ne fut apposé sur

les aérostats ayant pu évoluer à cette époque. Le vol de nuit était inutile, et dangereux surtout au-dessus des grands espaces américains, et bien peu d'aérostats se risquèrent à se lancer dans une telle entreprise. Idem pour le "phare" ou "projecteur", qui n'apparut qu'avec la prise en main des dirigeables par l'Armée à compter de 1910. Et si les dessinateurs et rêveurs du siècle dernier représentèrent parfois sur leurs croquis un tel équipement, pour des besoins de publicité ou d'illustration quelconques, cela ne correspondait absolument pas à la réalité. Un phare ou un projecteur aurait obligé l'aérostat à embarquer des batteries au volume et au poids tels que l'envol de l'appareil aérien aurait été impossible, étant donné le niveau développé par la technique du pays et du moment.

Pour ce qui est de l'influence de la littérature de science-fiction sur les mentalités, nous avons pu constater qu'elle fut nulle. Du reste, cette forme d'expression était embryonnaire au moment où ces événements prirent place. Les livres de Jules Verne étaient connus, mais il faut noter ici que les vaisseaux aériens dépeints par l'auteur français n'eurent strictement rien à faire avec l'airship de 1897, je crois l'avoir déjà signalé. Pour ce qui est de H.G. Wells, l'auteur anglais, Loren CROSS l'ufologue américain s'étant penché sur la petite vague de 1896 en Californie, a prétendu que "la Guerre des Mondes" aurait été publié en 1897 sous forme de feuilleton dans un quotidien américain. L'ennui, c'est que CROSS ne dit pas de quel journal il s'agit, d'une part, ni à quelle date précise, commença cette série. Personne parmi nos correspondants U.S. n'a pu nous renseigner sur ce point. Quoi qu'il en soit, il apparait à l'étude de cette vague, que l'hypothèse extra-terrestre fut très loin d'être l'obsession des foules, au point que les rares allusions faites à des martiens furent émises sous forme de boutades, comme le font des gens du midi en France, dont l'habitude de l'exagération relève davantage du trait d'esprit que du mensonge.

La science fiction américaine, qui devait devenir si riche à partir de 1912 avec le fameux pionnier Edgar Rice BURROUGHS qui se lança dans ce

genre avec "Under the Moons of Mars", eut toutefois son petit Jules VERNE si nous osons dire, en la personne de Luis Philip SENARENS, ou lu SENARENS, qui n'était âgé que de 15 ans lorsqu'il fut choisi pour mener à bien la poursuite d'un feuilleton d'aventures comico-mirobolantes d'un personnage nommé Franck READE dans un hebdomadaire pour enfants, "Boys of New-York". Il avait commencé à écrire ses textes et même à les vendre, dès l'âge de 14 ans ! Son héros, Frank READE, était un inventeur de génie fantasque, à qui il arrivait des aventures naïves et grotesques, que seuls les adolescents appréciaient. Lu SENARENS fit voler son personnage favori dans un vaisseau aérien qui ressemblait un peu à l'Albatros de Jules Verne avec beaucoup moins d'hélices horizontales toutefois. Selon Sam MOSKOWITZ, qui fait autorité en matière d'histoire de science-fiction, les textes de Lu SENARENS auraient été publiés au début des années 1880 dans "Boys of New-York", et reprises en 1884 et 1885 dans "Wide Awake Library". Comme "Robur-le-Conquérant" fut publié en 1886, les américains estiment maintenant que Verne s'inspira de LU SENARENS !

Ce qui nous paraît curieux, dans cette affaire, c'est que notre source d'information ("The Great Airship Mystery", de Daniel COHEN, Dood, Meed & Co, 1981, New-York), ajoute ceci : "En 1897, alors que Lu SANARENS avait 15 ans..." Sans doute une confusion...

Quoi qu'il en soit, il ne nous paraît pas probable que les récits de Lu SENARENS, Jules VERNE, et H.G. WELLS aient influencé les témoins d'observations de 1897. Nous n'en n'avons relevé aucune trace.

Tout ceci nous conduit donc à dire que les quelques chercheurs français ou anglo-saxons qui ont tenté d'identifier l'airship à l'invention d'aéronautes locaux de génie (tel Louis WINKLER, consultant en Astronomie pour le MUFON, dans The Mufon Ufo Journal n° 169 et 172, et Jean GIRAUD dans INFO-OVNI n° 6), des abus journalistiques (Daniel COHEN, op. cit.), ou des mauvaises interprétations - Vénus - provoquées par une psychose collective (Michel MONNERIE, "Le Naufrage des Extra-Terrestres. Editions Rationnalistes, Paris), SE SONT FOURVOYES. A noter que ces quatre personnes n'ont pas effectué d'étude approfondie sur cette vague et que certaines n'avaient à leur disposition que des données fragmentaires et très insuffisantes pour leur permettre d'émettre un jugement. Aucune d'entre elles n'a cherché à se procurer des textes originaux et l'astronome Louis WINKLER va jusqu'à accorder du crédit aux R.R.3 texanes où un aéronaute prétend se nommer WILSON, alors que dans un texte publié dans Infospace n° 56, j'ai montré avec preuve à l'appui que

ces incidents n'étaient que des canulars ! Non seulement Louis WINKLER n'a pas œuvré sur des données originales, mais de plus il ne semble pas avoir effectué de recherches sérieuses sur l'état de l'aéronautique de son pays en cette fin de 19^e siècle, considérant ce WILSON comme un aéronaute américain !

Il nous faut signaler également une anomalie de taille, concernant l'attitude plus qu'étrange des scientifiques de l'époque qui nièrent l'existence de l'airship DES LES PREMIERES OBSERVATIONS, sans même s'inquiéter de savoir si un génial bricoleur américain était parvenu à ses fins. Car l'idée de maîtriser l'art de la navigation aérienne, comme on se plaisait à dire en ce temps-là, était déjà dans les esprits depuis fort longtemps. Nous avons pu exhumer une cinquantaine de projets de dirigeables conçus par des américains entre 1850 et 1897, la grosse majorité étant des utopies pures ! Il faut l'avouer. Deux ou trois aboutirent seulement à un modèle réduit et un seul effectua un unique vol en plein air, sans passager, maintenu par des cordes aux mains d'assistants au sol qui plus est !

Le fait que ces scientifiques ne cherchèrent même pas à mener des vérifications sur la possibilité de l'existence d'inventeurs locaux alors qu'il y avait au moins deux dirigeables à force musculaire qui opéraient de petits vols diurnes (Voir mon étude résumée sur l'histoire du dirigeable U.S., qui viendra après cet article), nous donne l'impression d'un blocage psychique artificiel, auquel nous avons fait allusion dans LDLN n° 217/218. C'est pratiquement impossible à prouver, mais il va falloir que nous commençons à envisager sérieusement cette hypothèse, car elle rend compte de façon plus compréhensible, un comportement de ces scientifiques n'ayant aucun rapport, même lointain, avec la curiosité naturelle que manifeste tout homme normalement constitué quand il est confronté à quelque chose qu'il ne comprend pas ou qu'il s'explique mal.

Quant à nous, qui prétendons avoir mené des investigations en profondeur sur cette fameuse vague ainsi que sur l'histoire de l'aéronautique américaine, nous nous permettons de dire ceci :

En dépit des farces, des coups montés pour faciliter des escroqueries, des mauvaises interprétations, et de certains abus journalistiques évidents, représentant le déchet classique relevé dans toutes les vagues du passé comme du présent, il y eut en 1897, plusieurs appareils aériens non identifiés qui sillonnèrent les cieux d'une grande partie des Etats-Unis.

Ces ovnis, puisque nous ne pouvons les définir autrement, étaient probablement les produits d'une technologie n'ayant strictement rien à voir avec celle des sociétés humaines de l'époque, et

en conséquence, ne peuvent appartenir qu'à une intelligence extra-humaine.

Nous savons que nous pouvons nous tromper et nous sommes conscient que nous pouvons être leurré par quelque chose de différent de ce que nous supposons. Car nos convictions n'ont pas été forgées par des fantômes ou une mystique quelconque mais par une multitude d'éléments jugés d'une façon discursive et non pas intuitive.

L'étude de la vague de 1897 nous a convaincu de l'existence, parmi la panoplie de phénomènes qui semblent dispensés par cette intelligence étrangère à nos sociétés, de véritables VEHICULES AERIENS, dont le comportement se rapprocha singulièrement des ovnis observés depuis 1947, soit un demi-siècle plus tard.

Nous n'avons pas la prétention de dire QUI fut derrière tout cela, ni POURQUOI. Nous n'en avons ni la possibilité, ni la capacité, malheureusement... Nous préférons laisser ce soin à des chercheurs plus compétents et mieux armés que nous. Pour notre part, nous avons préféré démontrer cette présence étrangère dans un passé relativement peu reculé, à une époque où les mentalités et les concepts des populations étaient différents des nôtres. Nous avons choisi de faire ce travail sur-

tout parce que nous étions animé du désir de rétablir une réalité qui était maltraitée inconsidérément depuis quelques années. Nous osons espérer avoir réussi dans notre entreprise, et nous irons jusqu'à émettre le vœu de voir dorénavant des chercheurs courageux aller aussi loin que nous sommes allé, et même au delà si possible, lorsqu'ils s'attaqueront à une autre vague du passé avant de la dégingoler en flammes. Cela leur coûtera probablement quelque argent, mais de nos jours, chaque chose a un prix qu'il faut accepter de payer pour la posséder.

Et s'il y a encore parmi vous des gens estimant qu'il n'y a aucune raison pour qu'un humble passionné de phénomènes inexplicables puisse montrer autant d'impertinence à vouloir contester les explications de scientifiques vivant à la fin du siècle dernier, qu'il nous soit permis de proposer à leur méditation le texte suivant, dont Pierre Teilhard de Chardin est l'auteur :

"Anatomiquement, c'est vrai, l'homme ne paraît pas avoir appréciablement changé depuis quelque trente mille ans. Mais psychologiquement, est-il certain que nous soyons les mêmes ? C'est-à-dire sommes-nous bien sûrs, par exemple, de ne pas naître aujourd'hui avec la faculté de percevoir et d'accepter certaines évidences qui échappaient à nos devanciers" (l'apparition de l'homme, Chap. 7, Le Seuil)

Précisions sur l'histoire du ballon dirigeable aux U.S.A. par Jean Sider

Parallèlement à mes recherches de documents originaux sur la vague de 1897, j'ai pris la précaution d'établir différents contacts avec des organismes spécialisés et des experts en histoire de l'aéronautique américaine.

Disons tout de suite que ce n'est pas en France, malheureusement, qu'on a été capable de me renseigner. Sur quatre historiens contactés dans l'hexagone, trois n'ont pas daigné répondre, l'autre m'a conseillé de m'adresser à la Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C., ce que j'ai fait.

Le Musée de l'Air à Paris, bien que possédant 30.000 ouvrages divers consacrés à l'aviation, n'a AUCUN renseignement précis sur les premiers chercheurs en matière de ballon dirigeable. J'ai passé un nombre formidable d'heures à feuilleter des dizaines et des dizaines de volumes et de revues sans succès. Du reste, dans une lettre datée du 8 Janvier 1981, cet organisme, par l'intermédiaire de Mr A. Degardin, chargé de Recherches, me faisait savoir que : "... les nombreux ouvrages consultés ne font malheureusement pas état des renseignements qui vous intéressent".

Quant au Service Historique de l'Armée de l'Air au Château de Vincennes, il m'a pondu une missive pour me dire que la seule information qu'il avait découverte était relative au ballon de Morell en 1908...

C'est dire combien il importait de s'informer aux Etats-Unis mêmes, et c'est ce que j'ai fait. Cela m'a coûté environ une centaine de lettres, mais j'ai réussi à obtenir les réponses à toutes les questions que j'ai pu poser.

On peut diviser la recherche des américains sur les dirigeables en trois groupes bien distincts : les visionnaires, les précurseurs, et enfin les pionniers.

Les visionnaires

Il y eut un grand nombre de soit-disant chercheurs qui publièrent en leur temps, des plans de "machines volantes" basés sur l'emploi d'une enveloppe de gaz plus ou moins volumineuse devant soulever une nacelle, machines censées être propulsées, s'il fallait les en croire, par différentes forces motrices : vapeur, jets d'air chaud, électricité, gaz, etc...

Nous pouvons être certains dès à présent que ces plans ne furent que des projets, qui n'existerent que sur papier, tout du moins en ce qui concerne ceux qui furent divulgués avant la vague d'airships-fantômes de 1897.

La lettre de la Smithsonian Institution, que j'ai traduite dans mon article est suffisamment claire là-dessus, et vous en trouverez une seconde du même organisme, mais signée d'un autre fonctionnaire, qui me conforte dans mes affirmations. C'est également ce que me dit une lettre de la Federal Aviation Administration du 21 mai 1981, signée de Mr. N.A. Kommons, Washington, D.C. ainsi que Mr. Henry Palmer, historien en aéronautique, Stonnington, Connecticut qui m'écrit ceci, entre autre : "... J'ai des coupures de presse émanant de nombreux magazines américains tels le "Scientific American" et "Harpers", décrivant différents airships dessinés par PORTER, KINSELLA, PENNINGTON, STEDMAN, PETERSON, AYERS, etc... Certaines d'entre elles indiquent que des vaisseaux ont volé, mais en fait AUCUN NE FUT D'AILLEURS JAMAIS CONSTRUIT". (lettre du 13 Juin 1981).

Mr. Henry Palmer est un des historiens les mieux documentés des Etats-Unis sur les dirigeables. Il a écrit, entre autre, un remarquable article sur les plus légers que l'air aux U.S.A. à partir de 51 sources : 39 ouvrages d'historiens de langue anglaise, 9 revues américaines et 3 articles d'historiens U.S. spécialisés en aéronautique !

Parmi ces visionnaires, nous pouvons citer : Andrew Solomon. Toute sa carrière, il fit croire qu'il avait fabriqué des ballons propulsés "par la gravitation", selon ses propres termes. Il construisit deux appareils. L'un, l'Aereon, était constitué de trois cigares accolés, l'autre en forme de gigantesque citron. Mais aucun d'eux ne fut pourvu du moindre moteur. Il fonda une société pour soutenir son action et tenta d'intéresser l'Armée à ses projets. Mais il fût éconduit et lorsqu'il réussit à rencontrer Abraham Lincoln, celui-ci, soupçonnant une entourloupette, le mit à la porte de son bureau. C'est en 1849 qu'il commença ses travaux et en 1866 qu'il les stoppa, complètement ruiné.

CAMPBELL Peter : Pionnier de l'aérostation pendant 20 ans. En 1888, ce joaillier de Brooklyn, fit voler un appareil cigaroïde piloté par J. Allen. Il avait envisagé une propulsion par force électrique, mais dut renoncer à cause du poids considérable du matériel qu'il aurait dû emporter. Son ballon était en fait mû par la force musculaire à l'aide d'un système de pédales actionnant des hélices. Campbell avait déjà tenté d'autres vols depuis 1877, mais sans grands succès. En 1889, son engin, piloté par un certain E.D. Hogan, disparaît corps et biens sur l'Atlantique. Campbell arrête là ses travaux. A

noter que lui aussi fonda une société d'actionnaires... ("Lighter-Than-Air Flight In America", 1784-1910, article de Mr. Henry Palmer publié dans le JOURNAL de l'American Aviation Historical Society, Automne 1979, pages 178 et 179. Et "The Scientific American", 1889, Vol. 61, pages 47 et 54).

MARRIOTT Frederick : En 1866 il fonde la "Aerial Steam Navigation Company", pour soutenir son projet de "dirigeable" à vapeur qu'il avait baptisé "Avitor Hermes Jr.," Il le fait voler le 2 Juillet 1869 à Shell Mound près de San Francisco, sur un peu plus d'un mile. Deux jours plus tard, devant la presse, il tente la même expérience, mais sous hangar, le vent soufflant trop fort. C'était en fait un petit ballon SANS PASSAGER, muni de deux petites ailes à l'avant, lesquelles supportaient chacune une hélice. Une mini-chaudière chauffée par un réchaud à alcool était installée sur une partie de l'appareil, fournissant la vapeur qui actionnait un système de chaînes et d'engrenages jusqu'aux hélices. Des cordes étaient tenues par des assistants au sol, reliées les unes à l'avant, les autres à l'arrière, pour effectuer les diverses manœuvres destinées à faire évoluer l'engin. Ce gros cerf-volant pour adulte n'eût pas de suite et termina sa carrière là où il l'avait commencée. Marriott mourut en 1883 sans avoir réussi à faire mieux. ("Marriott and his Flying Avitor", article de Mr Marvin MARTIN dans "Popular Aviation", Novembre 1935, pages 289 à 291).

PENNINGTON John H. En 1850, il publie un dessin d'un projet de dirigeable censé être propulsé à la vapeur. Curieusement (et dangereusement), il faisait passer la cheminée de la chaudière à travers l'enveloppe du ballon laquelle devait être gonflée d'hydrogène ! Il fonda une société et vendit des actions boursières pour soit-disant "construire un appareil de 70 pieds de long, et qui coûterait 10.000 dollars". Mais on n'entend plus parler de lui une fois la somme récoltée ! ("The First Century of Flight In America", J. MILBANK, Princeton N.J., 1943, Page 78, - Et "Dirigeables", Henry BEAUBOIS, Edita S.A. Lausanne, 1973, page 43).

PORTER Rufus : en 1849, il fait voler un modèle réduit de dirigeable à vapeur dans l'Eglise du Tabernacle à New-York. En 1851, il fonde la "Aerial Navigation Compagny", financée par des actions boursières. Porter envisageait de construire un vaisseau de 800 pieds de long capable d'emporter plusieurs centaines de passagers ! Chaque fois qu'on lui demandait où en étaient ses travaux, il répondait invariablement : "Ils sont presque terminés". En fait, jamais il ne les commença. Il fonda ensuite sa propre société : Porter et cie. Ce fut une chimère de plus. Ruiné, il abandonne son entreprise onirique, la crise qui suivit la guerre civile, précipitant sa fin. ("A Yankee Inven-

Pour sa part, M. A. D. TOPPING, lui aussi historien en aéronautique, déjà cité, me signale dans une lettre datée du 25 juin 1981, n'avoir découvert aucun élément relatif à des feux de position qui auraient été portés par les plus-légers-que-l'air d'avant 1900, de même qu'il n'a strictement rien trouvé non plus indiquant que ces appareils aient été équipés de phares ou de projecteurs. Non seulement l'adjonction d'un tel équipement ne s'imposait pas, mais le poids des batteries ou de la dynamo qu'il aurait fallu emporter aurait rendu tout envol impossible.

M. Henri PALMER, historien en aéronautique de très grande réputation, quant à lui, me confirme l'absence de sources lumineuses sur les ballons d'avant 1900, dans une lettre datée du 13 juillet 1981.

Conclusions :

Ces différentes données, obtenues auprès d'experts américains et d'organismes officiels spécialisés, seront donc à prendre en considération par le lecteur pour qu'il puisse se forger une idée plus précise sur les événements de 1897 aux Etats-Unis.

Il aura pu se rendre compte que les élucubrations de certains démolisseurs appartenait au domaine de la pure fantaisie, aussi bien celles faisant état d'inventeurs géniaux locaux qui auraient disparu en mer par accident, que celles avançant l'hypothèse "socio-psychologique" relative à une psychose de masse.

Le tort de ces personnes de mauvaise foi (qui ne savent pas l'anglais, d'ailleurs), fut de survoler le problème au lieu de le pénétrer le plus en profondeur possible. Pour cela, il fallait OBLIGATOIREMENT remonter aux SOURCES, ce à quoi je me suis employé. Je possède dorénavant 700 pages de textes dactylographiés relatifs à des versions originales d'articles consacrés aux observations d'airships de 1897. De plus, j'ai collecté jusqu'ici environ 200 photocopies d'articles publiés dans les journaux de cette époque, relatifs à des affaires de "dirigeables-fantômes".

Bien entendu le cortège traditionnel de canulars divers se retrouve pour accompagner cette vague, mais d'une façon générale ils sont assez faciles à déceler, de même que les mauvaises interprétations.

De l'avis de tous les organismes que j'ai contactés et qui n'ont pu m'apporter de précisions sur l'histoire de l'aéronautique U. S., c'est le National Air & Space Museum, chapeauté par le Smithsonian Institution, Washington D. C., qui est le plus qualifié des Etats-Unis pour répondre aux points que j'avais soulevés. Parmi les nombreuses lettres

reçues me précisant cette information, figurent celles émanant des organismes suivants :

- U. S. Air-Force, Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson, Ohio, du 20/08/1981
- U. S. Air-Force Academy, Colorado-Springs, Colorado, du 14/09/1981
- Secretariat of Transportation, Washington D. C., du 01/09/1981
- New-York Hall of Science, Flushing, New-York, du 20/08/1981
- National Academy of Science, Washington D. C., du 21/08/1981
- National Science Foundation, Washington D. C., du 17/09/1981
- Air Transport Association of America, Washington D. C., du 24/08/1981

Ainsi, il est prouvé de la façon la plus OFFICIELLE qui soit, que les appareils aériens observés au printemps de 1897 aux Etats-Unis, n'étaient pas issus des mains de chercheurs de génie du pays, ce qui d'ailleurs était assez évident. A noter au passage que les ufologues américains ont eux-mêmes procédé à cette vérification depuis longtemps, et qu'il n'y a plus personne aux Etats-Unis pour contester ce point d'histoire.

A bon entendeur, salut !

Suite de page 19 : **NOS ACTIVITES**

Toute personne intéressée par ce domaine très particulier peut écrire au Siège du Réseau.

Tous les résultats d'expériences, de Veillées ou de documents photographiques relatifs aux O.V.N.I. seront publiés dans la revue. N'oubliez pas que les fruits de vos recherches serviront à tous les Chercheurs de L.D.L.N. Publiez-les !

Toute correspondance sérieuse aura une réponse assurée. (Timbre réponse S.V.P.).

Responsable National du Réseau : M. Benéteau Gérard - Le Bourg - 85200 St Martin de Fraigneau

**LA PÉRIODE DES VACANCES ESTIVALES EST IDÉALE POUR FAIRE CONNAITRE NOTRE REVUE AUTOUR DE VOUS !
MERCİ D'Y PENSER.**

- **16 avril, soir, Dallas, Texas** : "... Mme Bins GEORGE, la cuisinière noire de M. MIDDLETON, a vu... C'était une chose en forme de bateau, illuminée, et se déplaçant plus vite qu'un train... Elle rapporta son observation à son patron le lendemain matin et lui dit qu'elle n'avait pas peur qu'on se moque d'elle. M. MIDDLETON a dit que c'était une femme intelligente et de bonne foi."

(*"Dallas-Morning-News"*, Dallas, 18 avril 1897, p.7).

Témoignages intéressants, car les Noirs de cette époque étaient illétrés à 95 %. De plus, ils n'avaient pas pour habitude de se mêler des affaires des blancs. Pour qu'ils aient le courage et l'audace de faire de tels témoignages aux Blancs, c'est qu'ils avaient été effectivement confrontés avec quelque chose qu'ils redoutaient. Les relations entre Blancs et Noirs, à la fin du siècle dernier, étaient loin d'être cordiales, hélas, et moins les Noirs parlaient aux Blancs, mieux ils s'en portaient.

Nous allons maintenant aborder la partie la plus délicate de cette étude, car elle est relative à des schémas très contestables et très contestés. Nous avons longuement hésité avant de vous les présenter, mais finalement nous avons opté pour la divulgation. En effet, il n'aurait pas été honnête de notre part de les passer sous silence, ou d'en faire seulement une vague allusion en prétendant péremptoirement qu'ils n'étaient pas à considérer comme valables. Car au fond ce n'est pas à nous d'être juge. Nous ne sommes que collecteur d'informations et nous présentons seulement le résultat de nos recherches.

Schéma "photographies"

S'il faut en croire certains récits que nous avons glanés, des photos d'airship auraient été réalisées. Cela peut paraître risible, mais les lecteurs qui connaissent leurs classiques doivent se rappeler que la première photographie relative à un ovni (Et tout à fait authentique, celle-là !), fut prise le 12 août 1883 par l'astronome Bonilla, sur fond solaire, à partir de l'observatoire de Zacateras au Mexique. Elle fut même publiée dans le périodique "L'Astronomie" de 1885 page 347. (Les rationalistes n'ont JAMAIS contesté ce document, ni le témoignage de l'astronome qui compta 283 corps inconnus traversant son objectif braqué sur le soleil).

- **11 avril, matin, Roger Parks, Chicago, Illinois** : "...Un airship a été photographié, par M. Walter Mac Cann très tôt le matin. La photo, examinée par des experts, a été déclarée authentique..." (*Chicago-Times-Herald*, 12 avril, 1897, p.1)

Nous possédons la photocopie grandeur nature de la première page du Chicago-Times-Herald citée ci-dessus. Elle comporte, à l'appui de l'article voué à cette affaire de photo d'airship, un croquis reproduisant le cliché réalisé par Mac Cann. L'airship est constitué de DEUX corps cylindriques superposés de même taille et de même largeur, réunis par des montants placés à chaque extrémité. L'espace libre entre ces deux corps est faible, deux fois moins large que la largeur des deux corps. L'article, qui est long, explique que les experts en photo cautionnent le cliché après avoir scruté le négatif avec minutie et qu'ils n'ont décelé aucun trucage.

Mais d'autres organes de presse, tel le "Chicago-Evening-Post", du 12-4-1897, prétendirent qu'il ne s'agissait que d'une maquette suspendue à un fil (Déjà ?!) après avoir soumis le cliché à d'autres experts qui affirmèrent que c'était une entourloupette !!! Il y a aussi une histoire de témoin qui soutint Mac Cann au début, puis se rétracta. Affaire assez suspecte nous l'avouons et nous préférons ne pas nous y attarder davantage. Ajoutons que l'ufologue Wendelle C. Stevens prétend dans "True Flying Saucers UFOs Magazine" n° 5, qu'une autre photo d'airship fut faite une heure après celle de Mac Cann, à Grand-Rapids, Michigan. Nous avons des articles émanant de journaux du Michigan des 12, 13 et 14 avril 1897, dont un émanant du "Déroit-Evening-News" du 13 avril, qui dispense une abondante prose sur la photo prise par Mac Cann à Roger-Parks, mais ne dit pas un mot sur celle de Grand-Rapids. Suspect aussi, donc.

- **12 avril, 19 h 45, Lincoln, Illinois** : "...Airship vu à Lincoln hier soir... le journaliste Ira Paisley prit une photographie du phénomène. Compte tenu de la relative obscurité et de la pluie qui tombait, sans compter les éclairs de la foudre qui zébraient le ciel, cela constitue un véritable exploit..." (*"Lincoln-News"*, Lincoln, Illinois, 13 avril 1897, p.5)

- **1ère quinzaine avril, Schaller, Iowa** : "...M. C.B. Wallace a écrit à notre journal pour nous décrire son observation de l'airship. Dans sa lettre, il joignait une photo de l'appareil qui ne fut pas publiée (en croquis) car l'éditeur trouva que l'airship allégué ressemblait davantage à un oiseau..."

(*"Marshalltown-Times-Republican"*, Marshalltown, Iowa, 17 avril 1897, p.3).

- **25 avril, Nuit, Sunbury, Ohio** : "...M. W.F. Whittier, éditeur du "Sunbury-News-Item", avait installé son appareil photographique dans l'imprimerie de son quotidien dans le but de prendre quelques clichés d'éclairs, la nuit étant particulièrement orageuse. En développant l'une des plaques,

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il eût la surprise de constater qu'à côté d'un magnifiquement éclair, on apercevait la silhouette de ce qui paraissait bien être le fameux dirigeable inconnu... M. Whittier avait installé son appareil devant une fenêtre du 2^e étage de son imprimerie... Notre correspondant a pu se procurer un exemplaire de la photo qu'on peut voir à côté d'un éclair, le soit-disant airship haut dans le ciel. ("Dayton-Daily-Journal", Dayton, Ohio, 28-4-1897).

Wendelle C. STEVENS, toujours dans "True F.S.UFOs Magazine N° 5, prétend que le 26 avril 1897, une photo d'airship aurait été prise à Baring-Cross, Michigan, et à Little-Rock, Arkansas. Nous n'avons rien de tout cela dans notre fichier. Il est vrai que nous ne prétendons pas tout posséder sur cette vague.

L'histoire la plus vraisemblable est la dernière citée. Hélas, il faudrait avoir une photo en mains pour juger, et avoir en outre la possibilité de faire analyser son négatif. Ces documents, s'ils ont existé, sont probablement perdus à tout jamais.

Schéma "Atterrissages avec ou sans occupants remarquables"

Jacques Vallée ("Passport to Magonia") et Michel Bougard ("La Chronique des Ovnis") ont abondamment disserté sur de tels cas s'étant produits en 1897. Il est donc inopportun de les reprendre, d'autant que nous avons pu localiser de nombreux canulars et coups montés parmi les affaires qu'ils ont citées. Nous avons évoqué dans un article publié dans "Inforespace" n° 56, l'atterrissage d'Uvalde, Texas, du 20 avril, qui fut démenti par son principal "témoin", le shériff Baylor, dans un journal du 8 mai.

A Bartonville, Illinois, des cheminots à bord d'un train prétendirent avoir vu un airship posé près de la voie qu'ils suivaient et bavardé avec ses occupants 3 hommes et une femme, vêtus d'uniformes d'officiers de l'armée U.S. L'histoire est très longue et abonde en détails. Or, un reporter du "Peoria Times" fit une enquête, et elle déboucha sur une grosse blague. Sur place il ne découvrit aucune trace ni le moindre témoin. Le mécanicien du train, un nommé SCHEME lui affirma n'avoir rien vu. Il apparait que seul, un nommé HARDINBURG aurait inventé toute l'histoire pour épater ses collègues.

A Northwood, Iowa, un fermier nommé CARSON prétendit (Selon une lettre envoyée au journal par un certain F.A.KERR), avoir vu un airship posé dans un champ et bavardé avec ses deux occupants qui déclarèrent se nommer Théodore DEVON et Charles GUNDERSON originaires de Glennville, Iowa.

Le journal fit une enquête et il s'avéra que les deux personnes en question étaient inconnues à Glennville. La lettre ayant été postée à Northwood, on fit des recherches dans cette localité et elles s'avèrent également négatives. Quant au prétendu F. A. KERR, il était totalement inconnu dans ces deux villes, tout comme le fermier CARSON !

Nous avons des fiches relatives à des histoires de ce genre certaines étant franchement démentielles. Les cas où les occupants se désignent par des noms (Typiquement anglo-saxons) sont à considérer comme des coups montés en vue d'escroquerie. Bien souvent, dans ces affaires, les "occupants" sont tout à fait disposés à montrer la "machinerie" de leur appareil aux "témoins" et des explications sommaires sur son fonctionnement sont données. Les performances de l'engin sont mises en évidence, et des allusions à la possibilité d'utiliser l'airship pour aller bombarder les armées espagnoles à Cuba (Où une guerre faisait rage), sont souvent faites. Combien d'escrocs réussirent à soutirer de l'argent à de hommes d'affaires éblouis par la perspective d'avoir le monopole de la navigation aérienne ? Nul ne le saura jamais. Mais un de ces jours, il faudra que nous nous décidions à raconter les exploits extraordinaires du nommé Edward Joel PENNINGTON, génial excroc que de nombreux américains considèrent toujours comme un authentique pionnier du dirigeable ! E.J. PENNINGTON, passa TOUTE SA VIE, à escroquer son prochain et réussit même à faire croire qu'il était l'inventeur de l'airship vu en 1897, alors qu'il avait quitté les Etats-Unis depuis 1895 pour aller filouter les anglais !

Nous pourrions vous citer un cas d'occupants de 10 à 11 pieds de haut, parlant chinois (Langue comprise du témoin, distingué linguiste !), venant en droite ligne de Mars et absorbant en guise de nourriture une pillule PAR MOIS ("Parkensburg-State-Journal", Virginie de l'Ouest, 17/4/1897). Ou encore celui-ci, relatif à des individus parlant par gestes et montrant la Lune du doigt pour indiquer qu'ils en étaient originaires, et munis d'une courte queue ! ("Cumberland Advocate", Wisconsin, 15/4/1897). Et celui-là, censé s'être produit à Gas-City, Indiana, repris les yeux fermés par Jacques Vallée sans vérification : un témoin (**Prévenu par un télégramme envoyé par un ami !**), voit un airship et ses six occupants qui l'invitent à monter à bord, mais il refuse parce qu'il a peur que se femme l'engueule !! ("Wabash-Plain-Dealer", Indiana, 17 avril 1897).

La rigolade n'est pas terminée. Des occupants d'airship sont vus par un marshall à Farmersville, Texas. Ils sont deux en compagnie d'un chien de race Terre-Neuve. Ils ressemblent à des espagnols et le témoin estime qu'il s'agit d'espions venus de

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Cuba. Un deuxième témoin verra 3 occupants et les entendra chanter : "Plus près de toi, mon Dieu !!" ("The Dallas Morning News", Texas, 18 avril 1897). A Pine-Like, Michigan, un témoin livra des sandwiches à des occupants d'airship qui le payèrent en monnaie canadienne ! Ils réclamèrent même un tire-bouchon ! ("Lansing-State-Republican", Michigan, 17/4/1897).

A Chambers Creek, Texas, des aéronautes prétendirent venir du Pôle Nord et être les survivants d'une des dix tribus d'Israël renforcés par les descendants de différentes expéditions naufragées ! ("Dallas Morning News", 19 avril 1897). A Nora, Illinois, un cheminot qui aida des occupants d'airship à réparer leur appareil, reçut en récompense un perroquet noir vivant "parlant dans une langue étrangère" ! ("Warren-Sentinel", Illinois, 21 avril 1897). A Mc Kinney, Texas, on entendit un occupant s'exclamer : "Nom d'un chien, William J., il faut mettre la gomme" et prononcer une phrase où il était question d'une "couronne d'épines" !! ("Galveston-Daily-News", Texas, 22 avril 1897). A Winamac, Indiana, un occupant donna 15 dollars au témoin pour lui acheter une miche de pain et des rafraichissements ! ("Wimanac-Democrat-Journal", Indiana, 30 avril 1897).

A Conroe, Texas, les occupants d'un airship entrent dans un restaurant pour y prendre un repas ! ("Galveston-Daily-News", Texas, 24 avril 1897). Enfin, pour terminer ce tour d'horizon dans ce genre, la meilleure de toutes ces histoires : à Prairieburg, Iowa, le propriétaire d'un airship atterri effectua des démarches auprès d'hommes d'affaires en vue de la vente de billets valables pour une excursion sur la planète Mars !!! ("Central-City-Newseller", Iowa, 22 avril 1897).

Afin de ne pas décevoir nos "supporters", nous leur soumettrons toutefois quelques cas pouvant à la rigueur entrer dans un certain schéma développé par les occupants d'ovnis de notre époque :

- **Mi-avril, soir, Beaumont, Texas** : "... Un reporter du "New-Orleans-Picayune" interviewa le rabbin A. LEVI, à propos de l'atterrissage d'un airship à Beaumont, Texas, l'autre jour. Il cite sa déclaration avec toute la solennité que lui confère sa position de ministre du culte et sa réputation sans tache... Le rabbin, qui habite Beaumont, a vu le vaisseau aérien d'une part, et a bavardé avec ses passagers d'autre part. Il a raconté ce qui suit : "Le vaisseau avait atterri sur un domaine situé près de mon domicile un soir il y a environ 15 jours. Apprenant la nouvelle de cette arrivée, je me rendis sur place où j'appris par des gens que le vaisseau était descendu pour refaire sa provision d'eau. Il faisait noir comme de la poix, et je ne pus le voir que difficilement, excepté ses contours. Il faisait 150 pieds de long... avec d'immenses ailes

sur les côtés. Il semblait fait d'un matériau léger... J'ai parlé avec l'un des hommes lorsqu'il vint au bâtiment principal de la ferme, et lui ai serré la main. L'engin fonctionne à l'électricité... J'ai bien entendu dire l'homme où il avait été construit, mais je ne me rappelle plus le nom de l'inventeur... **JE SUIS ENCORE STUPEFAIT DE N'AVOIR PU LUI POSER UNE QUESTION INTELLIGENTE, et à cause de cela je ne peux vous donner que peu de détails...**" ("Pike-Country-Democrat" Pittsfield, Illinois, 7 mai 1897).

Cette affaire ne semble pas liée à celle qui prit place au même endroit le 19 avril, dans laquelle un sieur LIGON aurait bavardé avec un occupant nommé WILSON, cas très suspect d'ailleurs.

Nous pensons que l'intelligence manipulant le phénomène ovni désire **PAR DESSUS TOUT, ne pas être identifiée**. A la lumière de ce que nous avons pu tirer comme enseignement à travers les différents événements relatifs aux R.R.3. qui prirent place dans le monde depuis la fin de la deuxième guerre mondiale, il nous est apparu clairement que cette intelligence solutionnait le problème des témoins d'atterrissages de deux façons :

- 1) Les témoins sont encore suffisamment loin permettant une fuite rapide afin de ne pas permettre à ceux-ci de livrer un témoignage comportant des détails précis pouvant faciliter une éventuelle identification.
- 2) Les témoins sont trop près pour permettre une telle manœuvre et il est pratiqué alors une occultation de leur cerveau (Effacement de souvenirs visuels, annihilation de la volonté parfois accompagnée de paralysie physique, etc... Le cas de Valensole -M. Maurice MASSE- étant un des cas extrêmement rares, où la faculté de penser du témoin ne fut pas totalement bloquée -il VIT et ENTENDIT deux petits êtres après avoir été paralysé-).

Ceci étant ETABLI par des preuves testimoniales multiples dont certaines sont d'une crédibilité indiscutable, du fait d'enquêtes très poussées. Il y a une troisième solution qui est proposée par des chercheurs sérieux : le leurre au niveau du mental des témoins. C'est tout à fait possible, mais à partir de là, n'importe qui peut raconter n'importe quoi. Nous préférons nous désintéresser de certaines affaires pouvant entrer dans ce schéma, plutôt que de risquer d'accorder du crédit à des récits imaginaires pouvant leurrer... les ufologues !

Nous avons quelques cas de "fuite d'occupants" :

- **17 avril, soir, Laketon, Indiana** : "...L'airship a atterri sur la terre ferme près d'une pompe à

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essence (!?) et y demeura pendant quelques instants. Quand les habitants des lieux s'approchèrent, le propriétaire du vaisseau grimpa à bord et fila loin dans la profondeur de la nuit..." ("Wabash-Plain-Dealer", Wabash, Indiana, 23 avril 1897, p.3).

- 20 avril, 14h00, Smithville, Texas : "...L'airship se posa sur le sol... Nos chevaux donnèrent des signes de frayeur au point que nous préférâmes stopper pour les attacher, et nous nous dirigeâmes vers l'appareil. Mais à notre approche, il s'envola et fila vers l'ouest. Au moment où nous l'avons vu au sol, il y avait 4 ou 5 hommes autour de lui qui réintégrèrent l'appareil à notre vue et s'envolèrent. Les témoins sont MM. E.F. Mc CLENDON, physicien, et John BAKER un des associés de la Craddock & BAKER Cie." ("San-Antonio-Daily-Express", San-Antonio, Texas, 24 avril 1897).

- 21 avril, soir, Vallée de Symmes, Ohio : "...Des témoins aperçurent l'airship près de la vieille église de la petite vallée de Symmes, et ils tentèrent de s'en approcher furtivement... Ils entendirent des gens à l'intérieur qui parlaient dans un caquetage inintelligible. Puis ils virent la chose s'élever et étendre ses ailes pour s'éloigner..." ("Ceredo-Advance", Ceredo, Virginie de l'Ouest, 22 avril 1897).

Nous n'avons pas réussi à nous procurer la version originale de l'affaire de Mc Kinnay Bayou (Arkansas) du 25 avril, où un certain Juge A. BYRNE aurait vu trois hommes ressemblant à des japonais dans un airship atterri qui décolla rapidement sans attendre l'arrivée du témoin. Mais elle est bien connue des ufologues avertis.

Par contre nous avons obtenu un cas qui, dans les débuts de sa narration, nous promettait une magnifique R.R.3. Malheureusement, nous avons par la suite déchanté. Toutefois, pour ne pas avoir l'air de "censurer" cette information, nous vous livrons la partie qui nous a chagriné :

- 20 avril, soir, Clarksburg, Virginie de l'Ouest : "...Il y avait trois personnes à bord, et comme leurs visages étaient dans l'ombre, je n'ai pas pu distinguer leurs traits. Ce qui me stupéfia, fut le fait qu'ils avaient de grandes robes et de longs cheveux flottant sur leurs épaules. Leur apparence était bizarre... et cela me laissa penser que les occupants du vaisseau devaient venir d'un autre monde et ont peur d'atterrir sur terre, mais effectueraient des reconnaissances... Le témoin estime que l'airship a pu être attiré par les lumières dispensées par les nombreuses manufactures de la région..." ("Pittsburg-Leader", Pittsburg, Pennsylvanie, 24 avril 1897, p.8).

Nous éviterons le piège de la dissertation sur ce cas. Il comporte des éléments n'entrant dans

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aucun schéma vraiment solide, hormis peut-être celui des "anges" de l'imagerie populaire...

Nous en terminerons avec les R.R.3 par un cas assez extraordinaire, difficile à classer définitivement comme authentique, qui peut n'être qu'un canular, mais qui comporte un ou deux éléments pouvant le faire entrer dans un schéma "contactés", et que nous incluons volontairement (et provisoirement) dans le schéma faisant l'objet de ce paragraphe :

- 13 avril, nuit, Osage, Iowa : "...Je revenais de Stacyville en voiture hippomobile lorsque mon cheval s'arrêta et s'ébroua. J'aperçus un long cigare en forme de tube muni d'ailes sur les côtés, immenses comme celles d'un dragon. Il se tenait au milieu de la route, mais à peine étions-nous arrêtés qu'il s'éleva gracieusement dans les airs et nous survola à la verticale, si près, que j'aurais pu le toucher de la main si j'avais voulu. Le vaisseau était occupé par les deux plus belles créatures que j'aie jamais vues, lesquelles communiquèrent avec moi par la pensée, me faisant savoir qu'elles étaient les agents d'un autre monde envoyées ici pour chercher un nonhête homme (!?). Bien entendu j'étais déconcerté de leur choix, et je leur promis de tout faire pour leur être agréable. Ils m'ordonnèrent de dire à tous "les dadais stupides d'en dessous, qu'ils habitaient un monde de gadoue", et qu'eux avaient été chargés d'un travail de surveillance, avec l'intention d'acquiescer la Terre et d'en faire une colonie d'esprits. Comme ils ne sont pas matériels, ils dirent qu'ils n'interféreraient pas avec la vie des habitants, et cesseraient de nous déranger lorsque nous essaieront de distinguer leurs formes, lesquelles sont une combinaison de néant et d'esprit (!). Une fois ces informations divulguées, ils appuyèrent sur un levier, et avec un joli balancement, le grand vaisseau s'éleva et s'éloigna..." ("Mitchell-Country-Press", Osage, Iowa, 15 avril 1897, p.6).

Vraiment étonnant, n'est-ce pas ? Qu'un américain de 1897 ait pu inventer un tel incident est aussi dur à avaler que ses allégations !

(à suivre)

PRECISION

Un lecteur, M. Robert Durieux nous signale à propos de l'article de F. Lagarde "l'insolite qui dérange" (LDLN 217-218 page 18 ligne 7 que le restaurant est "La boîte à Bouffe" (et non "La Grande Bouffe"), et lignes 8 et 9 que le véhicule était une NSU R080 (et non une DS 21).

MESSAGE, Continued

the new chart which you may insert into your F.I. Manuals as page 78a. A copy of page 79 is also included, titled "Dial-A-Map Selector," which you may cut out and construct your own dial per the instructions provided to show the sky at any time of the year on the monthly maps on pages 80 through 91.

With the promotion of **Dan Wright** to Deputy Director of Investigations on the MUFON Executive Committee, a vacancy now

exists for Central Regional Director on the MUFON Board of Directors. Dan will continue to fill the position of Investigative Coordinator in his new capacity. An election will be conducted in early 1988 to elect a Central Regional Director by the members in the Central States, composed of the following states: ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, TX, MN, IA, MO, AR, LA, WI, IL, IN, MI, KY, TN, AL and OH. Any current member desiring to be a candidate should contact your own State Director so that he/she

may submit your name in nomination. All candidates' names must be received by MUFON headquarters by January 30, 1988. A primary election will be held if over six candidates are nominated with the ballot being enclosed in the MUFON UFO Journal. The term of the new Board Member will be 4 years. (State Directors may nominate themselves if they so desire.) Nominations are now being accepted.

The MUFON 1988 UFO Symposium will be held at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln on June 24, 25, and 26, 1988 hosted by MUFON of Nebraska (Fortean Research Center). **Ray W. Boeche**, State Director for Nebraska and **Scott Colburn**, Asst. State Director will chair the host committee. **Walt Andrus**, in conjunction with the host committee, will extend invitations to the featured speakers.

In another item of business at the MUFON Annual Board of Directors meeting in Washington, DC, **Richard H. Hall** volunteered to revise the 1982 edition of the MUFON Corporate Bylaws and submit same to the Board for their approval or further revisions.

Mr. Jean Sider, 17 rue Ferdinand Buisson, 92110 Clichy, France has published a booklet (380 pages) softbound on the famous "1897 Airship Wave in USA". Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of his ten year study of the mysterious airships should contact Mr. Sider directly.

George D. Fawcett, 602 Battleground Road, Lincolnton, NC 28092 has published a four-page listing of 58 sources for UFO information from the USA, Canada, England and Australia as part of a special project during the "3rd Annual National UFO Information Week" observances on August 10-17. This list may be obtained from Mr. Fawcett by mailing him a long self-addressed envelope with a 39¢ stamp attached plus a check for \$2.00 to help defray the cost of printing for this service.

Dan Wright, 228 South Fairview, Lansing, MI 48912 still has a supply of his 23-page, 8000-word booklet titled "Interviewing the UFO Witness" for

(continued on page 22)

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1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	0	0
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E. Total distribution	1137	1283
F. Copies not distributed		
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2. Returns from news agents	0	0
G. Total	1267	1400

(signed) Walter H. Andrus, Jr.
 Publisher

NIGHT SKY, Continued

revolving about each other almost in our line of sight. Periodically the larger and fainter companion partly eclipses the visible one, causing the 9-hour change in brightness. This gradual effect can be noticed with the naked eye or binoculars.

Algol is located between the "W" of Cassiopeia and the Pleiades cluster; it normally is the second brightest star in Perseus and is about 10° above the constellation's brightest luminary, Mirfak or Algenib.

M. N-87

LES NOUVELLES

A QUAND, UN "5 NOVEMBRE" A 2,80 F?

M. Bonnefon nous communique ce court extrait du *Monde* du 3 septembre 1994. On notera les guillemets, absolument indispensables, autour de "dignes de foi". Si ce n'est pas de l'ironie, c'est au moins de la prudence.

• Extraterrestres. - Incroyable série de huit timbres et six blocs émis par le Nicaragua, le 25 mai, sur les manifestations extraterrestres, textes en deux versions, anglaise et espagnole ! Soucoupes volantes, formes étranges lumineuses, etc., décrites par des témoins « dignes de foi » aux Etats-Unis, en Argentine, aux Canaries.

ANTIGRAVITATION

M. Poirier recherche un, ou de préférence plusieurs exemplaires du livre du Dr Pagès, *Le défi de l'antigravitation*, publié vers le début des années soixante-dix par les éditions Chiron. Ecrire à LDLN, qui transmettra.

Y EN AURA PAS POUR TOUT LE MONDE

Il y a une dizaine d'années, vous avez raté le gros fascicule de Jean Sidor sur la vague de dirigeables-fantômes aux Etats-Unis en 1896 et 1897. Et il est depuis longtemps introuvable...

Mais tout cela n'est pas grave, car Colette Vlérick s'appête à publier, en souscription, la version complète de cette étude, nettement plus étoffée. Le nombre de pages sera de l'ordre de 250, et la chose coûtera aux environs de 300 F. Le tirage sera limité, donc: pas de temps à perdre ! Passez les commandes à Colette Vlérick, 16 rue du Chevallier de la Barre, 75018 Paris.

ÇA TOURNE...

Dans LDLN 327, p. 15, nous signalions une contradiction entre le récit écrit et le schéma qui l'accompagnait, à propos de l'observation du Boréon, le 7 août 1994. Patrick Boutonnet nous signale qu'il s'est trompé en réalisant son croquis. C'est donc le texte qui est juste, et le dessin qui comporte une erreur.

Nos fidèles lecteurs se souviennent probablement de la très fraternelle controverse qui nous avait opposés à nos amis Jean-Pierre Calmel et Denis Alarcon, de l'association Magonia, au sujet du film de Saint-Firmin (voir notamment LDLN 312, pp. 23 à 30, 313, p.40, 316, pp.18 à 22, 317 pp.42 et 43, etc.). Après un long silence, Magonia vient de sortir un numéro double (12/13) de *Trait d'Union*, dans lequel on trouve un très long article (pp. 29 à 40) qui innocente apparemment notre satellite naturel.

En fait, cette histoire est devenue tellement compliquée qu'elle demandera autant d'attention que d'aspirine, à qui voudra en faire la synthèse.

Hormis cette ténébreuse affaire d'ovni déguisé en lune qui imiterait un ovni (à moins que ce ne soit l'inverse), on trouve quantités de choses très instructives dans ce numéro 12/13 de *Trait d'Union*. Rappelons donc l'adresse de Magonia: groupe Les Faienciers, bât.A1, 13011 Marseille. Téléphone: 91.88.16.67 à Marseille, ou 79.75.20.75 à Chambéry. Fax (à Marseille): 91.87.47.97. Abonnement à quatre numéros: 160 F.

SUSPENSE...

Les négatifs originaux des photos publiées dans notre numéro 326 ont été remis, pour analyse, à un laboratoire qui a de bonnes chances d'être le mieux équipé, en Europe, pour ce genre de travail.

Cela prendra "un certain temps", et il est inutile de spéculer sur les résultats éventuels. Il faut malgré tout savoir une chose: l'analyse fine peut, dans les circonstances les plus favorables, permettre de déceler un éventuel trucage. Il lui est plus difficile de mettre en évidence une absence de trucage, pour la simple raison que certains types de trucage sont difficilement décelables, même à l'aide des matériels les plus performants. Il ne faut donc pas s'attendre à une conclusion du genre: "pas de doute: c'est une vraie soucoupe volante" (même si c'en est effectivement une). Le résultat ufologiquement le plus positif qu'on puisse espérer serait plutôt: "Nous n'avons pu déceler aucun trucage".

Nous verrons bien. Restons calmes...

Profitons de l'occasion pour signaler une erreur concernant le cliché 12 (LDLN 326, p.15): par mégarde, nous avons publié un tirage retravaillé, utilisé pour l'étude de la trajectoire. Sur ce tirage, l'objet a été artificiellement blanchi, pour que sa position et son contour soient plus aisément repérables. Sur un tirage normal, l'objet apparaît avec un contraste beaucoup moins bon, et ses contours sont "nettement moins nets". Ce vrai tirage (qui n'est pas le meilleur du lot), nous le publierons en temps utile, si les résultats de l'analyse ne sont pas négatifs.

LUMIÈRES DANS LA NUIT

le centenaire d'une grande vague: 1897 aux Etats-Unis

LDLN, N° 346, Jul-Août 1997



Jean Sider

Le 29 août 1995, à 20 h 40, la chaîne Arte modifiait son programme en extrême urgence, prétextant avoir obtenu un document cinématographique « venu clandestinement d'URSS », pour reprendre les propres termes de Michel Polac, animateur de l'émission, qui précisa en outre que cet élément « éclairait d'une lumière nouvelle le crash de Roswell ».

Il s'agissait en fait d'une pitrerie de bas étage, d'un canular avoué au cours même d'un débat réunissant autour d'une table en pleine nature un aréopage de rationalistes.

Mon propos n'est pas de disserter sur cette émission d'un goût douteux, destinée à tourner le crash de Roswell en dérision. Toutefois, au cours de la discussion, un certain Paul Veyne, professeur au Collège de France, devait dire en substance ceci: « *Il est quand même curieux de constater que c'est précisément au moment où l'homme envoie des fusées dans le cosmos, que les gens commencent à voir des ovnis* ».

Paul Veyne est probablement un excellent professeur dans sa spécialité, mais cette réflexion démontre qu'en ufologie, il lui reste beaucoup à apprendre.

cinquante ans avant Kenneth Arnold

En effet, si les premières « soucoupes volantes » ont fait la une des journaux pour la première fois fin juin 1947, on connaît bon nombre d'incidents du même type survenus depuis au moins ... deux mille ans ! Les *clipei ardentes* (boucliers de feu) observés sous l'Empire romain, par exemple, démontrent que Paul Veyne a encore beaucoup de choses à apprendre en ufologie... et en histoire ancienne.

Pour avoir étudié les phénomènes OVNI antérieurs à 1947, je crois pouvoir affirmer que la première grande parade céleste d'objets volants non-identifiés se situa au début de

l'année 1897, sur la moitié ouest des Etats-Unis. Quelques semaines auparavant, essentiellement fin novembre et début décembre 1896, une mini-vague d'*airships* (nom donné à l'époque aux ballons dirigeables par les Américains) avait déferlé sur la Californie, mais les quelque cinquante observations signalées dans la presse locale ne constituent qu'une petite curiosité ne permettant aucune étude approfondie.

Par contre, la vague de 1897, beaucoup plus riche en comptes-rendus publiés dans la presse de l'époque, représente incontestablement une somme de données qui mériterait d'être passée au crible.

Après avoir pris divers contacts, dès le début des années quatre-vingts, afin de réunir un maximum de documents originaux (copies de coupures de presse originales, articles sur l'histoire de l'aérostation et de l'aéronautique aux Etats-Unis, etc), j'ai été en mesure de publier, à compte d'auteur, une étude artisanale en 1987. Huit ans plus tard, en 1995, j'ai réussi à intéresser un petit éditeur débutant dans la profession, qui a proposé en souscription un travail beaucoup plus élaboré, imprimé à un très petit nombre d'exemplaires, dont certains sont encore disponibles, au prix de 360 F, à l'adresse suivante: Mme Colette Vlérick, le Spis, 29880 Plouguerneau. Les derniers risquent de partir très vite, en cette année du Centenaire !

un engin plutôt bizarre

En 1897, aucun ballon dirigeable motorisé ne circulait dans les cieux américains. Le premier du genre n'apparut qu'en 1904: j'ai pu vérifier ce point d'histoire aux meilleures sources. De plus, les quelques modestes réalisations connues, propulsées par la force humaine (manivelles ou pédalier actionnant une hélice) ne faisaient que de courtes apparitions en plein jour, tant leur utilisation était délicate.

Les airships non identifiés furent essentiellement observés de nuit, mais, comme lors de la vague de 1954 en France, des apparitions en plein jour (et notamment des atterrissages avec vision d'occupants: RR3) ont été rapportées par des témoins de toutes conditions sociales, dont des médecins et des hommes de loi. Bien entendu, la majorité des observateurs étaient de condition plus modeste, mais dans l'ensemble, les témoignages de bonne foi apparaissent beaucoup plus nombreux que les récits fantaisistes. Il y eut des canulars, certes, mais en général, ils se distinguent facilement des comptes-rendus sincères.

Les descriptions concernent généralement une forme oblongue noire, pouvant évoquer celle d'un dirigeable comme il en apparaîtra quelques années plus tard. Le problème est que les rapports font mention d'ailes, de voiles, et autres équipements grotesques sans aucun lien avec la technologie, alors en gestation, des plus-légers-que-l'air. Les ailes, pour un ballon dirigeable, sont inutiles, puisque c'est la force d'Archimède qui permet au vaisseau de vaincre la pesanteur. Quant aux voiles, leur présence est tout aussi déplacée.

Des témoins apparemment dignes de foi ont même signalé la présence d'une ancre, comme celle des bateaux, alors que les ballons de l'époque étaient plutôt équipés de simples grappins. De plus, des sources lumineuses, et notamment un puissant projecteur, ont été décrites lors d'observations nocturnes. Or, aucun ballon libre (et pas davantage les deux ou trois petits dirigeables qui volaient en 1897) n'était équipé de lampes, ni de phares. Non seulement ces équipements étaient inutiles, le vol de nuit n'étant pas pratiqué, mais le poids des batteries qu'il aurait fallu embarquer dans la nacelle aurait pratiquement empêché l'appareil de décoller.

D'autre part, les airships furent souvent vus accomplissant un trajet fait de manœuvres curieuses, incompatibles avec le vol d'un vrai ballon: des ondulations verticales faites de plongeurs et de remontées subites, des zigzags, des bonds successifs, etc...

On signala des fenêtres éclairées, mais le terme « hublots » ne fut jamais utilisé. L'aspect matériel de ces phénomènes ne fit aucun doute dans l'esprit des observateurs. Ils signalèrent souvent des détails tels que ceux-ci: « une coque de métal scintillant », « le soleil (ou les rayons de la lune) se reflétant sur l'objet »,

« le corps de l'engin fait d'un métal brillant comme de l'aluminium », etc...

Des bruits divers, supposés être ceux d'un moteur, furent notés: ronflements, vrombissements, ronronnements, sifflements, etc. Mais le plus souvent, les airships se déplaçaient silencieusement.

On vit aussi des « vaisseaux-mères » et leurs « baby-airships », aussi incroyable que cela puisse paraître, tout comme des processions de sources lumineuses sur une ligne parfaitement droite, chaque lumière avançant à la même vitesse que les autres. D'un plus gros corps, des petits semblèrent jaillir, pour en certaines occasions retourner ensuite s'y loger.

Des témoins virent des airships remonter des vents violents, sous une épaisse couche nuageuse, et même durant un orage avec des éclairs.

les rencontres rapprochées

Des témoins purent voir des airships atterrir, et distinguèrent même leurs occupants. Hélas, il semble que dans ce domaine, beaucoup de canulars aient été publiés par des journalistes blagueurs. Néanmoins, j'ai été en mesure de relever des cas de RR 3 ayant l'apparence de l'authenticité.

D'une façon générale, les occupants des airships furent décrits comme étant des humains, et donnèrent l'impression d'être des inventeurs expérimentant leurs créations. Il existe cependant une exception: j'ai trouvé un cas d'enlèvement perpétré par de petites créatures à têtes noires, sans yeux apparents. Leur peau, ou plus probablement leur vêtement, était de couleur rouge foncé. L'homme qui fut victime de cet incident prétendit avoir été soustrait à son environnement familial durant trois semaines, et avoir été fréquemment torturé par ses ravisseurs, dont il décrit les mains comme chauffées au rouge. A l'époque, son cas fut attribué à l'alcoolisme.

Dans un autre cas de RR3, il est question de messages télépathiques livrés au témoin, ce qui semble extraordinaire, compte tenu de l'époque. Les êtres qui communiquèrent ainsi prétendirent ne pas être matériels, et venir pour prendre possession de la Terre, ajoutant que cette invasion ne devait absolument pas déranger les Terriens !

Des récits suspects font intervenir des « aéronautes en route pour Cuba », de pseudo-inventeurs qui donnent un nom comme A.C.

Clinton, qui réclament de l'eau, du sulfate de cuivre, etc... Malheureusement, ces histoires sont très souvent ternies par des enjolivures qui ne permettent pas de les prendre au sérieux. Tel est le cas, par exemple, du fameux témoignage d'Alex Hamilton, qui prétendit avoir vu l'équipage d'un airship (de petits hommes, curieusement), qui s'employait à capturer une vache au lasso ! Le fermier affirma avoir retrouvé les restes de la bête le lendemain, restes réduits à la peau et aux os. Longtemps, les ufologues pensèrent que ce récit était authentique, mais des vérifications extrêmement poussées ont montré qu'il ne s'agissait que d'un canular.

Toutes sortes d'escrocs se manifestèrent également, profitant de cette conjoncture idéale pour annoncer que l'airship était le fruit de leur génie. L'essor grandissant des industries en tous genres permit aux faux inventeurs de prospérer aux dépens de naïfs désireux d'investir dans la création de compagnies aériennes. Les colonnes des journaux de l'époque abondent en déclarations ronflantes sur les performances prodigieuses de leurs airships.

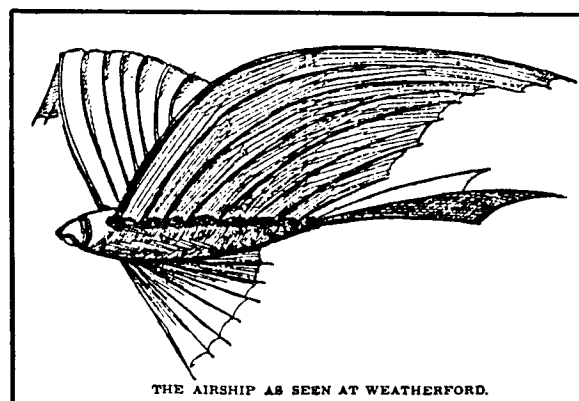
Quoi qu'il en fût, malgré tous les abus facilités par le contexte de l'époque, il reste des RR3 en apparence crédibles. Mais toutes, ou peu s'en faut, développent une thématique qui n'avait strictement rien à voir avec l'idée de visiteurs extraterrestres. Du reste, par précaution, je n'ai retenu comme valables que les cas dans lesquels les occupants de l'airship réembarquent précipitamment dans leur machine, dès que les témoins s'en approchent de trop près.

autres effets des apparitions

J'ai également noté un certain nombre d'incidents dans lesquels intervient une réaction animale intéressante. Ils concernent, pour leur quasi-totalité, des chevaux et des chiens. A l'époque, les voitures étaient surtout hippomobiles, les véhicules à moteur étant encore très peu répandus. Beaucoup d'observations nocturnes furent faites par des cochers ou les passagers qu'ils transportaient, et, bien entendu, des chevaux eurent l'occasion de manifester de la frayeur à proximité du phénomène.

Il y a aussi quelques cas de chiens, qui s'enfuirent ou aboyèrent à la vue d'un airship.

J'ai trouvé des récits signalant que des Noirs et des Indiens ont été témoins. Ceci



L'Airship vu à Weatherford, illustration publiée dans deux journaux du Texas: le *Morning News* de Dallas, le 16 avril 1897, et le *Daily News* de Galveston, le lendemain.

démontre que cette conjoncture exceptionnelle n'était pas le fruit de l'imagination débordante des Blancs, ni de leur penchant pour les canulars. Les Noirs qui virent l'airship en furent véritablement épouvantés, au point de croire leur dernière heure venue. Quant aux Indiens, peu portés à la plaisanterie, ils furent impressionnés au point de penser qu'il s'agissait des âmes de leurs ancêtres, venues voir ce qu'étaient devenus leurs descendants.

Il y eut aussi des rumeurs de crashes d'airships: j'ai relevé une dizaine de cas dans la presse de 1897. Certains sont peut-être explicables par des chutes de météorites. Les autres ne sont probablement que des nigauderies concoctées par des journalistes en mal de copie.

Aussi invraisemblable que cela puisse paraître, on trouve des cas de photographies d'airship. Malheureusement, celles qui semblent les plus sérieuses n'ont pu être reproduites dans les journaux, la technique du moment ne le permettant pas. Je me souviens d'un compte-rendu dans lequel le photographe d'un journal avait tenu à photographier un éclair, pendant un orage, pour voir ce que cela allait donner. Au développement, surprise: un airship était là, que le photographe n'avait pas vu.

Il semble en outre que divers phénomènes étranges se soient produits au cours de la même période. On signale surtout des « hommes sauvages », individus entièrement velus, que les Américains baptisèrent plus tard « Bigfoot ». Un animal bizarre fut aperçu,

emportant plusieurs moutons, et aurait été vu tuant du bétail, à plusieurs reprises. Le texte ne précise pas comment il s'y prit, pour emporter plus d'une bête. Aurait-il fait plusieurs voyages ?

Un témoignage très surprenant est celui de deux fermiers qui prétendirent avoir vu sept « hommes volants » se poser gracieusement à moins de cinquante mètres d'eux. Les intrus étaient six jeunes garçons, accompagnés d'un homme d'âge mûr. Le rapport ne précise pas si ces « hommes volants » avaient des ailes. Notons que dans la Vague de 1954, on trouve un cas de petit homme qui fut vu s'envolant à la verticale, sans qu'il eût besoin d'un engin pour se déplacer. Et il existe d'autres exemples analogues.

les réactions des scientifiques

Lorsque les articles faisant état de témoignages sur l'Airship commencèrent à encombrer les pages des journaux locaux (notamment ceux des grandes villes, comme Chicago ou New York), les rationalistes du pays s'en donnèrent à cœur joie.

Comme leurs confrères de notre époque, ils n'étaient pas en manque d'imagination pour expliquer les phénomènes. La plupart des « experts » interrogés étant des astronomes, les rationalistes du moment trouvèrent en Vénus la panacée résolvant tous les mystères. Parfois, lorsque l'Etoile du Berger n'était pas visible à l'heure de l'observation, ils firent appel à Alpha d'Orion, ou plus simplement, à des ballons d'enfants.

Apparemment, aucun de ces hommes de science ne tenta de rencontrer des témoins. Il y eut même un astronome pour avouer à un journaliste venu le consulter, qu'il avait préféré rester cloîtré chez lui, plutôt que de sortir dans la rue pour voir l'Airship, comme l'avaient fait ses voisins ! Comme la quasi-totalité des astronomes étaient des pasteurs protestants, peut-être avaient-ils reniflé une odeur de soufre dans l'affaire...

Comme toujours, il y eut des exceptions. Parmi les témoins que j'ai pu localiser dans les comptes-rendus de presse, figurent deux astronomes. Malheureusement, compte tenu des risques encourus pour leur réputation, ils préférèrent rester anonymes...

La presse accueillit plutôt fraîchement les témoignages, et certains journalistes n'hésitèrent pas à s'en gausser, parfois de manière vexante pour les observateurs. C'est ce qui ressort de mon étude des éditoriaux et autres relations comportant des critiques sur les témoignages concernant l'Airship. (J'emploie sciemment, ici, le singulier, car pendant plusieurs semaines, on crut qu'il n'y avait qu'un seul appareil, qui vagabondait à travers plusieurs Etats.)

conclusion

Etant donné qu'en 1897, il n'existait pas de « syndrome extraterrestre » (contrairement à 1954, par exemple), et que l'esprit des témoins n'était pas matraqué par les agressions de la radio, de la télévision et de la publicité, la crédibilité de cette série exceptionnelle d'événements s'en trouve renforcée.

Dans mon étude de 1987 comme dans sa version augmentée de 1995, je ne me prononce pas sur l'interprétation de ces phénomènes. Je me borne à démontrer que cette vague s'est bien produite, en dépit de certains abus que je signale.

Pour conclure le présent article, je prendrai un risque. A mon sens, ces incidents n'ont rien d'exotique, et ne paraissent pas suscités par des êtres intelligents en provenance d'une autre planète. Il n'y a rien, dans les éléments que j'ai collectés, qui puisse démontrer l'intrusion de voyageurs issus d'un monde lointain. La seule évidence est celle d'une intelligence. Quant aux airships et à leurs occupants se comportant comme des inventeurs (tels que pouvaient les concevoir les Américains des zones rurales en cette fin du XIX^{ème} siècle, parfois avec un marteau et un burin, occupés à « faire des réparations »), je suis plus dubitatif. J'ai le net sentiment qu'il s'agit de « représentations théâtrales », de scénarios, l'Airship et ses occupants n'étant que des leurres psychiques ou matérialisés temporairement.

Que sont venus faire ces Airships aux Etats-Unis en 1897 ? Honnêtement, je n'en sais rien. Peut-être sont-ils venus semer quelque chose, qu'ils ont ensuite récolté, cinquante ans plus tard. Après tout, c'est aux Etats-Unis qu'« sont nées les soucoupes volantes », en 1947 et comme par hasard, c'est le pays qui domine et régent notre planète...

Mais qui donc pourra dire un jour quelle est la finalité de tous ces phénomènes ?



1896 SKY SHOW

By Ted Rathbone

"FLYING SAUCERS" (RAY PALMER),
No 40, FEBRUARY 4, 1965.

In November of 1896, the astonished citizenry up and down the Sacramento Valley of California were favored with a manifestation of scientific achievement the like of which was not to gain public notice again for three quarters of a century.

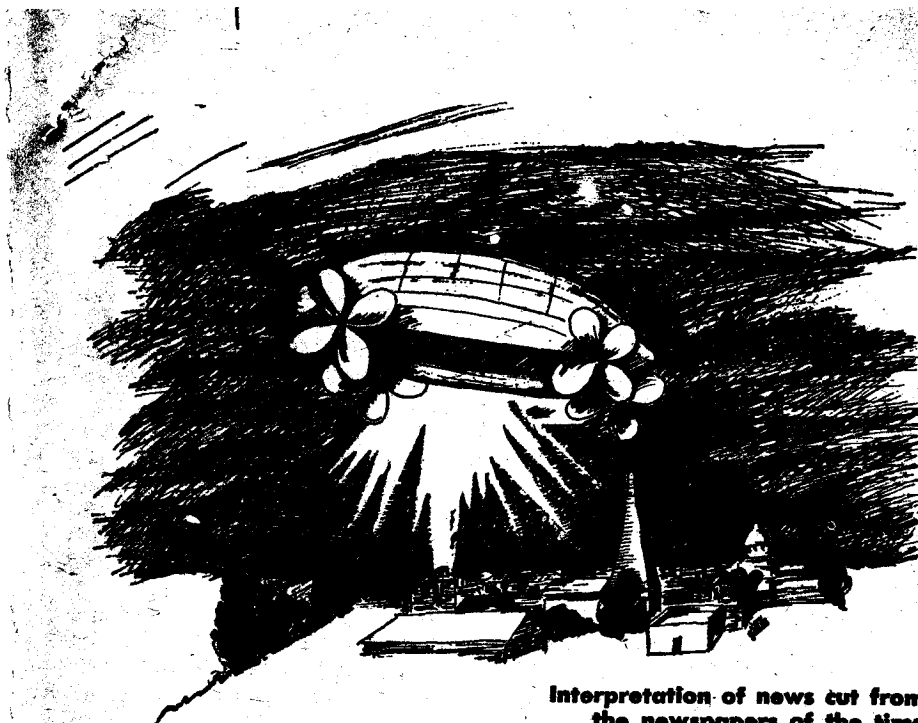
A "flying machine," whose origin is still in dispute, maneuvered purposefully and mysteriously from Oroville to San Francisco, and from Oakland to Sacramento, unrestrained by darkness, rain, wind, or the hue and cry of aroused observers.

The astute San Francisco Call ran a full front page on the 19th of November on the sightings. A couple of scooped rival newspapers questioned the veracity of the many reports, but only for a day. As their offices became overrun with subscribers and others who "saw it with (their) own eyes," the two papers

changed their minds, investigated, and were forced to take the story seriously. But none of the papers discovered anything at all about the history, workings, or purpose of the strange craft. 1896 was no different from any other year in history in that unknown objects have explored the skies of earth and been observed, wondered at, and reported; and in the thrust and squeeze of mortal progress, generally forgotten.

There was great talk at the time of the strange machine being of local invention, originating in the Table Mountain area above Oroville. This is so highly unlikely a proposition as to be called impossible, although the top of Table Mountain would certainly have provided a secluded and safe temporary landing site for an alien visitor from the sky.

Names were inevitably associated



Interpretation of news cut from the newspapers of the time

with the advent of the strange craft. There was a Dr. Benjamin who allegedly did the inventing. Then there was one George Collins, his attorney, who offered to the press a description of the sky machine although he obviously had not as yet seen the actual vehicle. But one is forced to question which came first, the advent or the association.

The sky vehicle which visited Northern California in 1896 employed the vertical maneuverability and hoverability of a present day helicopter, but without a sign of the ungainly and hungry rotor. It swooped and soared over the roof tops of San Francisco and glided

neatly and precisely over the mining shacks of Cherokee in Butte County, without benefit of wings. The Collins story has the airship with crude, inept flappers. In all pictures, however, the background is rain swept and cloud torn, and although the craft was undoubtedly wingless, the 1896 outlook would most certainly have added wings in the recounting. To be sure, there were lighter-than-air craft in operation at the time on an experimental basis, but the movements of these were about as decisive and determined as the wanderings of the spider watching the treetops slip by below her as she clings to her strands of silken web.

Some of these pictures in which wings are shown not only have a stormy backdrop, but all pictures clearly delineate powerful search-lights. On this all witnesses agree, even to the extent that with the Sacramento (1896) observations some of the hundreds of citizens who gaped, openmouthed and startled, were partially and temporarily blinded by the brilliance of the "great lights" emanating from the sky object. The ship obviously had access to a source of power incompatible with the heavy glass jar batteries and even heavier dynamos with which the world prided itself in that day.

It seems that November of 1896 in Northern California, there was manifestation of the same type of phenomena which startled Kenneth Arnold near Mt. Ranier in 1947. Call it or them what you will, but their existence cannot be denied.

The strange sky craft visited Oakland. On Monday the 23rd of November of that year when the bare electric bulb in the kitchen was still a novelty and a marvel, horses, buggies and spellbound people mingled in confusion and wonderment on dark streets as the "monster of the air" swung low over the housetops. It inspected building, street, and the startled life of the metropolis in the glare of its blinding light beams. And of course, the revealing lights were made still more dramatic as the unknown vehicle came down through the clouds of a rainy, stormy night to view the city.

Among the many reputable ob-

servers of the unknown machine were Oakland's Mayor Davies, and Mayor Sutro of San Francisco. Mayor Sutro witnessed the slow approach of the sky vehicle as it sailed toward the Golden Gate from somewhere above the Pacific Ocean. He and his family and all the servants made their way hastily out onto the lawn at Sutro Heights Manor to watch the progress of the object coming in from the direction of the sea. This, too, was an evening visit, and San Franciscans hurriedly climbed ladders and stairs to get a roof top view as the light beams from the sky played about over their city.

The seals on Seal Rocks found themselves illuminated, causing them to protest with grunts and squeals and retreat into the water. The sky car cruised leisurely past the eminences of Twin Peaks, its bright rays passing lightly over the pines and rhododendron, and the formal gardens of the area. Brakes on the cable cars were locked and destinations forgotten as passengers and crew piled off to wonder at this dark sky chariot with the bright lights which was passing through the sky above them. One newspaper account said its "frame" was like "the body of a bird," yet still no mention of anything even resembling wings as we know them. Undoubtedly because the ship had no wings, nor had it any need of them.

At about 9:15 of that same San Francisco evening, Van Ness Avenue was treated to a little longer display as the "glowing giant" hov-

ered at about 400 feet above the thoroughfare while the people on the street looked. A few no doubt gazed in fear, others in boiling curiosity. The next morning the city hall and all the municipal offices were besieged by excited men and women, all demanding an explanation of just what it was they had seen the night before flying around over the city, shining its lights everywhere and scaring horses and people half out of their wits.

A special meeting of The Board of Supervisors was called to cope with the questions of the populace. In the matter of an unknown sky vehicle however, it is not known just what The Board's answers were, but we can be sure that in this instance they saw the limits of their supervision.

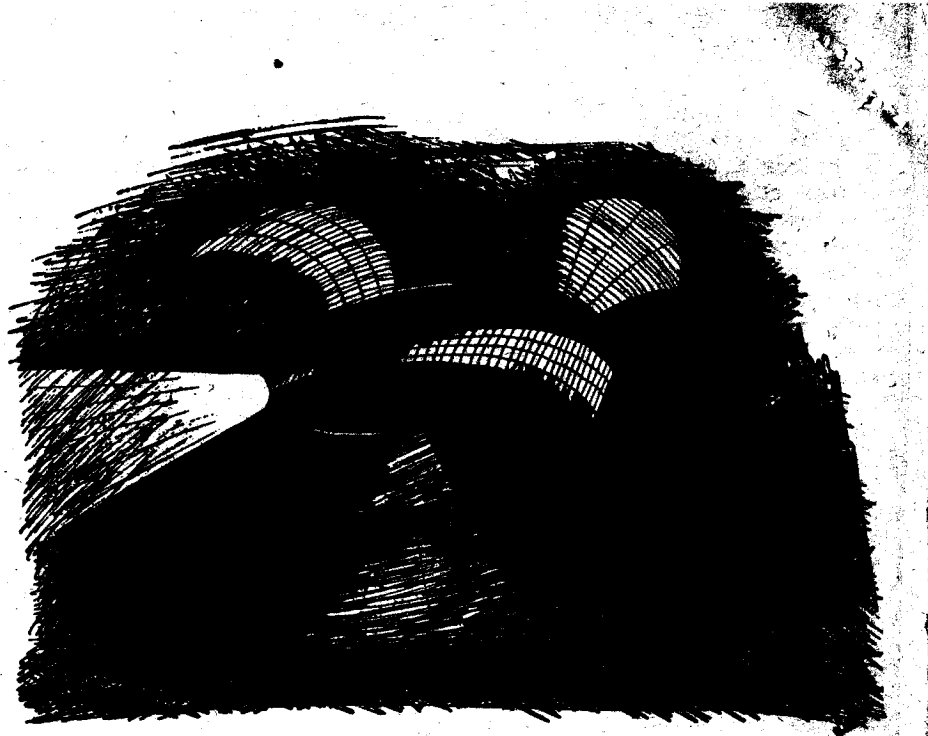
One 1896 newspaper cut shows the strangely familiar rounded outline of the ship inspecting St. Mary's College, Oakland. The shape of the object in the air is remindful of other, more recent phenomena which a government department have found highly unpalatable, and to whom the UFO and its viewing has become anathema and grounds for excommunication. The illustration shows four airscrews arranged around the lower rim of the oval, hanging from the underside, which would certainly be an unhandy place for them. The propellers can be nothing but the viewer's assumption that such were necessary for propulsion because the ship was flying and something had to make it fly. But if whirling pro-

pellors were the motivation it would have required an eye faster than human to identify them and determine they had four blades. Notable in the description is the absence of any reference to a roar, whir, or sound of any sort coming from the strange machine, whereas in any propeller driven aircraft most of the noise heard on the ground comes from the blades churning the air.

The propellers go with the wings: ready answers for the unknown.

During this same time, over in Camptonville which lies a couple of ridges and a river to the west of Oroville, one of Camptonville's leading citizens, a Mr. Meek, reported on a landing made by, it is presumed, this same ship. The unknown craft settled to earth on a level spot just out of town, whereupon five of the strongest and bravest of the town's young men ventured out to investigate. There was no hostility from the only crew member they saw, but unfortunately conversation lagged because neither party understood the other.

No doubt there were many on those wet windy November evenings in Oakland and San Francisco who knew an unvoiced longing as they watched the departure of the strange craft heading out. Then as now, the new and wonderful possibilities of which they had been given a glimpse must have sent a surge to the hearts and inflamed the imaginations of many of those observers. But the Spanish-American War was even then a-brewing, and the never neglected direction of public



**Interpretation of news cut from
the newspapers of the time**

sentiment was under way. The excitement caused by the unknown visitor from the sky was crowded out by the induced fever of mundane strife and politics, and the story then, as similar stories now, became officially forgotten.

If such effortless and manageable power were available as that demonstrated by the unknown vehicle, it is difficult to conceive of it being immune to exploitation. In fact, a powerful California Railroad Entity threw money and manpower into an effort to discover the origin and

workings of the sky vehicle, but in vain.

The "in vain" is as conclusive proof as any of the unassailability of the secret of this ungravitating visitor from the sky. Or of it not being "local invention."

Besides the railroad, the government investigated also, thinking perhaps it was An Implement of Spanish Aggression. Here too, as with so many other authenticated UFO sightings, all they found was mystery, and no answers, but a lot of eyewitnesses.

LO SPETTACOLO CELESTE DEL 1896

1.896-97

Di quante cose siamo moralmente sicuri,
delle quali è impossibile fornire
la prova materiale.

(Luigi Da Venezia - Bellotti)

CLY, MAYO - JUNIO 1966

JED RATBONE

(Da: "Flying Saucers" - Febbraio 1965)

Traduzione di LUCIA MAY TURIN

Nel novembre 1896, l'attonita popolazione dell'intera Valle di Sacramento, in California, ebbe il privilegio d'assistere ad una manifestazione quale simile non doveva ripetersi, almeno per tre quarti di secolo.

Una « macchina volante », la cui origine è ancora ignota, manovrò misteriosamente da Oroville a San Francisco, e da Oakland a Sacramento, per nulla curandosi dell'oscurità della pioggia, del vento, nè delle grida degli osservatori allarmati.

Il giornale « San Francisco Call » del 19 novembre pubblicò l'evento sull'intera prima pagina. Una coppia di quotidiani concorrenti discussero la veridicità dei molti rapporti, ma solo per un giorno. Man mano che i loro uffici venivano invasi da testimoni che « avevano veduto con i loro propri occhi », i due giornali cambiarono idea, investigarono, e furono obbligati a prendere sul serio la storia. Ma nessuno di loro scoprì qualcosa circa la provenienza dello strano velivolo.

Il 1896 non fu diverso da alcun altro anno della storia in cui oggetti sconosciuti abbiano esplorato il cielo della Terra ed a loro volta siano stati osservati suscitando meraviglia e discussioni e, nel turbinio del normale progresso, furono presto dimenticati.

All'inizio, si parlò molto della strana macchina, si disse che poteva essere di fabbricazione locale, originaria della Table Mountain sopra Oroville. Questa ipotesi però fu trovata impossibile, sebbene la vetta del Table Mountain avrebbe potuto forse procurare un atterraggio temporaneo, sicuro e isolato, per un visitatore estraneo giunto dal cielo.

Inevitabilmente, si associarono nomi all'evento. Fu addebitata l'invenzione a un certo Dr. Benjamin. Poi il suo procuratore offrì alla stampa una descrizione della macchina celeste sebbene, egli in persona, non avesse ancora veduto il veicolo in questione. Si fu dunque obbligati a domandarsi quale dei due giunse prima: l'evento o l'invenzione?

Il veicolo celeste che visitò la California del Nord nel 1896 si serviva della manovrabilità verticale e volteggiante d'un elicottero dei giorni nostri, ma senza alcun segno di rotazione goffa o sgraziata.

Scendeva e saliva sulle cime dei tetti di San Francisco e « scivolava » con somma precisione sulle guglie di Cherokee nella Butte County, senza la minima presenza di ali. La storia di Collins descrive l'aeronave con insoliti coperchi a cerniera. In tutti i disegni, il suolo viene rappresentato bagnato di pioggia e il cielo coperto di nubi, e sebbene l'aereo fosse assolutamente senza ali, nell'illustrarlo i disegnatori del 1896 vi aggiunsero ali.

Alcuni di quei disegni in cui vengono aggiunte ali al velivolo, non solo indicano uno scarico posteriore "nuvoloso", ma perfino ben distinti e potenti fari. Su questo, i testimoni furono d'accordo; dichiararono tutti quanti, ed erano centinaia, che mentre guardavano a bocca aperta e impauriti, rimasero temporaneamente accecati dalla luminosità delle « grandi luci » che si prigionavano dall'oggetto celeste.

Ovviamente, la nave doveva avere una sorgente di luce e di forza incompatibile con le pesanti batterie ed ancor più pesanti dinamo di cui a quei giorni il mondo si gloriava.

A quanto pare in quel novembre 1896, la « manifestazione » sulla California del Nord fu del medesimo tipo di quella che meravigliò Kenneth Arnold nel 1947, presso il monte Rainer. Chiamatela come volete, ma la loro esistenza non può essere negata.

Lo strano apparecchio aereo visitò pure Oakland. Il lunedì 23 novembre di quell'anno, quando le nude lampadine elettriche erano ancora una novità e una meraviglia, cavalli e uomini attoniti si mescolarono in meravigliata confusione nelle buie strade per vedere il « mostro dell'aria » scendere in basso, volando rasente alle case. Stava ispezionando case, vie, e la vita spaurita della metropoli, con la luce dei suoi fari accecanti?

Naturalmente, le luci che tutto rivelarono, erano tanto più drammatiche in quanto il veicolo sconosciuto era sceso attraverso le nubi in una notte tempestosa per osservare la città.

Fra i molti attendibili osservatori della macchina sconosciuta, vi furono il sindaco di Oakland, sig. Davies e il sig. Sutro, di San Francisco. Quest'ultimo fu in grado di osservare il lento avvicinarsi del veicolo celeste mentre si dirigeva verso la Golden Gate, provenendo da una qualche parte al di sopra dell'Oceano Pacifico. Egli, la sua famiglia e tutti i suoi servitori si portarono velocemente sul prato più alto per meglio osservare il procedere dell'oggetto che veniva dalla direzione del mare.

Le foche, sulle « Rocce delle Foche », si trovarono tutte illuminate, il che provocò da parte loro squittii e grugniti di protesta mentre si ritraevano nelle acque.

Il carro celeste incrociò a tutto suo agio fin oltre le alture di Twin Peaks, passando leggermente i suoi chiari raggi sopra i pini e i rododendri, nonchè sui preoccupati guardiani dell'area. I freni delle diligenze furono bloccati, e i passeggeri dimenticando la loro meta si assieparono per osservare strabiliati quella « cosa » che passava nel cielo su di loro.

Un giornale riferì che la sua « sagoma » era simile « al corpo di un uccello » ma senza alcun riferimento a qualcosa che assomigliasse alle ali quali noi le conosciamo. Senza dubbio, perchè la nave non ne aveva, nè ne aveva bisogno.

Alle 21,15 circa della medesima sera, a San Francisco, la Van Ness Avenue ricevette in regalo una esibizione un po' più lunga del « gigante luminoso » che volteggiava a circa 120 metri sulla testa di chi dalla strada guardava.

Senza dubbio alcuni si spaventarono, perchè l'indomani l'atrio e gli uffici del Municipio erano zeppi di uomini e donne eccitate che domandavano spiegazioni esatte su ciò che, la sera prima, gettava raggi di luce attorno alla città e sopra ogni cosa, spaventando cavalli e gente.

Fu convocata un'assemblea straordinaria del Consiglio Comunale per tener testa al comportamento della popolazione; non sappiamo esattamente quali spiegazioni furono date al riguardo dello sconosciuto veicolo celeste, ma possiamo essere sicuri che su questo punto i Consiglieri dovettero scoprire i limiti della loro sovrintendenza.

Un giornale del 1896 porta lo schizzo dell'ormai stranamente familiare sagoma rotondeggiante della nave mentre ispezionava il St. Mary's College, ad Oakland. La forma dell'oggetto nell'aria ricorda altre forme, di fenomeni più recenti, che un certo dipartimento governativo americano trovò alquanto ostici, ed a causa dei quali gli UFO e i loro avvistamenti sono diventati anatema, e meritevoli di scomunica.

L'illustrazione mostra quattro eliche disposte attorno all'orlo inferiore di un ovale, fuorescenti da una parte interna che certamente doveva essere un posto assai scomodo per esse. Le eliche disegnate non possono essere altro che una ipotesi del disegnatore, il quale pensava che esse fossero necessarie per la propulsione, dato che la nave volava e qualcosa doveva farla volare. Ma se propellenti rotanti fossero stati la causa del volo, sarebbe occorso un potere visivo assai più veloce di quello umano per identificarlo, e per determinare che possedevano quattro pale.

Nella descrizione, è rimarchevole l'assenza di riferimenti a suoni, fischi o ronzii di sorta, da parte della strana macchina, mentre è noto che qualunque aereo ad elica emette forti rumori che si odono distintamente da terra, e che sono dovuti proprio alle pale vorticanti nell'aria.

Durante il medesimo periodo, sopra Captonville, che si trova a un paio di catene montuose oltre un fiume, all'ovest di Oroville, uno dei maggiorenti di Captonville, certo Signor Meek, riferì che un aereo, che si presume sia il medesimo di cui sopra, atterrò addirittura. L'apparecchio sconosciuto si sarebbe adagiato su di terreno livellato, appena fuori la città, per cui cinque fra i più robusti e coraggiosi giovanotti della città si avventurarono ad investigare. Non vi fu alcuna ostilità da parte dell'unico membro dell'equipaggio da essi veduto, ma sfortunatamente la conversazione non ebbe esito, perchè nessuna delle due parti capiva l'altra.

A quell'epoca si parlava pure della guerra tra Spagna e America, e l'opinione pubblica era sotto controllo.

L'eccitamento causato dal visitatore sconosciuto venuto dal cielo fu sommerso dalla febbre delle lotte politiche e mondane, e la storia, allora come oggi, fu ufficialmente dimenticata.

Se un simile potere controllabile e privo di sforzo era allora sconosciuto, come lo dimostrava lo sconosciuto veicolo, è difficile concepire che sia impossibile sfruttarlo. Difatti, una potente Ditta Californiana di Ferrovie, impiegò denaro e uomini alla ricerca delle origini del veicolo celeste, ma invano.

Questo « invano » è un'altra prova conclusiva dell'incomprensibile « Segreto » di quel visitatore celeste mancante di gravitazione. Dimostrazione, pure, che non si trattava di « invenzione locale ».

Oltre la Compagnia Ferroviaria, lo stesso Governo stigò, pensando forse che si trattasse di un aggeggi appartenente alla Spagna. Ma anche qui, come per tanti autentici avvistamenti UFO, tutto ciò che trovarono mistero, e nessuna risposta. Ma solamente una qualche notevole di testimoni oculari.

Weekly World News 2 Dec 80

Most amazing UFO visit in history remains a mystery after 84 years

One of the most amazing UFOs in history terrorized an American city more than 80 years ago — and the astounding incident remains unexplained today!

It was in 1896, before airplanes or weather balloons roamed the skies, when an enormous spaceship flew over Sacramento, Calif.

The dazzling event was witnessed by many prominent residents of the city and reported on Page One of the respected San Francisco Call newspaper.

The newspaper said scores of reputable citizens saw the incredible thing in the nighttime sky on Nov. 17, 1896:

"Many of them lived fully a mile or two distant from each other, but their accounts agree.

"The body of the craft was oblong and egg-shaped. Midway of the vessel and suspended directly beneath it was a brilliant search light.

"Above the egg-shaped body towered a tall, indistinguishable mass whose shape it was impossible to ascertain, owing to the fact that the onlookers' eyes were blurred by the brilliancy of the search light.

"It moved slowly in a circle leaving a volume of smoke be-

hind it. After a brief glimpse of the body of the airship it faded from view and all that was visible was the brilliant search light which moved slowly in a southwesterly direction."

A leading Sacramento citizen, Frank Ross, who headed the town's street car company, was among those quoted by the newspaper.

"All I saw was a brilliant electric search light, twice the size and power of an ordinary light, which was being propelled through the air by some mysterious force.

"From what I have learned from my employees — men of undoubted veracity — I am certain that this can by no possibility have been a fake.

"I watched the light until it passed out of sight 30 minutes later. I have no idea of its destination or purpose. I can only say that I am fully convinced that it was something out of the ordinary."

Some Sacramento citizens told the newspaper they could distinguish voices coming from — and could even see vague human-like forms scurrying around — the UFO.

The sighting has baffled experts ever since — but Dr. Tom Crouch, curator of the Smith-



A large portion of the front page of the San Francisco Call was devoted to coverage of the remarkable UFO that terrorized residents of Sacramento, Calif., in 1896.

sonian Institution in Washington, D.C., says he is certain the object was a UFO.

There was nothing else in the air that it could have been, he said.

Dr. Crouch, an aviation expert, said the earliest dirigible

wasn't built in America until 1902 — six years after the Sacramento UFO. The Wright brothers didn't fly until 1903, he said.

"In Europe, zeppelins, very rigid airships, were flying at the turn of the century. But no one

would have built one of those in America and not revealed it to the world," he said.

"The intriguing thing is the reports of the brilliant shining lights on the airship. This would have been very difficult to do at that time."

**OVNIS A TRAVÉS
DE LA HISTORIA...**

1.896-97

EXPLOSION EN EL CIELO DE MADRID

10 DE FEBRERO DE 1896.

Una tremenda explosión ocurrió en el cielo de Madrid y a todo lo largo de la ciudad no quedó un cristal sano.

Un muro del edificio ocupado por la Embajada Americana, se vino abajo. Habitantes del pueblo Madrileño corrieron por las calles presas del pánico, durante los cuales resultaron algunos heridos. Por cinco horas y media una luminosa nube de restos flotó sobre Madrid, cayendo algunas piedras en el cielo.

(EL CASO DE LOS OVNIS, M. K. Jessup).

R.O., N° 30, 1.994

The UFO Wave of 1896

© 1974 by Loren E. Gross, *secretly printed*
Freeport, California

FOREWORD

The mystery of unidentified flying objects (UFOs) is not a modern one. For a long time inexplicable things have been seen in the sky.

During the latter part of 1896 history's first big UFO wave took place when thousands of amazed people reported strange lights moving about in the sky over many cities of Central California. A careful examination of the 1896 flap could help answer the biggest question of all about UFOs. Are UFOs extraterrestrial?

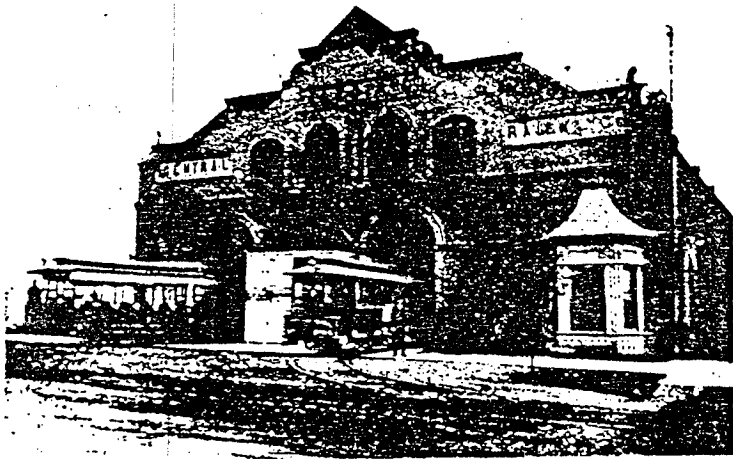
The following account is the most complete and accurate survey of the 1896 wave yet compiled.



On September 20, 1896, an astronomer named Swift noticed a point of light, the magnitude of Venus, out over the Pacific Ocean. The point of light was approximately one degree from the setting sun as twilight fell over San Francisco. The following afternoon Professor Perrins, working at the Lick Observatory atop the 4,000 ft. high Mt. Hamilton due east of San Jose, California, received a telegram from Swift announcing the possible discovery of a new comet. At dusk on the 21st, Professor Perrins mounted a Herschel-prism on a twelve inch telescope and scanned the sky in every direction in the neighborhood of the sun as it slowly sank below the horizon, however, the "comet" had disappeared.

About the first week of November, 1896, as dusk was descending on San Francisco, His Honor, Mayor Sutro, drove up in his carriage to his mansion which was west of the city and overlooked the Pacific. Members of his household staff rushed out to meet him with a remarkable story. It seems a "strange object" had hovered in the air just offshore over Seal Rock. The darkness had masked the features of the unknown aerial thing, but a powerful light had been discernable on the rear portion as well as a row of lights down its side, as the object suddenly flew away toward the east, passing overhead at an estimated 500 foot altitude. The Mayor ~~noticed that~~ his servants were "full of wonderment" as they told of the sight. He gave the episode no more thought for two weeks.

On Tuesday, November 17, 1896, Charles Lusk, cashier of the Central Electric Street Railway Company in Sacramento, California, stepped outside for some fresh air at his place of residence at 24th and "O" Streets. The weather had been worse than usual that winter, and the black evening skies, troubled with intermittent rain, drew his attention. Suddenly there appeared over the rooftops a bright light sailing on a westward course at a 1,000 ft. altitude. The following day, Mr. Lusk reported the sight to the fellows at the Car Barn, where, to his surprise, the "light" was already the main topic of discussion. There was a faint shape visible behind the light and the men agreed the thing could only be a powered balloon of some sort. Others in the neighborhood had apparently witnessed the same passage of the mystery light since the city's two newspapers carried an account of the phenomenon.



Central Electric Railway Car House, Sacramento 1896

George Scott, an assistant to the Secretary of State, had been chatting with a trio of acquaintances on the steps of the State Capitol building when the floating sky light caught his eye. He had called attention to the remarkable sight, but his friends dismissed it, calling it an illumination of some distant hillside. Privileged to have a key to the Capitol building, Scott led the others to the observation deck at the very top of the Capitol dome. From their excellent vantage point the group discerned the dim outline of a dark body sweeping through the air adorned with three lights.

A few of the townsfolk remembered the boast which had appeared in the newspaper a few days previously, of a New York inventor who claimed he intended to set sail for California in a powered balloon. On the strength of that boast, rumors began to grow fast. An Associated Press story from New York, dated November 17th, had told of a man named Leon who was constructing an aircraft in Hoboken, which could allegedly carry him across the continent. As a result of that story, some of the car men at the street car Car Barn jocularly volunteered to the press that they had heard crewmen aboard the "balloon" shouting orders to the helmsman to avoid church steeples. One fellow who used to work for the street railroad, R.L. Lowry, outdid his former buddies with this description:

I was standing near the Sacramento brewery when my attention was directed skyward by hearing a voice up there call out, "Throw her up higher; she'll hit the steeple," evidently mistaking the tower of the brewery for a church steeple. Then I saw the light. It seemed like a light within a globular glass covering that magnified it. Above the light I saw two men seated as though on bicycle frames and working with a bicycle movement. I heard one of them say, "We will get to San Francisco about half-past 12," but not mentioning whether midnight or afternoon. Above these two men, who seemed to be working their passage, was a kind of mezzanine box capable of holding two or more people, but I saw no others. Above this was a cigar-shaped body of some length. There were wheels at the side like the side wheels on Fulton's old steam boat.

J.H. Vogel, a bartender, was standing just down the street from the Car Barn crowd and he told a different story: "I saw the light and above it a dark body dimly outlined in the form of an egg with the small end forward. I heard a muffled buzzing of machinery." That was all Mr. Vogel would claim.

The Car Barn foreman, Mr. Snider, didn't engage in the

elaborations of the other employees when approached by a reporter from the *Sacramento Bee*. Mr. Snider merely affirmed that a white light, neither a star nor a meteor, had been seen by him and his men about seven o'clock on the night of the 17th.

Still, a few stories persisted that "voices" had been heard, though some likened the sounds heard to a sweet chorus of singers that seem to have an artificial quality like that produced by a phonograph. Many were unable to make out any distinct words at all, blaming such difficulty on the intermittent intensity of volume due probably to wind currents in the air. Not everyone would volunteer even a conservative opinion. E. Caverly was approached by a reporter from the *San Francisco Call*, but stayed mum on what he saw, giving the impression that he had witnessed something uncanny.

Those residents that lived in Oak Park, a Sacramento suburb, told newsmen that something had circled high in the sky over that place the day before, leaving a smoke trail, and now they were wondering if there could be a connection with the sky light mystery. The *Sacramento Record-Union* published a very sketchy item on page four in contrast to the *Bee's* front page treatment. Not sure what the "light" was, the *Record-Union* called the light a "wandering apparition" and titled its article: "What Was It?"

A reporter for the *San Francisco Call* telegraphed word of the sky light to his newspaper which printed an account on the 18th, telling San Franciscans that a "light" had approached Sacramento at about 1,000 ft. altitude and then had risen to about double that height as it came in from a north-east direction. When it arrived at the city limits, the article continued, it turned to the south, and bore southwest toward San Francisco. In the process the light had floated over the street car company barn, causing the startled employees of that place to emerge en masse. The story added that the passage of the mysterious visitant took thirty minutes, furthermore the story continued, a postal telegraph lineman spotted a similar phenomenon earlier, near Suisun, at nine o'clock Sunday evening. The call told its readers that the car men had glimpsed a faint shape that resembled a balloon, so there was a general consensus in Sacramento that it could only be some kind of powered balloon-type airship since it moved into the teeth of a heavy wind.

On the 19th, the *Sacramento Bee* ran more about the Tuesday episode on its front page which asked: "Airship or What?" calling it a "queer phenomenon." The light was now the talk of the town. The opinions were split as to whether it was a meteor or a balloon. The description of voices

and an elliptical, propeller-driven airship given by a couple of people was regarded by the majority of Sacramento citizens as the embellishments of hoaxsters. General agreement, though, centered around the arc-lamp type light. Nonetheless, unsubstantiated rumors were circulated that a balloon contrivance was tethered somewhere on the outskirts of the city. The *Sacramento Union*, a critic of the local uproar, printed a story painting the mood of the populace as 99% skeptical. Five of the electric railway motormen, T.P. DeLong, D. Curl, F.E. Briggs, M.F. Shelly, and the ex-employee, R.L. Lowry, (now the center of attention) found their names in the *Union* along with details on the "voices" and the alleged specifications of the airship.

As the days passed and the "unknown New York inventors" did not land, the motormen became the object of ridicule with every fare boarding the electric railcars making flip-pant remarks about when the next airship was due. It was not long before the number of wisecracks approached intolerable levels. By November 20th things began to quiet down. The *Sacramento Union* ran a comic fictional piece with a group of hillbilly types engaged in a country store, wild tale contest about the "airship," complete with humorous accents. The *Union* noted that: "Hundreds agree that the light was rising, falling, and moving slowly, but only two or three hold that they saw the machine and only one (R.L. Lowry) gives any rational description of it."

The *San Francisco Chronicle* mentioned nothing until the 19th, when they carried a small story on page five titled: "Strange Tale of a Flying Machine," "Romance from Sacramento," "Said to Have Been Seen by Many Citizens." The *San Francisco Chronicle* preferred to see more of a hoax than an airship. Diagnosing the airship sighting as the affliction of the stagers, the *Chronicle* wondered in print why the marvelous flying machine had neglected to pay its respects to San Francisco. The *Chronicle* suggested that the Bible pounders around town might be right when they loudly sermonized that the citizens of the Bay Babylon were Hell bound and that San Francisco was hardly the place any decent soul would venture near. All day, the *Chronicle* went on, shoppers and businessmen "glanced furtively" upward expecting to see a black oval and passed off such unusual interest in the sky as concern for the weather. A reporter down at Police headquarters had told the editor's desk to relate the fact that the local law enforcers characterized the sky light as a fake, but that the night squads planned to engage in some amateur astronomy. Meanwhile, said the *Chronicle*, a peddler had spent a profitable day selling cheap telescopes on Market Street carrying a sandwich board advertising: "Watch Out for Great New York Airship." The *Chronicle* even sought the advice of Professor George Davidson who saw the nonsense as the work of the imagination of

the "wild-eyed," holding that the reported helter-skelter arrangement of the rumored propellers on the airship, and the claim that people on the ground could clearly hear the conversation of the "Airship's" crew 1,000 ft. in the air, were the products of a "free-masonry of liars." He could expect, he snorted, that at least a thousand fools would be victims of eyestrain, having spent their evenings searching the heavens. Weather observer Hammon shared the professor's conclusions, annexing it with his own comment that only a true heavier-than-air craft could perform as the reported Sacramento "balloon."

Elsewhere editors shared the disbelief of Dr. Davidson. The *Stockton Daily* finally took notice of the ruckus with an editorial jibe at the imaginations of its northern neighbors, proposing that they were perhaps still under the influence of the "airy flights" of the recent Presidential campaign.

A letter to the editor was published in the *Sacramento Bee*, which entitled a complaint about the sky light tomfoolery with the words, "A Car Barn Conspiracy." And the *Bee's* editor began to be concerned about the reputation of Sacramento.

On the 20th, the *Chronicle's* airship enthusiasm had shrunk to the size of a small article on page thirteen titled, "More of a Hoax Than an Airship." Along with the paper's waning interest, someone on the staff made a careless error by referring to the Sacramento mystery object as a "black oval speck with outstretched wings." As for the mysterious wheels, they could be traced solely to the imagination of R.L. Lowry. However, one must keep in mind the state of technology in the late 1890's.

What happened to the "Airship"? No one could offer any information on that score. News value of the "hoax" was all but dead and public opinion was more or less convinced that the "Airship" was being kept aloft with the hot air of liars.

South of Sacramento, at a small town named Tagus, about ten miles west of Visalia, California, an incident occurred which seemed unassociated with the "Airship" stories up north. It seems that about two o'clock in the afternoon of November 20th, Mr. S.H. Rison claims to have seen what he believed to be neither an airship nor a balloon:

(It was)...more like a canvas sheet spread out floating in a north-easterly direction at about an altitude of two thousand feet. He was pumping water and a tramp came up and asked him for a drink. While drinking the water, he saw the

object floating in the air and called Mr. Rison's attention to it.

They watched until it was out of sight and could see nothing but the canvas.* (Mr. Rison had not heard nor read of the Airship at Sacramento.)

On Saturday, the 21st, the *Chronicle* ventured to ask if the strange light over Sacramento might have been Diogenes' ghost, fruitlessly searching the town with his lantern--a jest with unflattering overtones for the citizens there. The *Sacramento Record-Union* tried to put the finishing touches to the airship debate by suggesting Ignis Fatuus (Swamp gas) and other jejune logic.

At five-thirty of the church-day afternoon, the sky was obscured with a dark, angry ceiling of clouds, resulting in a premature twilight, when "It" came out of the northwest, exhibiting a small searchlight flashing out in sharp relief against the solid, low-hanging overcast. "It" evidently was bent on a repeat of Tuesday's run. Only this time it was not going to skirt the city out where the Car Barn was located; instead, it headed directly for downtown Sacramento!

Mr. Isaac Gough, who happened to look up while walking near Second and "K" Streets, claims to have been the first to see the oncoming marvel. After a moment's hesitation to convince himself he was not seeing things, he dashed down the street shouting the alarm in all the stores, saloons, and hotels. People quickly spilled out into the cool evening air to see the amazing aerial prodigy with their own eyes. As the word spread like wildfire, the much-abused motor men raced their trolleys across the town yelling and clanging their car bells with all the zeal they could muster now that the opportunity to salvage their reputation unexpectedly presented itself.

Luckily, the enigma was in low gear and Jacob Zemansky, a cigar store proprietor, had a small telescope which he brought to bear. He gave the crowd around him a running account of a dark, mass rising and falling which the bright light seemed to be attached. The staff of the "we'll-believe-it-when-we-see-it" *Record-Union*, hearing the uproar outside, charged through the front door of their office bug-eyed. Though the dark sky did not permit them to distinguish detail, they returned to their desks much impressed by the large, bright, evidently electric light carried along by the mystery ship.

Edward Carragher, owner of the Saddle Rock Restaurant, had a pair of field glasses which also disclosed a large,

*See note at the end of this pamphlet.

dark body supporting the light. Dr. Amiel Morris, of Woodland, California, was called outside by Carragher, who pointed out what the doctor believed to be a ball of fire sailing along about six hundred feet in the air.

The Sacramento representative of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Colvin Brown, a leading debunker of the airship tales, was horrified at what was happening. During the twenty minute passage, the chagrined journalist grabbed an almanac and attempted to convince a nearby knot of people at Seventh and "K" Streets that the planet Venus must have slipped its orbit and was now coursing overhead. Making no impression on the excited observers, the never-say-die newspaperman went off in search of Sergeant Barwick, the head of the weather bureau, to have him explain the thing as a meteor.

The *Contra Costa Gazette*, which was published weekly at Martinez, California, later managed to obtain complete information for its November 28th issue. The "light," it seems, appeared in the northwest and headed slowly southwest. As the light reached the southern edge of Sacramento, the enigmatic visitor turned west and then south, after which it was absent for a period of time. Later the phenomenon made another appearance out of the west, finally to leave the skies over Sacramento on a northwest heading. The *Gazette* allowed that whatever it was, it permitted everyone an extended look.

Among the groups of witnesses that evening was a cluster composed of State officials and lawyers of repute, all of whom had fancied themselves above the hysteria of the *profanum vulgus*; they were among the most astonished. The Governor's executive secretary took in the sight with amazement, appraising the flicking mystery as definitely not a star (the sky was overcast anyway) or some breed of meteor, but undeniably an arc light. The aerial riddle moved with such quickness, he swore, that he had to keep shifting his position as the downtown buildings intervened. Dignified reticence kept him from endorsing the "Airship" theory, although he conceded that the traveling light was neither a phony nor a mistaken celestial body. District Attorney Frank D. Ryan stared at the spectacular sight and muttered aloud: "And there will be strange sights seen in the heavens. Wars and rumors of wars. I shall certainly attend church tomorrow, for this may be the advent of the millennium." And then feeling that perhaps he was becoming too serious, Ryan forced a laugh and turned to those around him and spoke in a lighter tone: "That thing is too deep for me. I don't understand it. It might be that aerial travel has been accomplished. It seems as strange and improbable as were the inventions of the telephone, phonograph and the electric power applied to streetcars."

The Regional Military Signal Corps Commander, also an on-looker, subscribed to the anti-hoax theory and suddenly re-

membered an inquiry two gentlemen had made at his office around four o'clock only that afternoon. A Mr. Haines and a Mr. Fleetheart both said that they had the good fortune to have been gazing upward when an object crossed high overhead in the azure and vanished in the northwest. The Signal Corps Lieutenant assured the two men that the dark, misty thing could only have been a cloud, but the miffed duo insisted that the rapidity of its passage, and the then clear sky precluded a prank by the weather. Now, an hour and a half later, a strange flying body had approached Sacramento from the northwest, same compass reading, so the officer informed the press that the public could well believe a real air vessel was flying about in the sky.

It will be remembered that our mystery light had disappeared to the south of Sacramento for a short spell. The *Livermore Herald* quoted two gentlemen who said they had a fantastic encounter near Knights Ferry in Stanislaus County (southeast of Sacramento) on the evening of the 22nd. While their buggy rattled across a bridge, something like a ball of fire caught their eye about a furlong ahead. The "fireball" rose slowly and then flew low for one hundred yards before beginning a shallow climb. The strange thing began its take-off in the direction of the perplexed witnesses, yet made a half circle maneuver to keep its distance. At two hundred yards, the men discerned a couple points of intense white light on the "nose" at right angles to the body and another on the rear as the red glowing object rushed by. The two watched open-mouthed, as the thing gathered speed and sped out of sight. In relating their story to the editor of the *Herald*, the gentlemen discounted the meteor possibility, remarking that the thing skimmed the surface of the ground. Nor did they want to give credence to the popular balloon rumors. However, they asked, if it were not an airship, what could it have been? They left the editor with statements that the aerial mystery must be shorn of the burlesque antics of irresponsible newspapermen, for they could vouch for the authenticity of the phenomenon. The witnesses were two prominent Methodist ministers, Rev. H. Copeland, and Rev. John Kirby.

One is also inclined to believe these men of the cloth; their description correlates with the one given by Nick White, editor of the *Sacramento Record-Union*: "...(I) at one time saw several smaller lights in addition to the larger light. When the direction [of the airship] changed, but one of the lights was visible."

Back in Sacramento on the 22nd, convinced and excited crowds of people chattered in their homes and hotel lobbies far into the night about the new wonder of science they had just seen. The saloons were doing a roaring business, as endless toasts were offered to the unknown inventor that had finally mastered the age-old dream of air travel. The Wed-

nesday edition of the San Francisco *Call* which had carried speculation on the possible workings of airships and had told of the Hoboken inventor, was hunted down all over town. When a copy was found it was passed around among friends but jealously guarded for that particular issue had suddenly become a collector's item. Even Walter Mallory, Sacramento's deputy sheriff, now stepped forward to be formally listed as an original Tuesday night witness of the visitant's passage over the Capitol. Mr. Mallory told everyone that he had just left the jail and was walking near Kearny and Broadway on Tuesday night when he happened to notice the unusual sight:

It was a strong white light, seemingly moving. I thought it was a balloon attached, at first, but on a closer observation I thought I recognized a dark body immediately over the light, somewhat of a different shape than a balloon. The more I observed it, the more puzzled I became as to what it was.

The papers the next day proclaimed that there could be no doubt as to the airship's reality, describing how suddenly and completely, skepticism had evaporated because of the display of the previous evening.

The "light" had not finished its nocturnal wanderings, for having left the Sacramento sky at approximately six o'clock, it appeared one hundred and fifty miles to the south-east. There, a brilliant shaft of light was seen over San Leandro, in the East Bay, south of Oakland, California. This "mysterious bark," as the *Oakland Tribune* termed it, rose and fell in an undulating fashion and was seen by Selby Yost, a motorman of the Alameda Electric Railway line (those Car Barn types again), as well as by passengers, C.H. Ellis, Miss Wilson and her unnamed friend. An unidentified youth had first spotted the "bark" and dashed to the nearest "expert" on the phenomenon—the local streetcar operator. A large dark shape was seen emitting a stream of light from its forward part as it floated rapidly toward the northwest and then turned in the direction of Hayward, where it vanished in the darkness. Mr. and Mrs. W.J. Rodda, strolling the street that evening, backed up the witnesses on the Alameda car, saying that they discerned a light in the sky about the same time. When reporters heard that the light was also supposed to have hovered over Saint Mary's College in Oakland, they went knocking on the door of the director of the college, Brother Walter. He said:

I gave no special thought to the light that was seen, because there was nothing to attract my attention to it until I heard some of the people about the college discussing the airship story. I found, upon talking to several students and members of the faculty, that none who observed the illumination

gave any thought to it except to surmise it was a meteor, although it moved rather slowly for that. Nothing, I learned, was visible except the light, and that was of such a character as to cause no special comment.

One would believe the unknown aerial navigator had made a direct transit from Sacramento to San Leandro, yet accounts have the aerial visitor leaving the capital city on a north-west bearing. Luckily, a telegraphic message, received by the Sacramento *Record-Union* office, reported that shortly after six the airship had flown twenty miles west near Folsom, the site of the new hydro-electric plant, moving along on a southern heading before pivoting to the southwestern tract into a bank of heavy clouds.

At eleven o'clock, Frank Everette, living in Santa Clara, south of Hayward, glimpsed the light bound for an unknown destination in the southeast.

The foregoing sightings do form a rough sequential scheme for the night of the twenty-second and make it appear unlikely that all of the witnesses had been inspired by telegraphic accounts, which lends credence to the actual physical character of the phenomenon.

Now that thousands had viewed the Airship over Sacramento, the suspense became unbearable as people waited for the genius responsible to land his craft and exhibit the machine for public inspection. Earlier in the month of November, a Bay Area attorney had received assurances from an inventor, who wished to remain anonymous, that the problems of air travel had indeed just been solved. George D. Collins, who had a law practice in San Francisco, let it leak out that a mysterious client of his evidently had been the one cruising among the clouds over the Capitol. Collins had been impressed with the claims of the unnamed improviser who said that \$100,000 and five years had gone into perfecting a 150 ft. machine equipped with canvas wings. Furthermore, this San Francisco member of the Bar declared that he had been "favored with a demonstration at a secret location." Up to the day of the 21st such claims received an indifferent reception, but the sensation at Sacramento on the 22nd caused the over-running of Collins' home and office by reporters and just plain snoopers pressing him for details. Backed into a corner, Collins said the aerial nocturnal wonder was hidden in a Berkeley barn during the daylight hours, and that a mysterious Dr. Benjamin of Ellis Street had something to do with the construction of the vehicle. That temporarily got everyone off Collins' back, and self-appointed detectives rushed to search Ellis Street and Berkeley to run down a lead. The case began to take on the flavor of a Victorian dime novel.

The November 23rd edition of the *Call* carried a front

page drawing of the "Airship"—a black, stubby, torpedo, garnished with the large fabric wings described by Attorney Collins. Even a tale by a San Rafael hunter was entertained concerning the alleged discovery by him of an airship machine shop on Bolinas Ridge some months earlier. The call actually began to believe it was closing in on the story of the century.

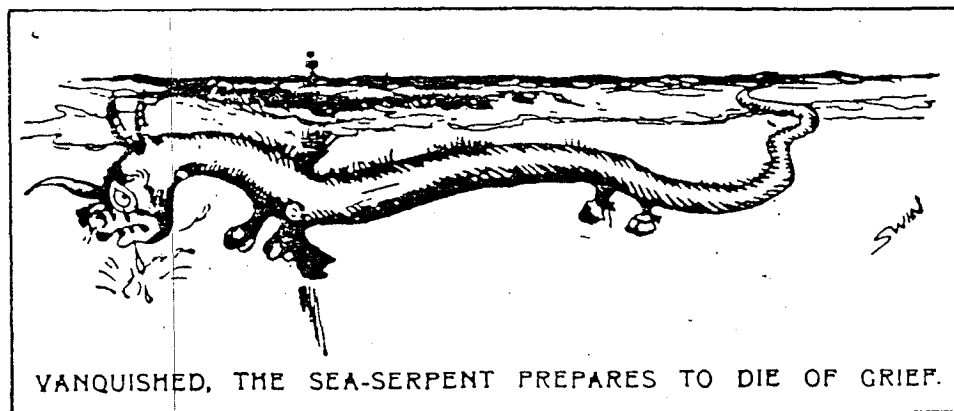
The San Francisco Examiner had the young William Randolph Hearst (a coming name in sensational journalism) as editor-in-chief, but Hearst had left the West Coast some months before and was then in New York at the helm of the Journal-American, a failing daily he had recently purchased and was now rebuilding in a fierce circulation battle with the other metropolitan papers. Even though well occupied with the Journal-American, Hearst kept close control over the Examiner's editorial policies, constantly urging more pictures and bigger type. One would have expected the Examiner to have played up the sensational aspects; yet, the comment in its columns on the California mystery light was of a light-hearted nature mixed with considerable straightforward news reporting. In fact, the Examiner didn't even mention the airship business until November 23rd. The Examiner even corrected the facts on the Oakland airship sightings as reported by the call. In a story under the peculiar multi-headings common to the newspapers of the time: "Queer Things You See When," "A Mysterious Wanderer of the Skies Perplexes People," "The Sea Serpent Has Drawn in His Horns and His Nose is Out of Joint," the Examiner quoted Superintendent Tiffany of the Piedmont Electric road on the aerial "bark." Tiffany said:

I made a thorough investigation today of the story told by some of our men of an alleged airship seen floating over Saint Mary's College...so far as I could learn from our men, none of them saw anything but a light. I had a long talk with Selby Yost and he admitted that he saw nothing but a moving light in the air. The airship proposition was, I found, not considered for a moment.

The talented Examiner cartoonist, James Swinnerton, then went to work and had a field day with the airship subject at the expense of the true believers.

The call, involved in a circulation struggle with the Hearst paper, expressed a conviction that the Examiner's negative outlook was simply due to the fact that they had been scooped by their cross-town rival.

The November 24th issue of the call carried charges by Attorney Collins that: "...a Chronicle reporter had misrepresented him [claiming] that he had actually seen the airship and was processing a patent for it." Furthermore, Collins



Swinnerton
Cartoons

added that: "...the *Examiner* sent a man to me today who said they had treated the whole affair as a huge joke, but found that the people were looking at it in a serious manner and they were ready to give the news received, regardless of how improbable it might look. He asked me to give a true account of the matter as far as I knew anything, but when I denied having seen the machine work or having ridden in it, he laughed, and said I was hedging."

Similarly, Collins snapped to a reporter from the San Francisco *bulletin*: "Oh, now, what are the papers saying?" "Why, my airship grows larger and larger. It is expanding indefinitely. The first day I was its sponsor, today I am hedging it on behalf of its sponsor. Oh, I get lots of funny letters and see lots of funny people and I think they are likely to get worse. One man wants space for a peanut stand on the airship; another a barber shop."

Newspapers with Collins' remarks hadn't been on the street more than a few hours when something was spotted hovering high over Sixth and Broadway Streets in Oakland. Around seven o'clock that evening the sidewalks began to fill with crowds gawking upward. The light would hang motionless and then move around in different directions. Witnesses said it performed "evolutions" and blinked on and off. Reporters noted the more prominent persons among them for their readers: Colonel Garriety; George Hatton, the managing editor of the *Tribune*; city electrician Carleton; and Melvin Holmes, the ex-deputy Superintendent of Streets. The aerial rover, as the call termed it, seemed to move to a position over San Francisco and then to return to the dark night sky over Oakland, where it disappeared for a while.

At that time, just south of Oakland, three men saw a powerful light southeast of them, moving toward the bay. One of the men, Mr. Hoogon, made the observation that, "One peculiar feature of the light was the way it changed from time to time. It appears as if the operator of the searchlight was placing red and blue glass before the light occasionally so as to make the light more noticeable...no star has ever done that in the past and I am not ready to believe one is doing any such capers at present."

The call quoted Deputy Constable Robinson's estimate that some five thousand people were watching when the mystery light reappeared over East Oakland:

It wheeled around over Alameda and then seemed to cross over San Leandro toward Piedmont. By the time it was headed for Piedmont, the excitement was intense. Proprietors and clerks came to the shop doors, bartenders left their pumps, ladies stopped walking and directed their attention heav-

enward. Cable and electric cars slacked up so that passengers might peep at the wondrous light. At the Golindo Hotel, the windows were thrown open and guests appeared with all manners of spyglasses and looked at the traveling light. Sometimes they declared that there were several smaller lights visible and they could see a dark object, but it was too high in the air for any of them to detect the nature of its wings or tail, if it had any.

Some time before midnight the light moved out of sight in a northeastern direction. A cause for confusion was the phantom's habit of popping up again and again all around the state.

Steering southwesterly at ten o'clock on the evening of the 23rd, the "light" dropped in on Stockton, California. The *Stockton Daily Independent* carried accounts of citizens seeing a bright, swift light moving through the rainy, black-curtained sky. From the suburb of Lathrop, a Mr. Saguinette telegraphed that the light was growing rapidly brighter as it approached out of the dark sky in the north. He said that he would try to signal the airship to land. A nightwatchman in the area later gave testimony that the cigar-shaped silhouette, with smoke issuing from both ends, dipped low near the building he was patrolling, announcing its arrival with two loud booms. Because the guard was speaking about the grounds of the Lathrop State Insane Asylum, it took a bit of nerve for him to tell the tale to the *Independent* the next morning. The *Independent* was presented with another engrossing yarn when a steamboat captain turned up to demand the local Justice of the Peace prepare an affidavit dealing with a phenomenon that had disturbed his sleep the previous night (the 24th). In the document the Captain stated that he had been enjoying the slumber of the just, when about midnight his Chinese cook busted into his cabin yelling excited Cantonese gibberish. The cook grabbed his arm and dragged him out on deck to see something. There in the night sky was a flying cigar-shaped thing, high-tailing along, surrounded by a "shifting" light and accompanied by dull thuds. The Chinese man was terrified at the sight and jumped ship at the very next mudbank. A local Stockton citizen then stepped forward with his account. The *Independent* printed:

W. Bruce Harrison of the Farmer's Union also saw the "thing." It was on Thanksgiving (the 26th) night and he declares that the brandy in his mince pies was not strong and there was no sherry in the plum pudding sauce. He saw the lights out to the northwest of the city over the tules. He says it might have been *ignus fatuus* (swamp gas), but it was not a lantern tied to a wild goose, nor a paper balloon, nor a star hidden by the mists. He does

not pretend to say that the thing was an airship nor that it had people aboard, but he does declare that it was something which he had never seen before and something which he could not explain and would like well to have someone else try to.

As a crowd gathered around the *Independent* office, more reports were tallied. One townsman offered to pass the hat to raise funds for a trusted and sober member of the community to spend the night perched atop the highest church steeple (with one hand placed over his heart). Still, the disbelieving staff of the *Independent* remained skeptical, preferring to treat the idea of machinery challenging the clouds as absurd "dreams of Verne."

Big city newspapers gave news of some scattered airship sighting over the thinly populated western part of San Francisco (at long last), but a low level swoop over Market Street never materialized. The *Chronicle* continued to report the plight of Attorney Collins, harried by squads of "Baker Street irregulars," reporters, and outright cranks. "Airship" Collins, as he was now known among his detractors, changed his tune completely and denied ever having any knowledge at all of a fully completed aircraft. The Washington D.C. Patent Office sent disclaimers in response to a flood of mail inquiring if Collins had applied there; furthermore, the patriarchs in residence at the Smithsonian Institute refused even to comment on atmospherical apparitions across the continent.

The *Sacramento Record-Union* continued to call for an explanation, insisting that a dark object carrying an arc of light was an undeniable fact, but that its nature, whether natural or supernatural, remained in doubt. Whether or not it was due to the continued publicity, a few Sacramentoans observed a third overflight at two o'clock in the morning of the 25th, with the object rushing away to the northwest.

Also, on the 25th, the *Chronicle*, feeling it was time to ring down the curtain on the airship operetta, devoted a number of lines to the continuous recanting and latest woes of Dr. Benjamin, now nicknamed "Aluminum Benjamin," and "Airship" Collins. Up and down Market Street reporters polled passers-by as to their opinion, the *Chronicle* men finding the planets Mars and Venus vying for first place as an explanation for the "light" in the sky that had been fooling impressionable individuals. Dr. Benjamin complained to the press that he had to move to escape the curious, and that eating in public restaurants proved impossible because throngs would quickly gather to stare, giggle, and gesture at the windows of the establishment. He heard his mind would soon become unhinged.

Collins opened the Wednesday edition of a leading newspaper to page sixteen and saw the result of his contradiction

—a huge cartoon of himself puffing on an opium pipe!

Waning credibility in San Francisco meant little to the wandering enigma. A perusal of newspapers of various localities elsewhere had the airship still on the prowl. Some accounts were old as well as new. J.B. Loser, who ran the Analy Hotel in Sebastopol, California, claimed to have seen a dazzling flying light while enroute to the County seat around the 22nd. C.T. Musse, who had some fruit orchards near Bowman, Placer County, told friends that he had witnessed a singular vision four weeks previous (October 25th) when he beheld:

...the prettiest sight that his eyes ever viewed ...[which] appeared to be three very bright lights moving horizontally and easterly at a rate of perhaps one hundred miles per hour.

Mr. A.H. Thompson concurred by testifying that he saw the same aerial display which he described as:

...Three very bright and large lights appearing about eight feet apart, the forward one as being larger and brighter than the rest, and moving horizontally eastward rapidly and gracefully... [in sight for] several minutes.

Under the heading "Santa Rosa Excited," the San Francisco *Call* printed a news dispatch that said:

...at 7:30 [on the night of the 23rd], a light appeared to be moving in an easterly direction, occasionally disappearing entirely from view with a dull red glow, only to reappear more radiant after a few seconds. It was impossible to see anything beyond the light, owing to the distance.

Also from Santa Rosa was this report:

On Saturday night [the 21st], just before midnight, several reputable gentlemen of this city saw a light moving in a southwesterly direction. It was first observed about two miles southeast of town, just above the Sacramento Valley. It moved quite swiftly and disappeared in the direction of Alameda County. This is vouched for by Charles Winters, a well-known merchant, and William Rohrer of the firm Rohrer, Einhorn, and Company.

The San Francisco *Bulletin*, which had generally ignored the whole airship business, finally gave in and carried a dispatch from the northern section of California's great Central Valley:

At about 6:45 p.m. [on the 24th], a crowd which was standing on the corner of Walnut and Washington Streets [Red Bluff, California] noticed almost directly west of them what appeared to be a star; but which was moving rapidly in a southwesterly direction toward the mountains.

Dr. J.A. Owen, who was in the crowd, called to several others who were near, and the crowd watched the object till it went out of sight over the mountains. Mr. Chase says that it was going directly west, as part of the time when the ship was on this side of the mountains he could see the summit of the mountains above it, and he noticed that it was not going north or south, but appeared to be getting further away. Soon after the object had passed out of sight, a telegram from Chico was received stating that the object had passed over there a few minutes previous.

The Chico Enterprise confirmed the San Francisco Bulletin's account received from Red Bluff:

When first seen last evening, the light was a little south of this city and gradually traveled to the north with an irregular motion, finally disappearing behind the trees.

Parties who witnessed the strange sight from the Normal building [a small teacher's college now the site of Chico State College] perhaps had a better view of the phenomenon than anyone else in this city. To them the light appeared to be about the size of a ball, which threw rays of light from four or five different sides. From the elevated position on the Normal building, it could also be plainly seen that the mysterious object was moving, as though it were coming to the ground, and then rising high in the air, all the time pursuing its northward course.

The Bulletin's Red Bluff dispatch continued:

W.H. Huges, a carpenter, climbed to the top of the Red Bluff City Hall after it had disappeared and says that after making a few turns it came back over the mountains and a few minutes later again passed over this place. A telegram was a short time later received from Leesville saying that the strange craft had gone as far as that place...several people say not only was the light visible, but on the return trip, the body of the object was seen. The witnesses compared it in shape to an egg.

Again the Chico Enterprise confirmed the flight path of the mystery light. The light, or an object bearing a light, had retraced its flight path and flew by Chico once more:

...a bright light was seen west of this city, apparently at a distance of about six miles. The light was a whitish color, and had the appearance of an electric light.

Second Street was thronged with men, women, and children who had heard of the strange light, but had not before had the privilege of seeing it.

Elsewhere the Placer Herald, printed in Auburn, California, told its readers:

Several citizens...assert they discovered a brilliantly lighted barrel-shaped object passing over town Wednesday [November 25th] night. It was "away up in the sky" as they put it...[and] traveling very rapidly and had a sinuous motion up and down.

There were two items from the Hayward, California, area. A man named Webb told George Oakes, the editor of the Hayward Journal that the light was seen by him and his family over Hayward, traveling east toward Castro Valley, on Wednesday about 9:30. The spectacle must have been convincing, for a certain Fred Hoyt stated to Oakes that he probably saw, and chased on foot, the same leisurely floating enigma near Liedel Place close to San Lorenzo. Hoyt had fallen headlong into a ditch while running in pursuit. Still more. A story in the Call titled: "San Jose Startled," dated November 24th, stated:

(at)...eleven o'clock a bright light moving rapidly in the heavens toward Gilroy, was testified to by Eugene Barre, Dan Manning, and Jerre Sullivan, who are employees of the Sunset Telephone Company. About one hour afterward, others saw the same mysterious light moving northeasterly very rapidly, as if it were returning from the direction of Gilroy.

The airship business was also still making headlines in the Bay Area in regards to who was responsible for the construction of the craft. W.H.H. Hart, one-time Attorney General, convinced apparently by one of the dozens of local "airship inventors," stepped forward to claim that he was in secret communication with the mysterious genius, thus replacing Collins as the focus of attention. He said, "You know the idea is not now to get it patented, but to use it for war purposes [leveling Havana]."

Almost overlooked among the airship stories was a sad note from Oakland. John Griser had schemed since 1880 to perfect a contrivance for navigating the atmospheric sea. Laboring for years and existing in squalor, Griser's spare time and funds had gone into the building of a rickety, wood-framed airship behind his modest house near Lake Merritt. After a score of attempts to get his device off the ground, he believed he was close to success by the fall of 1896. When the newspapers began headlining stories of an airship already in the air, he went out to the shed in his backyard, took one last look, and then kicked sixteen years of work to kindling.

The call at this time let the world know that four strong men had formed the "Mission Dolores Vigilance Committee" to track down and punish practical jokers who were using balloons. Apparently, this article was meant to intimidate the *Examiner*, which was sending aloft toy balloons to hoax airship believers and embarrass the call and the *Chronicle*.

The call had found the airship good front page stuff for over a week, with the lawyer, Collins and "Aluminum" Benjamin providing local excitement. Now Collins had washed his hands of the whole matter, and Dr. Benjamin had fled into hiding, leaving what personal effects he had behind in his apartment to be auctioned off. However, local curiosity still continued. As workers cleaning out Dr. Benjamin's apartment speculated on some copper dental fittings found, a few reporters still around, scribbled down the laborer's remarks that perhaps the metal was meant for bomb cases.

The San Francisco *Bulletin* and *Examiner* had been unenthusiastic all along and the *Chronicle* threw in the sponge on Wednesday, the 25th, when Collins recanted. The *Chronicle*, on the 25th, titled a special article: "Mars and Venus Under Suspicion," "Planets Stay Out Late at Night," "Airship Hunters Seek Them," and "Conjurer Collins Explains the Reasons Why He Didn't Do What He Did." And on the 26th, when the dispatch from Red Bluff and points north came in, the *Chronicle* carried it, but also included editorial opinion of a negative nature under the headings: "The Airship Craze Fast Fading Away" and "Star-gazing Has Ceased."

To keep some life in the call's new leadership, the paper needed two things: First of all, local airship news was essential; secondly, the call needed an exclusive pipeline to the center of the mystery to keep the public plunking down their nickels for the latest revelation.

The ex-Attorney General, W.H.H. Hart, fortunately had come forward to replace Collins as a spokesman for another secretive airship inventor. A bearded, distinguished-looking gentleman, Mr. Hart, filled the bill as a convincing source of information. Or so it seemed. The mysterious airship

owner, Hart assured the public, would without a doubt demonstrate his craft in the daytime for all to see at some future date that he would soon announce.

The call announced Hart as the new custodian of the aerial machine secrets on the 25th. On the 26th, the call carried a story that expanded on W.H.H. Hart's claims. The story was headlined: "The Mystery Again Seen at the Capitol." Without a close perusal, one would think the call was offering a new airship episode, however, the information was merely a retelling of the sighting over Sacramento the evening of November 22nd. The call had lacked the second ingredient vital to a front page treatment and that was some local aerial maneuvers by the elusive airship.

Luckily, the unidentified voyager of the air put in an appearance over San Jose at the south end of San Francisco Bay on Thanksgiving Eve, the 26th, in front of some excellent witnesses. The call carefully gathered what information it had on hand and hit the streets on Sunday, the 29th, with a full page spread built around the San Jose sightings with statements by Professor Cross, Dean of the University of the Pacific, and Professor W.B. Worcester, two who saw the passage of the mystery light with their very own eyes. On the same page was a full statement over Hart's signature, again affirming the existence of an aerial invention, and stating that it would soon be perfected and dispatched to aid Cuban insurgents fighting their Spanish overlords.

A friend of Professor M.S. Cross, Professor H.B. Worcester, President of Garden City College, gave an account of what happened on the night of the 26th:

There was a small party at my house in East San Jose on Thanksgiving Day and it was prolonged until 7 o'clock in the evening. The company then retired to the front of the house to enjoy some music and I went into the rear yard to get a lantern. I happened to look up and saw several miles away, apparently about College Park or Santa Clara, a large light moving rapidly toward San Jose. In fact, I surmised it was the mysterious light which people had seen and which was said to be attached to an airship. In order to call the attention of those in the house to same, I ran around the house to save time and called out that the airship was passing. Everyone rushed out into the front yard.

Within the time it had taken me to run around the house the light had changed course from east to southwest and had traveled several miles and was in line with the southern portion of San Jose. The entire party saw the moving light go west, then turn south, and then change to the southeast.

The Call

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 1904. TWENTY-EIGHT PAGES. PRICE FIVE CENTS.

AIRSHIPS, SAYS HART.

His Signature the
orney Tells of His
Client.

WHY AND HOW OF THE MYSTIC LIGHTS.

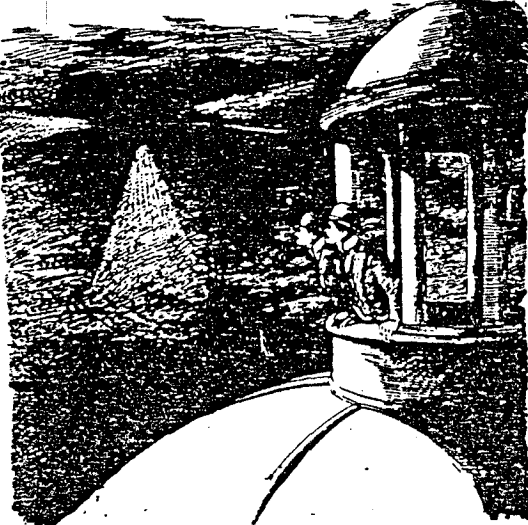
Again the Brilliant Shafts
Sighted Speeding Above
the Bay Counties.

ALIGENT TESTIMONY OF STANDARD CITIZENS.

is Maywards Inmate on the Aeronauts
very-Professor Cross, the Linguist,
Adda His Evidence.

...the brilliant shafts...
...the aeronauts...
...the linguist...
...the evidence...

Viewing the Mysterious Aerial Lights From the Dome of the State Capitol.



HART'S INVENTOR HAS THREE AERIAL FLIERS.

A Full Statement Made Over the Signature of the Attorney for the
Alleged Cuban Filibuster.

In testimony to the society which has been passing and examining many of the papers of Cuba...
I have not seen it previously, but have viewed with the aid of a microscope...
I am not a scientist, but I am a lawyer...
I have seen the inventor...
I have seen the inventor...
I have seen the inventor...

SLAUGHTER SPANIARDS

Cuba's Insurgents Claim to
Have Killed 2000 in
One Battle.

THRILLING STORY TOLD BY RIGGS.

News of an Important Victory
Brought by a Lieutenant
in Cuba's Army.

STREETS WALKERS THE WALK OF THE MILLER.

The Police Charge, Made in the
San Francisco Police
Office.

...the streets...
...the police...
...the office...

...the streets...
...the police...
...the office...



WHY

LEVY STRAUSS & CO'S
...the streets...
...the police...
...the office...

We watched the light finally disappear behind the horizon.

When the ship turned to the southeast I could distinguish two lights, one behind the other. The single light first seen was about the size of an engine headlight and had more of the appearance of a large incandescent light than anything else. It was moving at the rate of from 60 to 100 miles an hour only a few moments before it had disappeared behind the horizon.

There were three things regarding the light which impressed me, viz.: its velocity, its regular movement and its apparent intelligent control... I have seen many fire-balloons, but the light I saw had none of the characteristics of such a toy. Its velocity was great for a balloon on such a still night and its movements too regular. The light was about 1500 feet high when first seen, and may have continued at that elevation, but it appeared to lower as it disappeared... the party consisted of Professor Cross, Dr. and Mrs. Allen, Colonel and Mrs. Moore, Miss Annie Chase, and Mrs. Worcester.

Professor Cross backed up his colleague:

I was visting at the residence of Professor Worcester and was called into the yard by him to view the airship. Whether it was in fact an airship, of course, I am not prepared to say, but certain it is there was a rapidly moving light in the heavens far too large and bright to be an electric street light. To my eye, it appeared to be about six inches in diameter. It was moving in a southerly direction and apparently at a high rate of speed.

The motion was not steady. It wavered and swerved, rising and falling slightly. The motion, however, was not that of a balloon. I have frequently watched balloons in the air, and the motion of this light was in no way suggestive of the manner in which I have always seen them behave. Moreover, it was a quiet night. What slight wind there was, I think, was from the south. Yet this light traveled rapidly in a southerly direction. As it left us, the light seemed to broaden. This suggested to us that there might be two lights which as the craft swung broadside to us, joined rays and gave the appearance of a wide streak of light.

Professor Worcester described the light's undulatory, bat-like flight, as suggestive of the "alternated flapping"

of wings." That statement gave the *Call* the chance it needed, and it was not long before a farmer, John Bawl, was located to testify that he had discerned wings propelling the mystery object.

While the San Francisco papers continued to entertain their readers with personalities and gadgets, the mystery light began to shift its attentions elsewhere.

At Modesto, on the 26th, around 10:30 the cashier of the First National Bank, J.E. Ward, alerted his friends and neighbors to witness the passage of some flying lights thought to be the famous airship. Deputy Treasurer W.B. Bell, bookkeeper, C.P. Schafer, County Treasurer, W.A. Downer, and Armory L.J. Maddux joined Ward to see the lights float by at a great height in a northwesterly direction.

Also on the 27th, observers in and around the city of Woodland informed the *Woodland Daily Democrat* that bright and unusual lights were seen in the sky flying in a southwest direction around 10 P.M. Accounts mention that at first the display was believed to be a group of stars.

The strange light began to shift more and more to the south as telegraph dispatches followed its progress toward the Los Angeles area.

In Fresno, California, at 6:30 in the evening of the 25th, the airship was seen:

...traveling high up in the western horizon in a northwestern direction... [it was in sight from] two to seven minutes...[and appeared to be] several miles distant. It sailed toward the earth for a time and then took a sudden swoop upward. The light was not at all like a star, and its peculiar motion makes it altogether unlikely.

The light seems to be double as if there were one in front of the craft and one behind. The light was irregular as if it were being turned in different directions.

In Visalia, California, *The Weekly Delta* carried this about a sighting on the evening of the 26th:

...a number of people in the south part of town saw the vessel in the air and the sight created considerable excitement. E.O. Larkin testified that last [Tuesday] night about 7 o'clock Mrs. E.M. Jefferies came rushing over to his house exclaiming, "Come see the airship."

At first it seemed to be traveling a northwest-

erly course at an apparent speed of a train of cars in a straight line; then it moved upward, then downward, then to the right and again to the left, but all the time moving onward in its northwesterly course until it finally passed out of sight as if it had gone beyond the Coast Range mountains, and in the direction of San Francisco.

Sometimes on its course the light would disappear for a moment as if behind some object, but it would emerge again as bright as ever. The same night it appeared over Hanford [about 20 miles west of Visalia]...the *Hanford Sentinel* says that the aerial visitor was seen by Will Mathewson and Mort Hornbea [who]...saw a great light at an angle of 45 degrees in the heavens...The light was not a bull's eye lantern because it was too high up; it was not the north star because it was too low down; it was not a comet because it had no tail.

The light was surrounded by a halo the prismatic beams of which so dazzled the eyes of the beholders the true form of the ship was obscured. The light was a reddish hue. Its course seemed to be from Bald Mountain, northeast skirting the boundary line between Kings and Fresno Counties, thence in and across the counties of Fresno and Madera toward Mariposa where it was lost to view in the horizon.

In Bakersfield, California, on the night of the 26th:

Several parties declare they saw the airship about 8 o'clock...in the heavens over toward Tejon. Mr. Goode, the fruit vender, was one of the parties. He declares that all he could see was a monster red looking light, while the others who saw it claim that something encased the light. Mr. Goode says his eyes are bad and in consequence he could not see as well as the others.

In Bakersfield again on the night of the 27th:

A. Hughes of Hughes Drug Store saw something against the western sky in the early evening.... "It looked like a great moving white looking light similar to a street electric light; not very high moving slowly south." Mrs. Webster said that on Thanksgiving [the 26th] she was driving home from Poso and saw it...."show blue and white lights. Seen through a telescope it looked like a balloon in construction as it glided slowly toward the south."

W.H. Sanborn and Robert Blodge confirmed the presence of something odd in the sky over the Bakersfield area on the night of the 27th, when they told the local paper. The *Daily Californian* printed the following account:

[They]...saw the mysterious light low in the southwestern heavens 7:30 Friday while looking out the back of McKelvey's store. They declared it moved out of sight in a short space of time and it also had a descending and ascending or undulatory movement. It was a very large, bright light. These gentlemen do not claim that it was an airship, but a mysterious moving light, and that's all.

A singular report among the last sightings around the state was that of the episode at Tulare, California, on November 29, 1896:

Over one hundred Tulareans positively assert that they saw the now famous airship that has been wandering around in different sections of the state. Those who saw it say it first appeared just west of town last evening about 7 o'clock, between the residences of E.T. Cooper and Mrs. C. Castle. It came down quite a distance, then went up and took a straight shot for Hanford [westward]. Red, white, and blue lights were seen in succession, but no part of the ship was seen. They seemed to have perfect control of the ship, as they moved it around in many different directions. It was seen from every section of the city, and many people watched it as long as it was in sight [fifteen witnesses named in the news account.]

About 35 miles south of Tulare the same night, there came this account:

Reports came from Delano that the airship was seen there Sunday night. The whole population turned out to gaze at the heavenly visitor and there is abundant assurance that if not a real airship, there is still something mysterious floating in the air.

The San Francisco call notified citizens in northern California on December 1st, that the skies over Los Angeles had finally been visited. It seems that on November 30th:

...strange lights made rapid flights over the San Fernando Valley, in Los Angeles County. Last night the people of Los Angeles City were treated to the strange sight. Two fixed lights passed over the city at a high rate of speed and at a very

great distance from the earth. A third light that appeared to have all the characteristics of a searchlight in the hands of a skillful manipulator was also seen in conjunction with the two fixed lights. These passed according to reports from the northwest to the southeast, and two hours later they reappeared, passing from the southeast to the northwest.

The *Times* had ignored reports of strange flying lights in the air over Los Angeles on Friday, November 27th, but when there were more on the 30th, the paper published the previous accounts:

Last Friday evening numerous citizens of Los Angeles discovered a bright light in the heavens near the southern horizon. It was first observed about 6 o'clock and attracted the attention of many people who were on their way home. The most intelligent account of this particular appearance of the phenomenon is that given by Capt. Frank B. Taylor, United States Army, North Key West Street. About 6:30 Friday evening, Capt. Taylor was called out by a neighbor and his attention was directed to the light which was then near the horizon. To the naked eye the object seemed like a fixed star, although no scintillation was perceptible. Capt. Taylor brought out a field glass and made a careful observation. In describing the light as it appeared through the glass, he said: "The Light was apparent at a considerable distance perhaps fifteen or twenty miles through the glass it appeared pear-shaped or like a soap bubble when suspended from the pipe with the apex tilted a little to the left. About one fifth of the surface, on the left hand side, was dark and the remainder was very bright and covered at regular intervals with still more brilliant spots. It was up about 20 or 25 degrees in the heavens and appeared to be moving away in a southwesterly direction. I watched it through the glass for about ten or fifteen minutes. It finally disappeared apparently going toward the ocean. I did not think it was an airship. It seemed probable that it was some novel affair sent up by someone to impose on people. It might have been a fire balloon, although it hardly had that appearance. I could not see any indication of a car or any other attachment, though if there were anything of the kind, it probably would not have been visible.

On November 30, persons at Redlands, California claimed to have been the last to catch a glimpse of the brilliant

sky light that Monday eve. And at the other extreme end of the state, two gentlemen, E.G. Case, grand chief ranger of the Ancient Order of Foresters of the Pacific, and William Held, official stenographer of the local superior court of Ukiah, California, were on their way to Potter Valley, twenty miles north of Ukiah, when they encountered the "airship." About two miles from their destination at about 7:30 p.m., on November 28th, the "airship" passed so close to the double team of horses that the animals became panicky. The two men telephoned Ukiah from Held, California, with a short message that they had seen the "aerial wonder." They said it looked cigar-shaped.

A news dispatch from Anderson, California, told of something spotted near there on the 28th, about an hour after the report near Potter Valley:

...the aerial monster passed over Anderson last evening about 20 minutes past 8. Her citizens claim to have seen the stranger in its flight.

It was first observed from the corner of East Center and Ferry Streets by a reputable citizen noticing a peculiar light to the west. He called the attention of others to the seeming phenomenon, and quite a crowd collected. It was generally conceded that this must be the long-talked-of airship. Its course was south to west, and the lights soon disappeared in the south. The light was large and brilliant and seemed to move in a steady course.

The reports of regular flights over California cities by an airship had an unnerving effect on a Mr. H.W. Herne of Portland, Oregon. A loner and an eccentric, Mr. Herne became depressed at the frequent reports of a successful airship. According to neighbors, Herne "became violently excited over the airship stories and declared one of his ideas was stolen in its makeup." Barricading himself in his home and refusing food, the brooding recluse was finally hauled off to the insane asylum by authorities.

The San Francisco Call squeezed a final drop of ink out of the controversy by attacking its arch rival, Randolph Heart's Examiner, maintaining that the two Hearst papers, one on the west coast and the other on the east coast, had engaged in a two-faced game. The Call knew Hearst tightly controlled the editorial policies of both the Examiner and the New York Journal, and it appeared the airship business had been enlisted to do battle in the young journalist's attempts to draw readers away from other newspapers. Hearst's San Francisco paper, the Examiner, warred against the Call's big headlines about mysterious airships by vigorously blaming the aerial visions on people who were under

the spell of the Roman god Bacchus, while Hearst's New York Journal back east excited New Yorkers with sensational tales of powered balloons zipping all over California. Leaving nothing to chance, Hearst had artists on the Journal's staff sketch picturesque impressions of the airship right down to the wiring on the rudders. The Call printed selected excerpts from both Hearst papers for side by side comparisons. Though the California airship was being widely publicized, only one sighting of something similar was made outside of California.

On November 24, 1896 the following occurred in the State of Washington:

Last Tuesday night the operator of the airship is believed to have visited and explored the top of Mount Tacoma (Rainier). Tuesday night druggist George St. John closed his drugstore on Pacific Avenue at 11:30 and went home. He reached his residence on Tacoma Avenue fifteen minutes later and soon retired. It was a beautiful moonlight night and the window curtains a few feet away from the bed were up.

Just about 12 o'clock Mrs. St. John saw the strange light and called her husband's attention to it. It appeared to be high up in the heavens east of Mount Tacoma and moving in a southeasterly direction. The distance from Tacoma must have been at least fifty miles. They watched the heavenly stranger over an hour. They first saw it through a north window in their room but after a while they could see it through a window several feet further south without having changed their positions. This proves that the airship traveled a long distance during the time they were watching it.

Mr. St. John says that vari-colored lights were shot forth in all directions. They were emitted from each end and both sides. Sometimes the light at one end or one side would be cut off. Some of the lights were white, others red, blue and green. These four sides were distinctly visible. When all the lights were shining the aerial monster seemed incased in a brilliant glow, having the appearance of a powerful electric searchlight. The size then seemed to be that of an arc light. It flashed often sending the various colored rays shooting out from the center in every direction like spokes in the hub of a wheel. Sometimes it had a waving motion and swayed back and forth in its course, being varied by frequent dartings.

The moonlight was not strong enough to permit

a distinct view of Mount Tacoma, but the airship was seen to approach the neighborhood of the mountains at what seemed to be its exact height, and dart hither and thither as if an exploration was in progress.

The identity of the "airship," mysterious skylight, or whatever it was, remains a mystery. Though nearly everyone in the year 1896 insisted that the mystery object was either a hoax, a natural phenomenon, or an actual flying machine of some timid inventor, one gentleman of that Victorian age, a man we know only by his initials "W.A.," conducted his own inquiry into the airship riddle and then wrote the editor of his local paper about the results of his personal investigation. Here is his singular conclusion, one that no one else thought to propose. Mr. "W.A." penned:

...there is nothing improbable about our recent Airship visitor. The only doubt that can arise is as to the origin of this particular messenger.

In my investigations of this subject it would seem that this visitor is from our neighboring planet Mars. We know from the evidence of scientists and astronomers that Mars is many millions of years older than this Earth. It is but reasonable to consider that the inhabitants of our planetary neighbor are more advanced in the sciences and have more knowledge of the use of great scientific power than the denizens of the Earth. Many thousands of years of experience have given them the perfection of invention which would appear marvelous to our making.

The Lord Commissioner of Mars had evidently sent one of his exploring expeditions to the younger but larger world.

The Airships are constructed of the lightest and strongest fabrics and the machinery is of the most perfect electrical work.

Aluminum and glass hardened by the same chemical principles that form diamonds contribute the chief material of their most perfect Airships.

When in use these vessels at a distance have the appearance of a ball of fire being operated by the electric current generated on such vessels.

The speed of our Martian ships is very great and can be registered to the rapidity of a thousand miles a second.

In fact, with the Martian ships space is almost annihilated. These aerial craft can so adopt their

course that when they desire to rest they can anchor within certain degrees of latitude and wait for the revolution of the Earth, for resistance to bring any particular locality desired much nearer than without the necessity of any aerial navigation.

On Mars, all the great electrical power is converted by the waves of the ocean, thus making electricity a common utility for everything necessary for the arts, science, manufacturing, transportation, etc.

It is supposed that the Lord Commissioner of Mars is sending out this Airship seeking to establish at least telegraphic or telephone communication between the planets.

It is probable that in a short time his ambassador will make a call on the President. Perhaps they are delaying until McKinley assumes the administration of affairs on the theory there may be more advanced ideas in his head.

The End

A short Appendix:

On April 24, 1964, a policeman saw a mysterious ellipsoid shaped object about the size of an automobile resting on slender metallic legs in the desert a short distance from the highway a few miles south of Socorro, New Mexico. Near the object were two small figures dressed in what appeared to be white coverall type suits. When the policeman drove toward the scene to investigate, the figures had evidently retreated inside the mysterious craft, for the oval machine, spurting flame from its underside, flew away in a horizontal direction barely a dozen feet above the small mesquite bushes that dot the arid terrain. Though the policeman did not get near enough to make out much detail, an "insignia" in the form of red geometric lines was seen on the side of the object. Authorities investigated the incident and found that the report seemed very sound and substantiated. When the government denied that the object was American made, the episode became an overnight national sensation.

But the Socorro case was not the only report of something unusual in the region. Within a week many odd sightings were reported to the local newspapers.

A "ball of fire," or something that glowed an intense red (notice the similarity to the 1896 Knights Ferry episode) landed and then took off close to a radio station at Las Vegas, New Mexico.

A gentleman living in Edgewood, New Mexico, emptied his revolver at a large egg-shaped object hanging motionless 100 feet in the air.

On another evening State police watched a strange glowing object hover over the Entry building south of Las Cruces and then move slowly west to a position over Deming, New Mexico.

On April 29th a group of witnesses in El Paso, Texas, saw an egg-shaped object drop out of the sky and hover a short distance away. One of those watching it, a ten-year old girl, stood her ground when the rest of the witnesses drew back. Though nothing was apparent at the time, the young girl began complaining about pains about the face after the object flew off. Her face turned red and she was rushed to the doctor who diagnosed facial burns apparently inflicted by some sort of infrared radiation.

On the 28th of April the El Paso *Herald-Post* carried one story in particular that has an interesting relationship to one particular 1896 case. A group of eight youngsters

saw something in the air hovering a short distance over their school in El Paso, and they all agreed that: "It seemed to be floating in the air covered with something like a sheet. It was about 5'-6" tall and sort of egg-shaped."

Considering many other UFO sightings made over the years, this writer is led to believe that the thing seen over Tagus, California, in 1896, was an UFO which had produced a thin white cloud, perhaps due to an emission of gases, which partially cloaked the object from observation. This suspicion was reinforced when it was discovered that a strange cloud had been reported in the sky over Visalia, just a few miles from Tagus, on April 18, 1896. On April 19th the *Visalia Delta* printed:

Yesterday at 11:30 A.M., the attention of several people was attracted to a cloud in the southern heavens, wearing the colors of the rainbow. When first noticed, the hues were distinct and bright... In less than a minute the colors disappeared, and the cloud again became white. Twice again within fifteen minutes the peculiar change of hue was observed, but after the first time red, purple, and a light blue were the only shades that became distinct.

THE THING OF WHEELS AND CRANKS AND FROLIC.

Oh, say, you airy phantom,
Far up aloft afloat,
Are you some nervous goblin
Who likes to steer a boat?
Say, do you use the atmosphere,
As others use the sea?
And as you note our wonder
Do you chortle in your glee?
You hang out lights of warning
Across the misty sky,
But then you quickly vanish--
Oh, how? and whence? and why?

Some have not had the honor
To see your trailing gleam,
Yet 'tis against all reason
To say the others dream.
Some have not heard the voices
Your crew sends forth at night,
But still, as a phenomenon,
We vote you out of sight.
We cannot solve the problem:
Are you all gross, material?
With wheels, joints and engines--
Or wraithlike and ethereal?

We'd like to learn about you;
Permit us then to guess,
For you have got us rattled
To a point of keen distress.
Are you a Shortridge thunder bird,
Turned loose among the stars
From interstellar spaces
To scare the warlike Mars?
Or does the ghost of Hornbrook
Whirl down the giant void,
Revisiting the worldlings
His fables once annoyed?

Flammarion predicted
That stars would fall as rain--
So far as we have noticed
The most of them refrain.
To bring a pour of stars it seems
Was quite beyond his power,
But lights like yours may indicate
He did scare up a shower.
Magnetic currents--fearsome, weird--
Maybe have made the flash
To let the erring mortal know
His globe is soon to crash.

One editor is certain
You really are a ship,
And most adroitly manage
To give his sleuths the slip.
He thinks that now, or later,
The human race will fly;
So can't you, as a favor, soon
Take him aboard and try?
For if your motive power consists
Of force akin to wind,
He is as large a bag of that
As you will ever find.

Our faith it might be stronger,
But earth is rich in liars
Who do not pause to ponder
The future and its fires.
They'd see a ghost on every cloud
To sell the tale for space,
And spend the price for pie and cake
Wherewith to feed the face.
But come again, oh, toy balloons!
We rather like your style--
We see your catch of suckers
And join you in a smile.

The San Francisco Examiner.
November 26, 1896.

1

AN OCTOPUS IN THE HAND-

(is worth any number of them in the Smithsonian)

INFO JOURNAL, N^o 8, WINTER-SPRING 1972

In November of 1896, at St. Augustine Beach, Florida, a huge lump of organic matter washed ashore.

The first scientific observer on the scene was Dr. DeWitt Webb, a local physician and President of the St. Augustine Scientific Society. Dr. Webb examined the remains and pronounced them to be that of an octopus.

Measurements of the carcass gave these figures: size of the body as 18 to 22 feet long and 6 to 7 feet wide; estimated original weight of the head and body as at least four to five tons; the arms an estimated 75 to 100 feet long and 18 inches in diameter at the base. (The vagueness of the measurements arose due to the facts that the carcass was originally partially buried in the sand of the beach, and that it is somewhat difficult to measure an octopus under any circumstances -- and if you can't understand that, just try it some time.)

The case was brought to the attention of Prof. A. E. Verrill of Yale, at that time one of the world's leading authorities on cephalopods (or, to be pedantic, teuthologist -- another cute trick: try asking your friends what an expert on cephalopods is called.)

Verrill, having received descriptions and tissue samples from Webb, concurred in the identification of the creature as an octopus. A new biological species was created: Octopus giganteus Verrill.

This was in the early part of 1897. Verrill wrote his judgement for The New York Herald, The American Naturalist, and The American Journal of Science. He was an authority on the giant squid -- he had been the man who made the kraken scientifically respectable (after so many of them had washed up in Newfoundland waters in the 1870s that they could no longer be explained away) -- and he gave his considered opinion that the Florida monster was indeed a cephalopod: not a giant squid, but an incredibly large octopus.

But we all know that there ain't no such animal.

And so it was that a voice spake unto Verrill: "thou shalt have thy giant squid, but thou shalt not have thy giant octopus."

Verrill, harkening unto this voice, recanted.

In The New York Herald, The American Journal of Science, and Science, Verrill now declared that he had been mistaken and that the Florida carcass was actually that of some not-readily identifiable portion of a whale.

"But I am unable to refer this immense, closed, pouch-like mass to any part of any known whale, or, in fact, to any other animal..."

Tissue specimens from the carcass revealed "very little oil" -- a most atypical circumstance to be expected in any kind of cetacean remains.

It must be interjected at this point that we have not done any research on this case ourselves, but that all our information comes from "An Octopus Trilogy", by F.G. Wood and Joseph F. Gennaro, Jr., Natural History Magazine, March, 1971. We wrote Dr. Wood and obtained a print of the photograph appearing on our cover. (We assume that this was taken on Dec. 7, 1896 and that the gentleman in the picture is Dr. Webb. The photo is credited to the American Museum of Natural History.)

To continue: Verrill at first agrees with Webb, who was apparently the only knowledgeable person ever to inspect the carcass, then he decides to disagree with Webb, and moreover to become inconsistent with himself. At first Verrill examines the tissue specimens and finds them un-cetacean in nature. Then he looks at them again and "rejects them as having come from a cephalopod." Perfect logic: since the carcass must be that of a whale, or some part of same, the samples that are clearly from a cephalopod must not be from the same carcass.

F. A. Lucas, then Curator of Comparative Anatomy of the National Museum, was less circumspect than Verrill, and less scientific: "The substance looks like blubber, and smells like blubber and it is blubber, nothing more or less."

Whether or not he had a nose for blubber, Dr. Lucas certainly had a nose for knowing when to say the safe thing. That, after all, is the whole point of being a Curator.

Webb describes the integument (covering) of the creature as muscular. Verrill says that it "shows a lack of muscular tissue." Webb describes the carcass as "simply a great bag." Verrill calls it a "great bag-shaped mass."

Agreement and Disagreement.

But we somehow find ourselves assuming that Verrill should be able to tell the difference between the tissue of a whale and that of a cephalopod. At least as well as anybody could -- he is an expert, remember?

What accounts for the change of opinion? An Associated Press release dated April 10, 1971, reports Dr. Gennaro as saying, "We could find no scientific evidence that accounted for his switch. Presumably he was under a lot of pressure from the scientific community because of the controversy it caused."

It seems to us that we've heard that remark before.

The last official document in Round One of the Great Octopus Battle is a letter to W.H.Dall, Curator of Mollusks at the National Museum, from his superior, Prof. F.W.True (marvelous name!). It begins, "I am sorry to say that the secretary does not see his way clear to have the cuttlefish examined..."

Cuttlefish.

The cuttlefish is a cephalopod, no species known to exceed five feet in length, neither a squid nor an octopus. If there were a better way of signifying a complete lack of conception as to what problem was involved, or of showing a greater lack of interest, we might have expected a reference to "the whale blubber"...

Sufficient unto the day is the disinterest thereof.

In 1962, Dr. Joseph F. Gennaro, Jr., was allowed to take a sample from the specimen material of Octopus giganteus Verrill in the Smithsonian. Photomicrographs revealed the tissue to be that of an octopus.

Afterwards the remaining material in the Smithsonian's jar was lost.

So now the giant octopus is respectable. Even if the Smithsonian did lose what was left of the 1896 specimen. ... We're prepared to admit for once, perhaps, that the Smithsonian can sometimes lose something not as the result of being too organized (organization equals incompetence), but simply out of a normal and routine incompetence.

The Natural History article ends with a section on tales of sightings of giant octopi by Bahamian fishermen. (Octopi have a fascinating colloquial name in those waters: scuttles.) This brought to mind a couple of curious items relating to cephalopoid creatures, mythical or otherwise, from the Pacific -- where the previously officially-largest octopus lives.

Jorge Luis Borges, in his The Book of Imaginary Beings, describes under "The Fauna of Chile" the hide.

"The Hide is an octopus that lives in the sea and has the dimensions and appearance of a cowhide stretched out flat. Its edges are furnished with numberless eyes, and, in that part which seems to be its head, it has four more eyes of a larger size. Whenever persons or animals enter the water, the Hide rises to the surface and engulfs them with an irresistible force, devouring them in a matter of moments."

Borges' source for this was the Myths and Superstitions of Julio Vicuña Cifuentes.

We know of one alleged modern report of a hide-like organism from the Pacific. In Eric Frank Russell's Great World Mysteries he cites an account by an Australian diver in the South Pacific:

"All the way down I was followed by a fifteen foot shark which circled around full of curiosity but made no attempt to attack. I kept wondering how far down he would go. He was still hanging around some thirty feet from me, and about twenty feet higher, when I reached a ledge below which was a great, black chasm of enormous depth.

"It being dangerous to venture further, I stood looking into the chasm while the shark waited for my next move. Suddenly the water became distinctly colder. While the temperature continued to drop with surprising rapidity, I saw a black mass rising from the darkness of the chasm. It floated upwards very slowly. As at last light reached it I could see that it was of dull brown colour and tremendous size, a flat, ragged-edged thing about one acre in extent. It pulsed sluggishly and I knew that it was alive despite its lack of visible limbs or eyes.

"Still pulsating, this frightful vision floated past my level, by which time the coldness had become most intense. The shark now hung completely motionless, paralysed either by cold or fear. While I watched fascinated, the enormous brown thing reached the shark, contacted him with its upper surface. The shark gave a convulsive shiver and was drawn unresisting into the substance of the monster.

"I stood perfectly still, not daring to move, while the brown thing sank back into the chasm as slowly as it had emerged. Darkness swallowed it and the water started to regain some warmth. God knows what this thing was, but I had no doubt that it had been born of the primeval slime countless fathoms below."

The date was 1953, but unfortunately the INFO copy of the Russell book is a paperback with the original reference editorially chopped out. So the locale of the report isn't known to us.

The hide sounds rather like an enormous version of the umbrella-like octopi of great depths. Perhaps it isn't altogether imaginary?

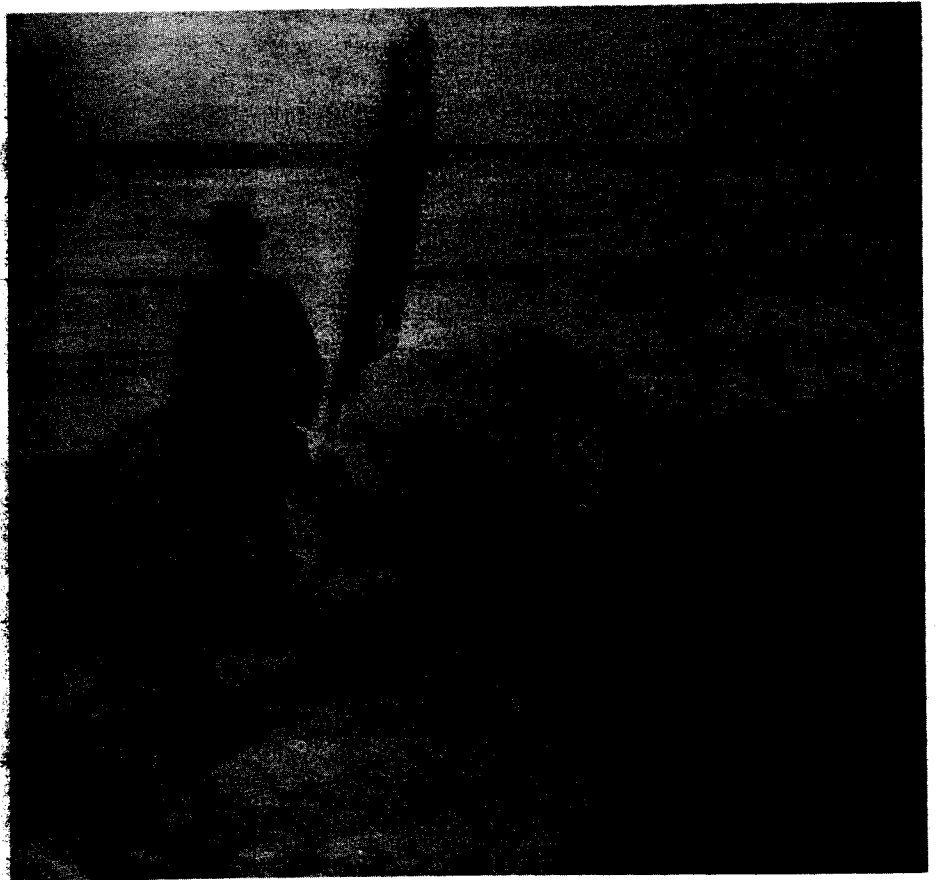
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The International Fortean Organization

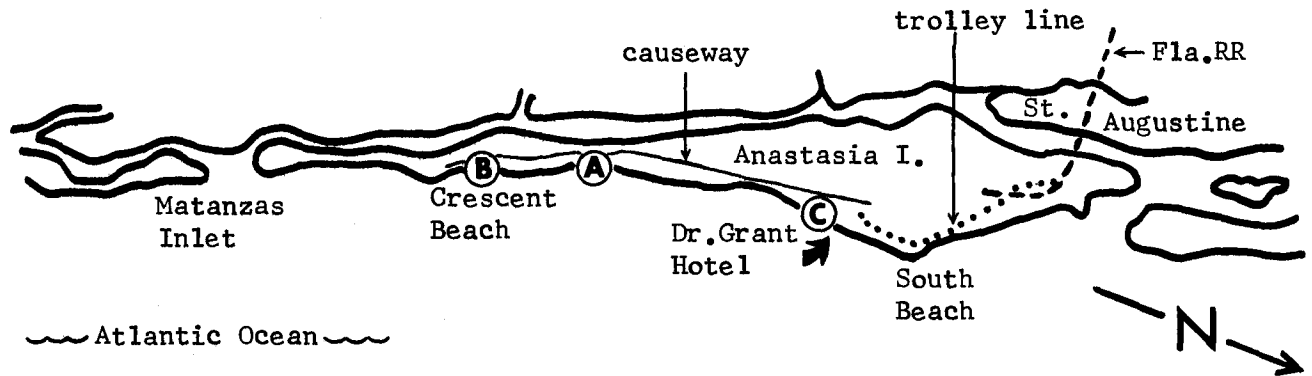


Giant Octopus — Florida, 1896

Monster on the Florida Beach

Part I by Gary S. Mangiacopra

INFO JOURNAL, No 17, MAY 1976



- A = Original position of octopus, Dec. 1896.
B = New position, Jan. to Mar. 1897.
C = Final position, Mar. 1897.

Map prepared by the author based on one drawn for the St. Augustine Historical Society in 1916, and showing the various locations of Octopus giganteus from December 1896 to March 1897.

The lead article of the INFO Journal #8, dealt with the discovery of a beached sea monster that upon examination in 1896, and later examination in 1963 of the preserved tissue samples was identified as a gigantic octopus of 100 feet in length. (1)

The following account is a personal investigation and reexamination of the facts and a vindication of this discovery, which is still considered by science as a joke.

THE STORY

The discoverers of the giant resident of the seas were two young bicyclists, Herbert Coles and Dunham Coretter of St. Augustine, Florida, who were cycling along Anastasia Beach towards Matanzas Inlet (see map) on the evening of November 30, 1896. Their trip ended abruptly when they came upon the remains of an immense carcass that was deeply embedded in the sands. (2)

News of the two boys' discovery would have been quickly consigned to the obscurity of brief newspaper mentions if not for the intervention of a local and remarkable citizen, Dr. DeWitt Webb. By profession a medical doctor, by avocation a local historian and amateur naturalist,

Dr. Webb would become the leading figure in this controversy, as he solely undertook the responsibility of collecting and recording the facts. (3)

Due to the distance and the lateness of the day it was not until the next evening, December first, that Doctor Webb along with several others was able to examine the beached carcass. Due to the isolation of the beach at that time of year, the carcass was probably beached for several days before its discovery and its weight of five tons had caused it to sink into the sand to a considerable depth. The dimensions of the visible portion measured 23 feet in length, 4 feet high, and 18 feet across the widest part of the back. It was much mutilated at one end and in an advanced state of decomposition. The hide was of a light pink color, nearly white, with a silvery appearance. But the most startling fact, Webb concluded, was that the remains were not those of a supposed beached whale, but of a monstrous octopus! (4)

Cloudy weather and rain prevented Webb from reexamining the octopus until Dec. fifth, but during the days of waiting he had the foresight to realize the importance and uniqueness of this chance dis-

covery.

Revisiting the site with two amateur photographers two days later, photographs were taken showing different views of the octopus as originally found. Drawings later published show a pear-shaped body with the largest section near the broadly rounded posterior end and flatter toward the smaller mutilated end. The head is almost unrecognizable due to mutilation and decay, but the most important feature visible in the foreground is what looks like the remains of the stumps of five arms.

Several days after the photograph session, a Mr. Wilson claimed to have dug around the carcass and found the fragments of the arms, stating, "one arm was lying west of the body, 23 feet long; one stump of arm, west of body, about 4 feet; three arms lying south of body and from appearance attached to same, longest one measured over 32 feet, the other arms were 3 to 5 feet shorter." (5)

Shortly after Mr. Wilson's excavation a severe storm had washed the carcass out to sea, to be cast ashore again two miles farther south. When later reexamined the reported arms were missing, probably the result of wave action on the carcass. Doubt as to the verification of the reported arms would later cast suspicion

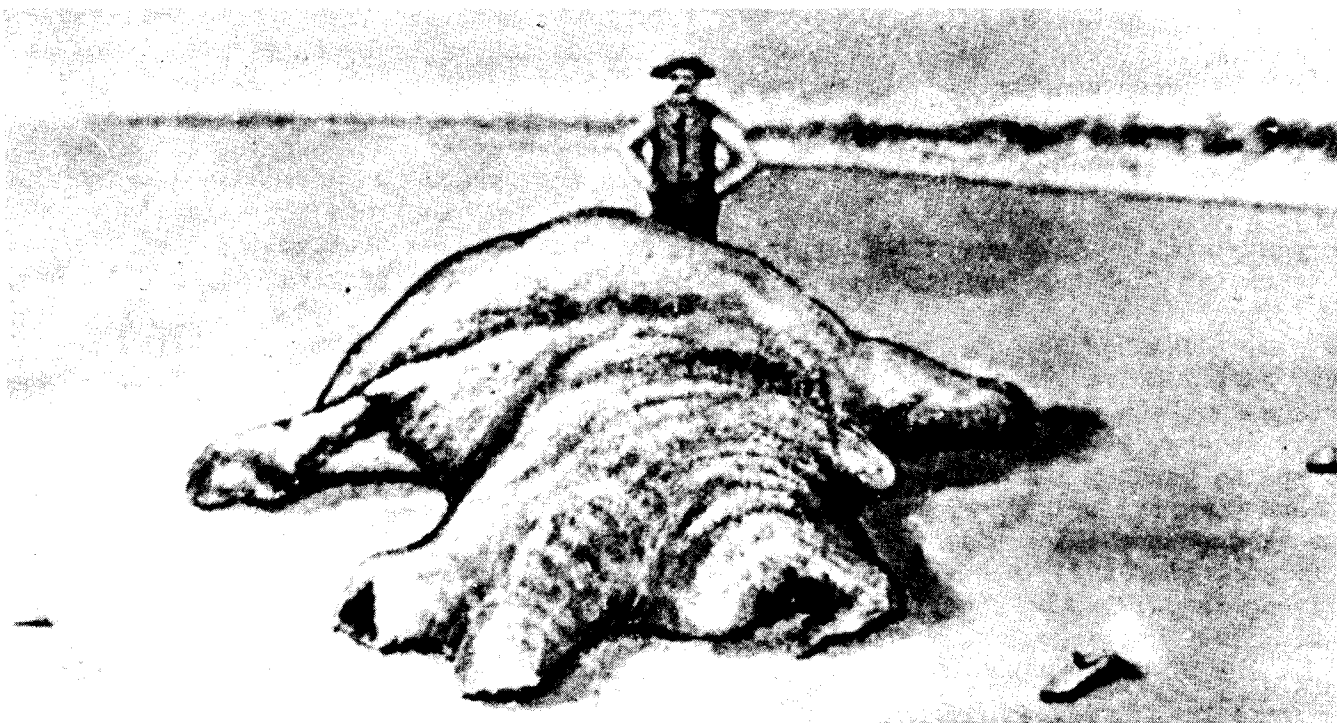
upon other data obtained by Webb.

Webb began a series of letters in hopes that others more qualified would personally examine the octopus. A letter dated Dec. 8, telling of the discovery of the body, passed through several hands until it was acquired by A. E. Verrill, Professor of Zoology at Yale University, best known for his work on the legendary sea monsters now recognized as the giant squids.

Verrill published a brief notice in the American Journal of Science for Jan. 1897 of this discovery. Based upon the dimensions given in the letter, he concluded that it indicated a giant squid, rather than an octopus, but a squid larger than the specimens he had studied in the 1870's. (6)

Verrill's position was that there had never been a scientific examination of an octopus of the dimensions of the giant squids (60 feet in length). Though he did not consider the possibility that there could always be a first time, Verrill quickly reversed his opinion after receiving additional information and photographs from Webb. (7)

Verrill's first article in his revised opinion was as a Sunday supplement for the New York Herald of Jan. third. Recounting the facts of this monster



The carcass, end view, drawn by A. Hyatt Verrill, from a photograph taken Dec. 7, 1896. From the American Naturalist, April 1897.

and based on the information of a reported fragment of arm 36 feet long by 10 in. at its broken extremity, the length of the arms would have been from 75-100 feet by 18 inches at the base, reaching an area 200 feet in diameter. (8)

He formally presented this new species of giant cephalopod in the following Feb. issue of the Am. Journal of Science, with additional information and based especially on photos sent by Webb, showing an eight-armed cephalopod, probably a true octopus of enormous size.

Officially the new species was named Octopus giganteus Verrill, though there was criticism at his failure to name the species in honor of Dr. Webb, since he was the person who identified and recorded the facts at considerable time and expense to himself.

Concluding that this was the first giant octopus described from an actual specimen, Verrill at a later date would question the correctness of the information he obtained, for he had based his published statements entirely on the facts gathered during the early part of December.

Due to the distance and stormy weather, Dr. Webb was unable to revisit the octopus until the second week in January. During this interval the monster was washed from the place originally found, and when located, had suffered further mutilation, especially the loss of the alleged fragments of arms.

Though in correspondence with Prof. Verrill about his new findings, Webb wrote a series of seven known letters to W. H. Dall, Curator of Mollusks at the National Museum at Washington, D.C.

In early January Webb wrote of his efforts at trying (and failing) to turn the monster over. No less than a dozen men with strong tackle could not turn it over and only partly raised it. Photographs were taken and Webb was trying to raise the money to draw it out of the pit it was in and up the bank by means of horses and tackle and then try to spread the hood out and cut through the thick hide that measured in some places $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick.

Writing Jan. 17, Webb records, "Yesterday I took four horses, six men, 3 sets tackle, a lot of heavy planking, and a rigger to superintend the work and succeeded in rolling the Invertebrate out of the pit and placing it about 40 feet higher upon the beach where it now rests on the flooring of heavy plank...on being straightened

out to measure 21 feet instead of 18...A good part of the mantle or head remains attached near to the more slender part of the body...The body was then opened for the entire length of 21 feet...The slender part of the body was entirely empty of internal organs. And the organs of the remainder were not large and did not look as if the animal had been so long dead...The muscular coat which seems to be all there is of the invertebrate is from two and three to six inches in thickness. The fibers of the external coat are longitudinal and the inner transverse...no caudal fin or any appearance if there had been any...no beak or head or eyes remaining...no pen to be found nor any evidence of any bony structure whatever."

This lack of a pen (cartilage material that is shaped like a quill pen), found in all the squids, gave support that it was probably not a squid, and the lack of bony structure would eliminate its having been some mammal, such as a whale, added support to the octopus identification.

Webb continues, "It is still in a comparatively good state of preservation and so would it not be a good thing for yourself or Prof. Verrill of Yale or both of you to come down and examine it for yourself and so determine its exact place better than I can...."

"If you think of coming at all you ought to come at once. I have written a similar letter to Prof. Verrill. You see I have said invertebrate rather than a squid because that is entirely safe."

But neither Dall nor Verrill would take the advice to personally examine the octopus. Perhaps due to Verrill's busy schedule and the possibility that Yale could not afford to send him to Florida at that time, he remained at home.

The same reasons may have prevented Dall, for a letter to him from Y.A. True reads, "I am sorry to say that the secretary does not see his way clear to have the cuttlefish examined at the cost of the Institution and the Museum can scarcely afford the expense at this time.

"Could not measurements etc., be made by Dr. Webb and some specimens saved?"

A brief letter of the 18th from Webb adds, "...I think I made one mistake in my description. The external muscular layer is circular and the internal longitudinal."

But Webb's revision to his description of the musculature is not character-

istic of either the whale or the octopus.

A brief article in the local St. Augustine newspaper based on information supplied by Webb contains the only printed reference that Dall acknowledged with Verrill that the remains were those of an invertebrate animal, the largest one ever recorded. (10)

Three weeks passed before Webb wrote on February fifth, "I made another excursion to the invertebrate and brought away specimens for you and for Prof. Verrill... Although strange as it may seem to you I could have packed them in salt and sent them to you at once although the creature had been lying on the shore for more than two months. And I think that both yourself and Prof. Verrill while not doubting my measurements have thought my account of the thickness of the muscular, or rather tendonous husk pretty large so I am glad to send you the specimens and express them in salt in a day or two... My time has been so limited when I have gone down that I have been unable to make a satisfactory examination of the viscera...."

On February 10th: "...I will ship the specimens to you tomorrow... I expect to have the creature moved up in a day or two when it can be put in better shape for examination. Prof. Verrill had decided to call it the *Octopus Giganteus*.

"I wrote to Prof. True to the expense of formalin in quantity as there will have to be a good deal used in the attempts to have the creature preserved. It will be worth while to make a good deal of effort if it is the 'only one.'"

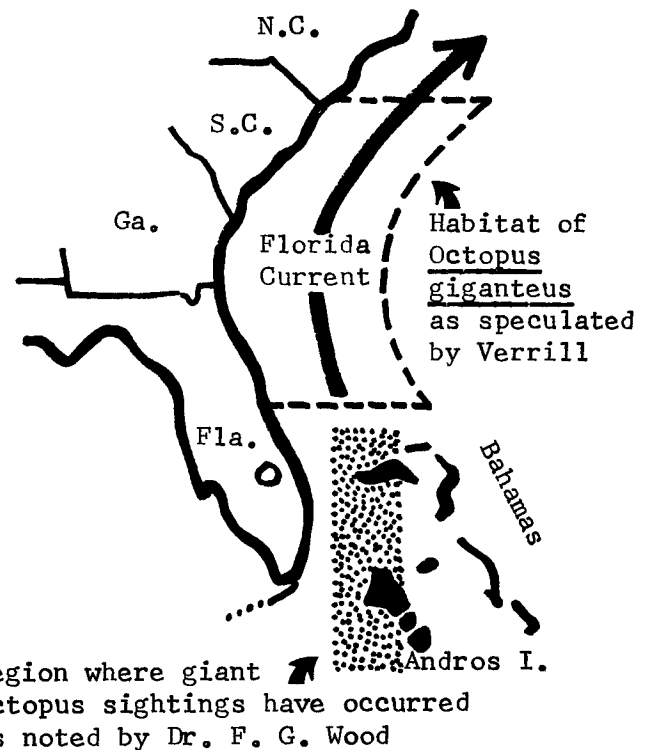
February 12th: "The box with the specimens from the '*Octopus Giganteus*' was shipped this afternoon by Express to Mr. True who as the Curator in charge was I thought the proper person to send it to..."

This letter marks the beginning of the controversy as to the correct identification of the animal's carcass.

While the specimens were in transit, Verrill published a second Sunday supplement for the Herald of February 14th and speculated on the size, habitat, and population density of these creatures. (11)

He estimated the live weight at 18-20 tons, with arms in length of more than 100 feet with hundreds of suckers; eyes a foot in diameter, and 10 gallons of ink in its ink bag.

Speculating that there must be thousands of others of equal size, their habitat would be the broad plateau that ex-



Region where giant octopus sightings have occurred as noted by Dr. F. G. Wood

tends out to sea 200 miles off South Carolina, Georgia, and north Florida, where in depths of 200 fathoms they would crawl on the bottom. (see map)

This region was the feeding ground of the sperm whale and the octopus was probably killed and partly eaten, with the remnants washed ashore in a storm.

On this same date, the New Haven, Conn., Evening Register published "Octopus for Yale." This would add something to the controversy at a later date, for it was written by Prof. Verrill's son, A. Hyatt Verrill, praising his father for his work on proving the Viking legends of the Kraken, giant squids, and saying that not until this present winter had anything approached the Kraken in size. (12)

Preservatives were forwarded to Dr. Webb to save as much as possible of the carcass, as portions of the body were awaited in New Haven.

On February 23 the specimens arrived at Yale.

On February 23 Verrill wrote the first two letters of retraction, subsequently published in Science, March 5th, and the Herald of the 7th, stating that he had just received some large masses of exterior integument, elastic, very tough and hard to cut, composed mainly of tough cords and fibers of white elastic connective tissue, much interlaced and bound together with irregular cavities and canals in some pieces. Little oil was present, though

whale blubber contains significant amounts of oil, even when beached for long periods of time. He concluded that these structures resembled those of blubber of some whales and that the creature could not have been an octopus but was a vertebrate animal! (13, 14)

But Verrill was unable to refer this bag-like form to any part of any known whale or any other organism that was large enough to have such a massive covering, and was puzzled as to how it could have been attached to any whale. His supposition originally that it was the body of an octopus was based entirely upon its general form and appearance as shown by photographs and on the reports of alleged stumps of arms.

(to be continued in next issue)

* * *

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the CABRERA ROCKS

by Ryan Drum

Some of us do not accept in any way the Bering Strait land bridge means of people coming to the Americas. Cold sober investigators are working slowly but surely to reveal carefully excavated and dated finds and sites presenting wild and exciting evidences for the long inhabitation of the Americas by people. In many ways the most extravagant claims and data are those presented by Dr. Javier Cabrera, an MD specializing in circulatory ailments, who lives and digs in Ica, Peru. Cabrera is a hyperkinetic, chain-smoking, dashing man in his early fifties; overtly brilliant, he has amazing ideas about cancer, genetics, religion, nutrition, and mortality. He is a much respected surgeon and physician in Ica (by the assertion of patients and associates), and the picture of fitness: in essence a delightful and convincing human who, unlike so many pushy inventive folks, is neither fat nor misshapen nor ugly or otherwise messed up so that he uses his scholarship act as compensation for personal inadequacy. We first learned of Cabrera from Maria Reiche (Mystery in the Desert - an amazing tri-lingual account of the Nazca Lines) who suggested that no greater marvel occurred in Peru. The "marvel" consisted of petroglyphs with strange scenes. When we got to Ica we asked for Dr. Cabrera; most knew him and his rocks, and told us that we "could judge for ourselves." We made an appointment one day for 1 p.m. and kept it as did Cabrera. As soon as he learned that I was a biologist and well-educated, his enthusiasm knew no bounds. We asked to see the petroglyph and he went into a sort of histrionic trance during which he mentioned that we were going to see the impossible, that we should be careful to whom we revealed the things, and that unregistered artifacts were liable to government seizure and he feared for his collection of rocks.

News From Another World: The Nebraska UFO-Cryptozoology Conference

reported by Michael D. Swords

November 11, 12, 13 of 1983: Ray Boeche, Nebraska State Director for the Mutual UFO Network (MUFON), engineered one of the finest Fortean conventions in recent years. Big Guns, J. Allen Hynek (Center for UFO Studies), Walter Andrus (MUFON), and Roy Mackal (International Society for Cryptozoology), headed a sparkling cast of experts who kept the audience and the press crackling with interest. ABC television featured the activities nationwide.

The mysteries of living dinosaurs, out-of-place animals, lake monsters, spontaneous human combustion, UFO abductions, crashed saucers, and cattle mutilations paraded before the conferees in an inspired format: four speakers per day, scheduled half-hour question and discussion sessions behind each talk, and one and a half-hour discussion sessions for all speakers at the end of the day. The interchange was dynamic and intimate. Everyone shared in the exchange. Even the experts learned some things. Thank you, Ray, for an extremely good show.

And, now to business...

Part One: Cryptozoology and Combustion, a Cabinet of Curiosities.

For this reporter, the presentation of Dr. Mackal (University of Chicago) was the outstanding example of solidity and excitement of the three days. Extant Dinosaurs! This dream of *SITU* founder Ivan Sanderson may be about to materialize. As *Pursuit* readers realize, there have been stories and folklore from central Africa for many years, alluding to the big beasts "head-like-serpent, body-like-elephant, tail-like-crocodile" that inhabit the great untracked swamps of the Congo and Rhodesian areas. Dr. Mackal and explorer-friends James Powell and Richard Greenwall have twice ventured into extremely difficult terrain in the Eastern Congo. To the west of the great Ubangi River lie regions nearly untouched. Here remain tropical swamps, similar to the domains of the Cretaceous dinosaurs. As the world entered the modern (Cenozoic) age, these regions may have remained stable, stable enough to allow a species of nature's most startling creations to survive. The names in the great quest are properly exotic: the village Impfondo, the river Likuoala, the village Epena, the river Bai, further and further removed from biology labs in Chicago and the support systems of civilization. What did they find?

Many biological samples were taken, including the tough Molombo fruit which is the alleged primary food source of the animals. Witnesses were quizzed by the animal flash-card method, with internal checks of cards of animals known *not* to be in the region included. Saurians were identified as the nearest to "mokele mbembe" by the natives. Lake Telle was said to be a recent haunt. Breaks or possible trackways in the bush were investigated. What were the preliminary conclusions?

1. stories describing the animals got vaguer going both North and South along the Likuoala; leading them to believe they were "in the vicinity."
2. witnesses passed the flash-card test with consistency; they didn't identify "ringer" cards like bears, they *did* recognize something like suariano.
3. descriptions of the animals as herbivores are not only consistent palaeontologically, but would seem unlikely for a

mere folkloric fantasy relating to religion (such creatures usually are *directly* involved with humans in some more sinister way).

4. a "trackway" seemed consistent with a large animal with a massive tail, but which also stood several feet high. Neither elephants nor crocodiles seemed to have all the necessary tools.
5. the Molombo fruit, analyzed in the States, had the nutritional value of a low-fibre content pear, rather low in protein content but judged "marginal" for an adult ruminant. Maybe the animals have another food source to supplement their diet in protein.
6. After Mackal's expeditions left the Congo, local explorer-scientists penetrated to Lake Telle and photographed the animals; these films are being processed in Paris. The cryptozoologists of the world anxiously await, and Dr. Mackal is poised to return.

As related side-issues to the great Saurian-hunt, the good doctor revealed that the notorious *That's Incredible* film of mokele mbembe by Kevin Duffy was a hoax of the crudest sort. Local villagers in Impfondo carved the head and the son of the local dentist-missionary strapped it on for the swimming scene. That, indeed, is incredible. Another claimant, the Regusters expedition, penetrated to Lake Telle and may have observed the animals. Unfortunately, the films were lost or incorrectly produced. Some taped materials survived and will be reported upon soon in the *Journal of Cryptozoology*.

Dr. Mackal also reported on Loch Ness and the northern "lake monsters." His studies show correlations between sightings and salmon influx from the sea. He feels that ocean-going animals, primitive whales or Zeuglodonts, follow the salmon run into the cold lakes and are then occasionally seen. Some individuals may remain behind if the lake is rich enough in fish, and be witnessed elsewhere in the year.

Another mystery involved *Octopus Giganteus Verrill*, the monster of the St. Augustine, Florida beach of 1896. Photos still exist as does *tissue* from the beast held in the Smithsonian Institution. Examination of the tissue shows the same alternating bands of connective tissue and protein-collagen characteristic of smaller well-known octopi, and the amino acid content of the species is comparable only to the smaller octopi, (*not*, for instance, to whale, dolphin, or squid). Photo analysis of the stumps of the octopus' arms indicate tentacles which would have stretched to great length, giving the creature a 150' spread tip-to-tip. So where is this denizen from Jules Verne today? The folklore tradition would indicate south of Andros Island in the Bahamas. Jacques Cousteau, where are you?

Two quick South American possibilities: 1) sightings of "Loy's Ape," the "impossible" large primate of northern South America, were confirmed by Danny Liska of Bogota, Colombia in the discussion period; also 2) Dr. Mackal mentioned another "hot" dinosaur possibility on the Bolivian-Brazil border. Pack your bags and go South!

Next up on the Fortean part of the program was the youthful but veteran cryptozoologist writer, Loren Coleman. Loren decided to try out some experimental ideas on the audience: at-



Photo of "sea monster" taken in January 1897 on beach near St. Augustine, Fla., shows creature's massive muscles.

Octopus Giganteus Verrill

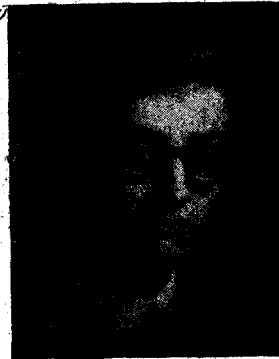
GIANT OCTOPUS or WHALE?

By Gary Mangiacopra
Reprinted by permission from OF SEA AND SHORE

For half a century marine biologists have dismissed Verrill's "giant octopus" as remains of a whale—but modern research indicates he may have been right.

REPORTED REMAINS of "sea monsters" found washed ashore on beaches usually turn out to be mutilated carcasses of sharks, whales, oarfish or other known denizens of the deep. But occasionally an unknown animal—one whose existence is not even suspected—is discovered by chance in this way. Such a chance discovery, made in 1896, still is the subject of controversy in marine zoology.

The story began unexpectedly on the evening of November 30,



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

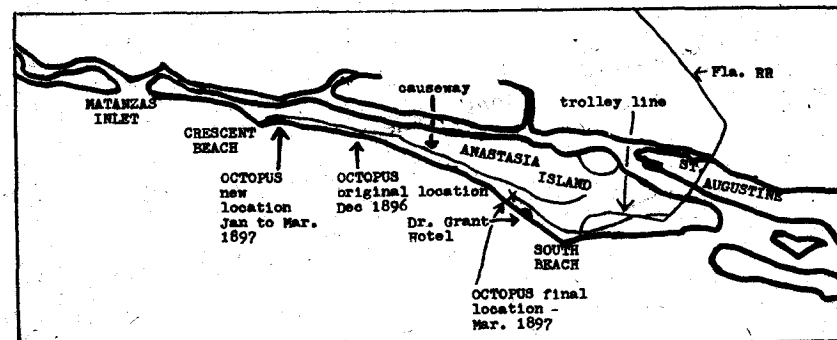
GARY S. MANGIACOPRA was born in Bridgeport, Conn., in December 1950. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of New Haven in June 1975.

He decided to use Verrill's giant octopus as the topic for his thesis in the spring of 1972. He reasoned that since Professor Verrill was associated with Yale University, only a few miles from his own school, he could easily acquire the original references in a few months; the few months expanded to nearly three years!

He presented his findings on the giant octopus at the International Fortean Organization's 1975 Fortfest.

1896, when two young bicyclists, Herbert Coles and Dunham Cor-etter, pedaled along Anastasia Beach near St. Augustine, Fla. Their planned trip to Matanzas Inlet at the far south end of the beach ended abruptly when they came upon the remains of an immense carcass embedded in the sand.

The two boys immediately notified Dr. DeWitt Webb, St. Augustine's leading naturalist. A medical doctor by profession, Dr. Webb's interests in both local history and natural history had led him to found the St. Augustine Historical Society and Institute of Science, which he served as president for 34 years. During



Author's map shows the St. Augustine, Fla., beach area where the giant octopus was found in December 1896 and its later locations after storms moved it.

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Drawing published in "The American Naturalist" in April 1897 was based on the only photograph that clearly indicates stumps of five arms in the foreground.

those years he devoted considerable effort and money to maintaining and expanding the society.

So the next evening, December 1, Dr. Webb along with several others examined the beached "whale." Their first examination revealed that due to the isolation of the beach during the winter months the carcass probably had lain there several days before its discovery. They estimated its weight at five tons as it had sunk into the sand to a considerable depth. The carcass was much mutilated at one end and in an advanced state of decomposition. That portion visible above the sand measured 23 feet long, four feet high and 18 feet across the widest part of the "back." The outer surface of the

hide was light pink, nearly white, and had a silvery appearance. Dr. Webb's startling conclusion was that the remains were not of a beached whale as originally supposed but of a monstrous octopus!

Rain prevented Dr. Webb from examining the carcass again until the fifth of December and during this wait he must have realized the importance and uniqueness of the chance discovery and the need for accurate records. On December 7, 1896, Dr. Webb revisited the site with two amateur photographers, Edgar Van Horn and Ernest Howatt, who took several different shots of the octopus where it lay embedded in the sand. Unfortunately these photographs now are missing but two drawings based

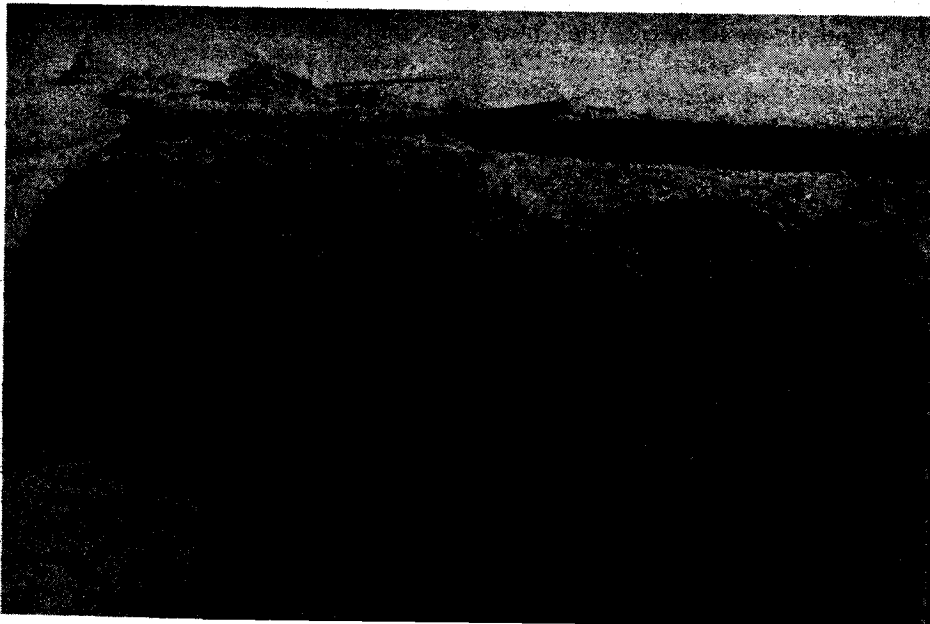
on them appeared in *The American Naturalist* in April 1897.

The more important drawing shows a pear-shaped body with the largest section near the broadly rounded posterior end. Due to mutilation and decay the head is almost unrecognizable but in the foreground appear what look like the stumps of five arms. The figure in the background, probably Dr. Webb, gives us some indication of the size of the carcass. The second drawing shows a side view with the thicker posterior end gradually tapering to the stumps of the arms, two of which are discernible.

Several days after these photographs were taken a Mr. Wilson claimed he excavated in the sand and found the fragments of the arms. He wrote Dr. Webb, "One arm was lying west of the body, 23 feet long; one stump of arm, west of body, about four feet; three arms lying south of body . . . longest one measured over 32 feet, the other arms were three to five feet shorter."

Soon after Mr. Wilson's examination a severe storm washed the carcass out to sea and cast it ashore again two miles farther south near Crescent Beach. The reported arms now were missing and, of course, this cast doubt on

When this January 1897 photograph was taken, the monster's carcass already had suffered extensive mutilation from storms and was in an advanced state of decay.



ished speculation on the size, habitat and population density of these sea creatures. Verrill estimated that "the living weight of the creature was about 18 to 20 tons. When living it must have had eight enormous arms, each 100 feet or more in length, each as thick as the mast of a large vessel and armed with hundreds of saucer-shaped suckers, the largest of which could have been at least a foot in diameter.

"Its eyes would have been more than a foot in diameter. It would have carried 10 or 12 gallons of ink in the ink bag. It could swim rapidly, without doubt, but its usual habit would be to crawl slowly over the bottom in deep water in search of prey.

"We must reflect that wherever this creature had its home there must be hundreds or thousands of its kind, probably of equal size, otherwise its race could not be kept up. Its habitat is probably the broad plateau that extends out to sea about 200 miles off the coast of South Carolina, Georgia and North Florida, on which the water increases very gradually down to 200 fathoms."

* * *

ON FEBRUARY 23, 1897, the specimens forwarded by Dr. Webb reached Yale University. That same day Verrill wrote two

letters in which he retracted his earlier identification. He states that he had received "some large masses of exterior integument preserved in formalin, in size from three to 10 inches thick, elastic, very tough and hard to cut, composed mainly of tough cords and fibers of white elastic connective tissue that were much interlaced and bound together with irregular cavities and canals in some places." Verrill concluded that the samples resembled the blubber of some cetaceans and that the creature could not have been an octopus but must have been a vertebrate animal!

The specimens sent to Smithsonian's National Museum were examined by Prof. Frederic Augustus Lucas who wrote in *Science Magazine*, "Professor Verrill would be justified in making a much more emphatic statement that the structure of the masses of integument from the 'Florida monster' resembles blubber and the creature was probably related to the whales. The substance looks like blubber and smells like blubber and it is blubber, nothing more nor less. There would seem to be no better reason for supposing that it was in the form of a 'baglike structure' than for supposing that stumps of arms were present."

Professor Verrill had difficulty

Dr. Webb's original description.

Dr. Webb wrote a series of letters to various scientists telling of his discovery. One of these was forwarded to Prof. Addison Emery Verrill of Yale University, New Haven, Conn. A systematic zoologist, Dr. Verrill was the author of over 350 scientific articles and had described more than a thousand new species. Of his numerous accomplishments in zoology he is best known for his research on cephalopods, the mollusc group to which the squids and octopuses belong. In the 1870's he had proven the legendary sea monster, the Kraken, was in fact the giant squid.

Professor Verrill consequently was much interested in the discovery of a huge octopus and published a brief report, based on information contained in Dr. Webb's letter, in the January 1897 issue of *American Journal of Science*. He tentatively concluded that the carcass must be a giant squid as no known octopus reached such gigantic size. But Verrill quickly reversed himself when Dr. Webb sent further details and photographs of the animal.

In the Sunday supplement for the *New York Herald* for January 3, 1897, Verrill published the first description of the unknown creature and called it a gigantic octopus. By comparing its pro-

portions with smaller species, he estimated the arms must have reached 75 to 100 feet. The creature's 200-foot diameter would exceed the size of the largest known giant squids. He repeated this description in the February issue of *American Journal of Science* and formally named the beast *Octopus giganteus*.

During the second week of January 1897 Dr. Webb relocated the carcass in the new location to which the storm had moved it. With the aid of "four horses, six men, three sets of tackle, a lot of heavy planking and a rigger," he succeeded in freeing the monster from the sand and placing it on planks about 40 feet higher up on the beach. This permitted more careful examination and measurement of the specimen and a new set of photographs. He tried, unsuccessfully, to persuade Professor Verrill and Prof. William Healey Dall, Smithsonian's curator of molluscs, to come and study the creature where it lay. On the fifth of February Dr. Webb wrote that he visited the monster to collect samples of the flesh to send to Dall and Verrill for study.

While the specimens were in transit, Verrill published another article in the Sunday supplement of the *Herald*. It was a popular account based on Webb's letters and contains Verrill's only pub-

relating the large mass of tissue to any recognizable part of a whale. His best guess was that "it came from the head of a creature like a sperm whale in structure. . . ." But Verrill's son A. Hyatt Verrill mentioned the creature in his 1916 book, *The Ocean and Its Mysteries*, and stated that no scientist could guess as to what animal it came from. Since young Verrill was well-acquainted with his father's articles on the monster and his father was still living, we can suspect that Professor Verrill still was unsure about the creature's identification despite his earlier conclusion that it was a whale.

Except for Hyatt Verrill's mention of the creature in 1916, the only attention it received in the half century following its discovery was given it by the late Charles Fort, who included the find in his list of sea monsters in his 1931 volume, *Lo!* Not until 1957 was any further serious research done. In that year Dr. Forrest G. Wood, Jr., Curator of the Research Laboratories of Florida's Marineland, came upon a yellowed clipping while researching octopus behavior. His interest was aroused and Dr. Wood began to investigate the reported find. Unfortunately, no records report the disposition of the creature after Dr. Webb suc-

ceeded in dragging it up from the beach. The specimens sent to Yale have disappeared. When Peabody Museum's original building was torn down in 1911 the specimens housed there were widely scattered until the new museum was completed in 1926. Presumably the monster specimens were lost during this period.

In 1962 Dr. Wood discovered that the other two specimens of preserved tissue still existed at the Smithsonian Institution. The following year he persuaded a colleague, Dr. Joseph F. Gennaro, Jr., to cut away and examine a small piece of the preserved tissue for identification. Dr. Gennaro prepared microscope slides of the monster flesh and also slides from octopus, squid and whale. Using polarized light and comparing the connective tissue patterns Dr. Gennaro concluded the Florida creature slide resembled the octopus slide, had no similarities to the connective tissue of the squid and absolutely no structure pattern in common with any mammal including whales. His verdict was that the tissue had come from an octopus!

Unfortunately, shortly after Dr. Gennaro's examination the container holding the original specimens of tissue was misplaced during a move at Smith-

onian and suffered a fate identical to that of the Yale specimens which had been lost some 10 years before. Because an article concerning the giant octopus written by Dr. Wood and Dr. Gennaro and published in *Natural History* in 1971 was met with scorn and derision, Dr. Gennaro later analyzed the last remaining fragment of tissue he had saved for further chemical examination. He concluded "the chemical constituents of the monster's collagen were of the type found in the octopus and that none of this type of tissue exists in the squid at all."

* * *

NOW, MORE THAN half a century after the unidentified carcass was found on the Florida beach, what do we know about giant octopuses? That one existed in 1896 and that its size, based on its mutilated remains, indicated an overall length of 100 feet is all we know. Anything more is speculation.

In the *Natural History* account Dr. Wood cites reports which suggest that such octo-

puses may have been sighted in 600-foot-deep waters off of Andros and Grand Bahama Islands in the Bahamas. If we assume the creatures are restricted to the Bahamas, then the Florida current that flows from the tip of Florida to Cape Hatteras, N.C., might have carried the carcass that washed ashore at St. Augustine in 1896. Or Professor Verrill may have been correct when he speculated that the creatures live off the southern coast of North America.

We are left with this question: Why haven't there been more reported sightings of these animals? Of course, if we do not recognize the possible existence of such an animal, then when they are sighted they may be mistakenly identified as known animals in the reports.

And yet 80 years have passed since the only representative of its kind was found and examined. Perhaps the words Dr. Webb wrote to Professor Dall were prophetic, "It will be worthwhile to make a good deal of effort if it is the 'only one.'"

THE COOKS' TOURS

ARRIVING for duty with the Fifth Organizational Maintenance Squadron, Minot Air Force Base, N. Dak., Master Sgt. Kenneth Cook discovered he was replacing another master sergeant named Kenneth Cook. Both men are married to women whose first names are Jo Ann. Each couple has four children, a girl and three boys, and two of the boys in each family are named Kenneth and Michael.

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THE MONSTER FRONT

IT BOGGLES the mind to consider the many kinds of monsters one reads about in the papers—giant eels and other sea creatures, abominable snowmen, the Loch Ness monster and unknown animals from bottomless pits. For this issue we have a full house.

Perhaps the most exciting, because it's the best documented, is the account of a giant octopus 200 feet in diameter—about two-thirds the length of a football field. The Associated Press dredged up the report and although it is 75 years old it's a doozy.

The story begins in 1896 when a giant sea animal washed up on the beach at St. Augustine, Fla. On hand to examine it was A. E. Verrill, a Yale professor and marine life expert, who identified it as an octopus and named it *Octopus giganteus* Verrill. Later on

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Verrill changed his opinion and said it probably was part of a whale, although the flesh "contained very little oil."

However, two marine biologists now have concluded that Verrill probably changed his mind under the pressure of ridicule by the scientific community and the controversy that resulted. They have good reason to believe the gigantic creature was indeed an octopus — even though the largest known giant cephalopod is only about 60 feet long.

For one thing, measurements of the 12,000-pound carcass found at St. Augustine indicate arms 70 to 100 feet in length and 18 inches thick at the base. Very few whales have such arms.

For another thing, a pretty substantial chunk of the creature was preserved in formaldehyde at the Smithsonian Institution. Joseph F. Gennaro, Jr., associate professor of biology at New York University, and Dr. F. G. Wood, senior scientist and consultant at the Naval Undersea Research and Development Laboratory, studied this chunk and collaborated on an article published in the March 1971 issue of *Natural History*.

Among the evidence they reported, as a result of Gennaro's study of the Smithsonian preserved tissue, is (1) the tissues were "with certainty" not those

IS THERE A BRITISH MONSTER OCTOPUS?

by

Ulrich Magin

At the end of the 19th century, science accepted the existence of the giant squid, but rejected that of the giant octopus. The big octopus of the Northwest American Pacific coast is still the only scientifically recognized species of that kind. The "octopus giganteus" of the Bahamas and Bermudas is still much doubted, despite good and recent evidence (1). In an earlier article I investigated the chance that big unknown octopi also live in the Mediterranean (2), a suggestion that has been verified by the find of a monstrous dead octopus near Sapri in Italy (3).

In this paper I will examine the evidence for a monster octopus in the British Isles.

We should note first that the biggest accepted octopus found in British waters was a "specimen with a radial spread of just over 6 feet and weighing 7 pounds" that was "spear-gunned by a member of the Brighton Swimming Club near the Palace Pier, Brighton, Sussex in September 1960, but spans up to 8 feet and a weight of 10 pounds have been claimed for other individuals." (4)

Bearing this in mind, let us now look at claims or sightings of such animals of bigger or monstrous proportions.

A Scottish newspaper, the Inverness Courier, reports the most northern story of that kind: "Skye Policeman's 'Capture' - Struggle with Giant Octopus at Broadford - Constable Ian Morrison, of the Inverness Constabulary, who killed an octopus on the shore at Broadford, Skye, on Saturday, believes that the beast might be a giant squid. Its identity should be soon established, however, as it is to be examined by experts of the Scottish Marine Biological Station and the Royal Scottish Museum. The creature measured 4 feet across the body, with eyes 4 inches in diameter, and it had eight tentacles each 6 feet in length.

"Constable Morrison had a narrow escape when he went to examine the object he saw lying half in the water. A tentacle shot out from the seaweed and gripped him by the left ankle. Fortunately, the Constable was wearing Wellington boots, and was able to withdraw his leg from the boot. He got clear, and later dispatched the huge brute by throwing stones at it, and belabouring it with a five-foot piece of wood.

"Marine experts are very interested in the Constable's 'capture.' Dr. A. C. Stephen, of the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, said that it was most unusual to find an octopus of such a size nearer Britain than Madeira" (5).

This story would be a good beginning for the article, but alas! the brute was simply a big squid. Dr. Stephens later identified it as a Stenoteuthis caroli, a big squid that has been stranded upon British shores more than once (6).

But we do not know what the monster "Kraken" was that was observed at Rothesay on the Isle of Bute in 1775 (7). The description of the animal is far too short, and it could have been a giant squid, a whale, an optical illusion or a vegetable mat -- as in that time "Kraken" simply meant "a monster as big as an island."

The last Scottish case involves a mysterious rotten carcass with very big eyes that was cast ashore at the Mull of Kintyre, near the Isle of Bute, in 1944 (8). The description sounds a bit like the 1896 St. Augustine monster, identified now by many as a giant octopus. It sounds even more like any of the 'globsters' found on beaches all over the world, which have proved mainly to be decomposed basking sharks or whales; and so an identification of the creature as a basking shark is very likely.

Moving south to Cornwall, we find that fishermen there know the giant octopus well: "The belief in a huge octopus-like creature still lingers in the

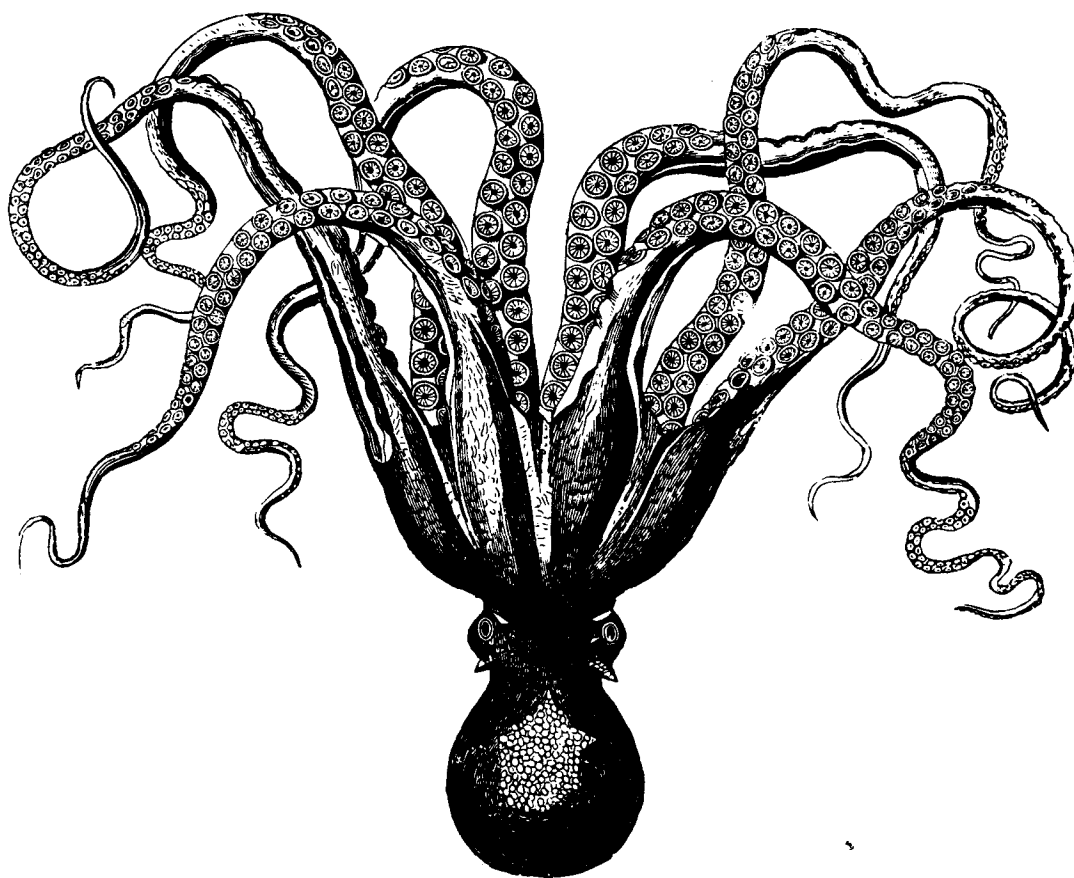
district around Godrevy and Portreath on the North Coast. Here the sea bed shelves steeply and the old sailors explained the sudden depth as the monster's lair" (9).

There is in fact one occurrence which could show that these fishermen's superstitions are based on fact: the French magazine Yachting Gazette wrote on December 16, 1899, that a Mr. Fison was attacked in 1897 by several monstrous octopi near Sedmouth, Cornwall. Fison escaped, but about a dozen other people fell victim to the beast (10).

An interesting story, but, as the French cryptozoologist Michel Raynal discovered, not based on truth, but upon an 1897 short story by H. G. Wells called "The Sea Raiders." In this novel, as in many others, Wells sells fiction as fact. He mentions not only Fison's octopus attack, but the stranding of a giant octopus near Land's End in 1896 (11). Obviously, the French editor did not recognize the fiction as such, or he consciously sold his readers a hoax.

The last Cornish report is about a "tentacled seamonster," published in the Falmouth Packet in 1977: "A new menace threatens the local coastline, a 20 foot long monster with Fongs that entangle boats and bathers." The paper then explains that this monster is an aggressive form of Japanese seaweed that threatens the local flora (12). Our last chance to find a real British monster octopus is the Channel Islands (British territory, although geographically they belong to France).

Victor Hugo's novel Toilers of the Sea describes the fight between a local and an awesome octopus that takes place in a grotto. This fight has become the stereotype for many other less ingenious adventure stories in books about diving and cheap horror novels (13). Hugo, however, claimed that his description of the monster was based on fact and not purely imagined. He knew a shrimp fisherman from Brecq-Hou, on Sark, who had been attacked and was drowned by a giant octopus some years before 1866 (13).



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Debunking the Debunkers

of the Giant Octopus

In a 1994 paper for *Fortean Studies*,¹ I told the story of the huge mass of organic tissue found on the Florida coast in 1896 and thought to be the remains of a gigantic species of octopus, named *Octopus giganteus* by Professor Addison Emery Verrill in 1897. My colleague and friend Gary Mangiacopra and I are also in the process of publishing a detailed account of the same affair in a four-part article for *Of Sea and Shore*.² Our conclusion, based on an in-depth analysis of the huge mass of documents, articles, photographs, and modern analyses then available, was that the "Florida monster" was indeed the remains of a gigantic octopus, possibly belonging to the cirrate sub-order of the octopods.

In the past few months, however, several articles have tried to debunk this "sea monster." Although they were published in scientific journals, they are full of inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and mistakes, not surprisingly from authors with preconceived ideas, if not overt hostility, against cryptozoology.

The first of these "scientific" articles,³ on the history of the discovery of the giant squids (*Architeuthis*), appeared in the *Archives of Natural History* in January 1995. The author, Australian biologist W. R. A. Muntz, also mentions the case of *Octopus giganteus*, about which he writes:

"A statement by a Mr. Wilson, one of the first people to see the carcass, says that the arms were *not attached to the body* [my emphasis] but were found some distance away. On microscopical observation, Verrill found that the integuments sent to him were blubber, and concluded that the carcass most probably came from a sperm whale. The detached arms could plausibly be those of a squid, eaten by the whale, which spilled out of the whale's body

when this broke up on the beach."

Apart from the fact that Verrill only made a visual—not "microscopical"—observation (as far as we know from his articles), it requires a lot of cheek to assert that the arms were not attached to the body, in order to prove that they came from a giant squid vomited by the sperm whale. Because Mr. Wilson never said such a thing! He wrote in his report:

"One arm was lying west of body, 23 feet long; one stump of arm, west of body, about 4 feet; three arms lying south of body and from appearances attached to same (although I did not dig quite to the body, as it laid down in the sand, and I was very tired), longest one measured over 32 feet; the other arms were 3 to 5 feet shorter."⁴

If there is still any doubt that these arms were attached to the body, it will suffice to read Verrill again:

"Dr. Webb writes that a few days after the photographs were taken (Dec. 7th), excavations were made in the sand and the stump of an arm was found, still attached, 36 feet long and 10 inches in diameter where it was broken off distally."⁵

And what about those photographs, which Muntz certainly did not study, which show that the arms and the body belong to one and the same animal?

Muntz's attack against the giant octopus was generally ignored, but the controversy recently resurfaced, as new tests on the remaining samples of the "Florida monster" and the "Bermuda blob" (a similar looking mass found on the Bermuda coast in 1988) purportedly showed that they have nothing to do with a giant octopus. This new chapter of the saga was published in the *Biological Bulletin* of April 1995,⁶ and comments on the results appeared in various scientific magazines, such as *New Scientist*

Michel Raynal

This unpublished photo (opposite), found in the files of the Smithsonian Institution, shows the huge carcass that washed ashore on Anastasia Island, near St. Augustine, Florida, in 1896.

and *Science*⁷—a favor not given to the previous works by Wood and Gennaro (1971),⁸ Mackal (1986),⁹ Mangiacopra (1976),¹⁰ and myself (with Dethier, 1991).¹¹ In the *Biological Bulletin* article, Sydney K. Pierce, Timothy K. Mangel, and Eugenie Clark, of the University of Maryland at College Park, and Gerald N. Smith, of the Faculty of Medicine at Indianapolis, begin with methodological criticism of Gennaro's and Mackal's works (my own contribution on iron and copper measurements is ruled out in one word as "inconclusive," without any other trial). They remark that Gennaro did not give references for the samples of the "contemporary octopus and squid" he used for his histological tests. But it should be remembered that the results were published in *Natural History*, a popular magazine where this kind of detail is never given. On the other hand, there is much to criticize about the methodology of the paper in *Biological Bulletin*, despite its "serious" appearance.

1. Pierce, *et al.*, speak of the "complete lack of suitable test of taxonomic relationships in Mackal's data," a statement that could itself be challenged (Mackal analyzed samples from an octopus, a giant squid, and various cetaceans). But Pierce and company have chosen the most unlikely candidates for their samples:

- A rather obscure abyssal octopus (*Bathypolypus arcticus*), the biology and physiology of which is certainly poorly known. If comparisons are to be made, they should be with the largest known species of octopus (*O. vulgaris* and *O. dofleini* for instance), and with the cirrate octopods such as *Cirrotheuthis*, *Grimptoteuthis*, *Cirrothauma*, etc., as only these groups of octopods have been proposed to account for the Florida monster as a giant octopus.

- The humpback whale (*Megaptera novae-angliae*). Comparisons should have been made with the sperm whale (*Physeter catodon*), as suggested by A. E. Verrill's conclusion that the Florida monster came from the spermaceti tank of this toothed cetacean. By the way, the scientific name of the humpback whale is *Megaptera novae-angliae* ("the one from New England with large flippers," from Latin *nova-anglia*, genitive *novae-angliae*), and not "novaeangelae," as it is printed twice in their article.

- The completely irrelevant rat tail tendon collagen!

2. Nothing is said about the *range* of the different concentrations of amino acids, banding pattern of the collagen fibers, and so on. Pierce and fellows claim that the results are significant for a warm-blooded vertebrate, but we have to accept this as if they were Bible verses.

3. Strangely enough, for such an important controversy, they did not make a "blind test." Mackal and myself, with regard to methodology, worked on anonymous samples (1M, 2M, etc.), the identification of which was

given *after* the results were obtained.

Let us see now what Pierce and colleagues did.

First of all, they present electron microscopy photographs. They show that the samples of the Florida monster are mostly collagen fibers arranged in layers that are perpendicular to each other, a structure found also in the blubber of the humpback whale. On the other hand, the mantle of *Bathypolypus arcticus* is mainly composed of muscle, with only a small amount of collagen. Also, the banding periodicity of the collagen fibers was 54.3 nm (nanometers: 1 nm = 10⁻⁹ meter) in the Florida monster, and 54.6 nm in the whale sample, compared to 46.6 nm in *Bathypolypus arcticus*.

These observations seem to be definitive, but as Mackal emphasized in his 1986 article, a *huge* octopus *should* possess a huge mass of collagen, for biomechanical reasons.¹² The low amount of collagen in a *small* octopus such as the one curiously chosen by the four authors is thus not at all surprising, and the enormous amount of collagen in the Florida monster should not be considered as evidence for it not being an octopus: quite the contrary!

As we have no data on the range of the banding periodicity in various cephalopods and cetaceans, what is the significance of a difference of only 16%? Measuring the collagen fibers from the dorsal aorta of *Octopus dofleini* (the largest known species of octopus), Gosline and Shadwick found an axial periodicity of 600-640 Å (Angström: 1 Å = 10⁻¹⁰ m) or 60-64 nm.¹³ Hunt, Grant, and Liebovich even find a 680 Å periodicity in the mantle collagen of the squid *Loligo peallii*.¹⁴ And what about a species (*Octopus giganteus*) of which we know nothing? Moreover, the width of the fibers may have been slightly altered after almost 100 years of storage in organic solvents.

Concerning the perpendicular pattern: rather than a genetic difference, it is probably a biomechanical necessity in order to reinforce the structure when a great quantity of collagen is present. A giant octopus should therefore be expected to have the same pattern as a large whale. It is interesting that the electron micrographs published by Gosline and Shadwick show a tendency to a much greater amount of collagen in *Octopus dofleini* than in Pierce's sample from *Bathypolypus*, as well as a tendency to a perpendicular pattern. Also significant is Pierce and fellows' comment on the presence of fat deposits in the cetacean blubber they used as a reference sample; this is quite unlike the Florida monster sample, which shows a lack of any fat tissue, in agreement with a cephalopod!

Our four biochemist musketeers then discuss an amino-acid analysis that, as they conclude, shows that the samples of the Florida monster are almost pure collagen. As a matter of fact, this "discovery" was already demonstrated and published by Mackal nine years earlier.¹⁵

Regarding the detailed results of the concentration of each amino acid, the four Dalton brothers of "scientific" debunking give great value to the imino acids (a peculiar

Another Response to the Giant Octopus Controversy

Keith L. Partain

The largest species of octopus known to me is *Octopus dofleini*, the Pacific Ocean octopus, which can reach a length of ten feet. Octopi are characteristically benthic (bottom-dwelling) cephalopods, and a large octopus would require large subterranean caves for concealment as well as a rich fauna to sustain its bulk. In this situation, the controversy regarding *O. giganteus*, we are discussing a mollusk over an order of magnitude longer than, and probably three orders of magnitude bulkier than, *dofleini*.

It is in ignoring the fundamental ecology of such a hypothetical creature that one sees the almost invariant, narrow focus of some debunkers. There is no *a priori* reason to deny *O. giganteus* a niche in nature. Although giant octopi are generally thought to flourish only in the fecund imaginations of Victor Hugo and Jules Verne, some evidence of them has come to our attention. The 1896 *O. giganteus* remains are just such possible evidence, as well as a bone

of contention.

Or perhaps I should say "collagen

of contention," inasmuch as octopi are invertebrates, and it is collagen that Sydney K. Pierce, *et al.*, concentrate on in *Biological Bulletin*. I tend to agree with *INFO Journal* editor Michael Shoemaker (private communication, Aug. 13, 1995) that far too much emphasis was placed on collagen (connective tissue) and too little on other relevant factors. Although Pierce insisted that bacterial action removed all but collagen from the carcass, there was no reported search for any muscle proteins or enzymes. Alfred S. Romer noted in *The Vertebrate Body* (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders, 1971, p. 26) that arginine is used for phosphorus metabolism in invertebrate muscle. The question is: could any traces of arginine (or creatine, the vertebrate muscle counterpart) survive? As many observers have noted, samples were kept in different solutions and were stored (in the Florida octopus case) for many decades. Preservatives or not, some degradation of the samples is possible. To be fair, however, I agree with Shoemaker that Pierce's Table I (p. 228)—the amino acid ratios—was

the most pertinent evidence. Nevertheless, why should we assume a member of an unknown genus or species, however closely allied, should have a similar amino acid content or collagen fiber configuration? Entomology teaches one to be wary of just such generalizations!

Dismissal of Gennaro's work (due to the specious reasoning that it was too popular, lacking in rigor and methodology) and Mackal's work (no doubt due to prejudice against the journal involved, *Cryptozoology*) was clearly, as Charles Fort would put it, *exclusionistic*. Add to this the eyewitness reports of probable tentacles and viscera (augmented by suggestive photos), and I really would prefer to leave options open for *O. giganteus*, pending new data.

Keith L. Partain, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, holds a bachelor's degree in zoology and a master's degree in entomology. Two of the courses for the advanced degree dealt with general invertebrate zoology and paleontology.

group of amino acids), whereas Mackal noted that no conclusion (in any direction) could be made from the results of serine and threonine, due to the sample's long storage in formaldehyde.¹⁶

Although the collagens are not too different from species to species, there *are some* differences, mainly in the acidic acids (aspartic and glutamic acids): according to Pikkarainen and Kulonen, there is an increase from 110 per 1,000 residues in the homeothermic (hot-blooded) animals, up to 150 per 1,000 residues in invertebrate collagens.¹⁷ With a concentration for aspartic plus glutamic acids of 13.1% (14.7% or 15.9%, depending on the samples, according to Mackal's measurements¹⁸), the results are more indicative of an octopus than a cetacean, whatever Pierce and colleagues claim, for the results of the other samples in Pierce, *et al.*, are: Bermuda blob 13.5%, squid 14.4%, carp 11.7%, whale 11.6%, shark 11.1%, but only 11.7% in *Bathypolypus* (which can be explained by the storage of the sample in isopropyl alcohol, a powerful organic solvent). Significantly, the highest concentrations are found in the Florida monster, the Bermuda blob, and the squid, in agreement with Pikkarainen and Kulonen scale for invertebrates!

Finally, they conclude that the collagen is skin collagen from the blubber of a cetacean. This is complete nonsense: blubber is only a layer of fat tissue (and let us remember that no fat tissue was found in the Florida monster), the shape, the thickness, the size, and the weight of which can by no means explain the Florida monster—unless one speculates that it came from a skin tumor never reported. As they also conclude that the Bermuda blob, a similar-looking mass of collagen, came from a cold-blooded vertebrate, we thus have not one, but *two* unexplained cases of anomalous, unrelated animals.

I would like to recall a significant anecdote about Pierce. In reply to my letter, he wrote:

"The photo you sent is the same that Richard Ellis published in his book.^[19] In the figure caption, he says that the structure extending *to the right* [my emphasis] of the carcass appears to be a tentacle. Unfortunately for Ellis, other photos taken at the same time clearly show that the structure he refers is a wooden pole, undoubtedly part of the rigging Webb used to unearth the carcass."²⁰

In fact, Ellis writes, "... something that appears to be an arm extending from the body of the creature *at the*

right [my emphasis].”²¹ So, Pierce is now caught short, mistaken preposition in support. Ellis clearly writes that the body (not the arm) is on the right of the photograph!

Bernard Heuvelmans here drew attention to the fact that cryptozoology is a multidisciplinary science that uses all the available data: witnesses’ accounts, native traditions, photographs, anatomical fragments, etc.²² Biological tests are of course welcome, but they only constitute additional evidence, certainly not the sole evidence, and not necessarily the best. There are definitely many reasons to think that the Florida monster was indeed a giant octopus. For instance, at least three witnesses (Dr. Grant, Mr. Wilson, and Dr. Webb) saw and described stumps of arms, which can be seen on several photographs taken in 1896-97 (some of them unknown to Verrill). Webb also noticed the presence of “organs” or “viscera” in the stranded mass (which do not exist in cetacean blubber)—this, among many other points analyzed in my articles already cited, should be taken into account.

I have, however, imagined three other tests that could give more certainty on the nature of the Florida monster, in order of increasing precision.

1. An electrophoresis of collagen, compared with known collagens. The electrophoretic mobility (speed of the protein in an electric field) will depend on the mass of the protein, hence of its zoological affinities.

2. Decoding the *sequence* of amino acids of the collagen (and not only measuring their concentrations), and comparing it with known collagens, should provide information on the substitutions in the chain of amino acids of the collagen protein.

3. An immunological test: a solution of the monster’s collagen is injected into a rabbit, which will make antibodies against it. The rabbit’s plasma is tested with known collagens through radio-immuno assay (RIA). One would expect the following result:

Vertebrates —→ Squids —→ Octopuses
 weak reactivity greater reactivity high reactivity

Until these tests are made, I remain convinced that the Florida monster actually was what its scientific name of *Octopus giganteus* suggests it is, a gigantic species of octopus.

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- ² Gary S. Mangiacopra, Michel Raynal, Dwight G. Smith, and David F. Avery: “Update on *Octopus giganteus* Verrill: More Forgotten Fragments of Its 19th-Century History,” *Of Sea and Shore (OSAS)* 17:3 (Fall 1994), pp. 171-178; “History Repeating Itself: Ignored—Rediscovered—Ignored Again—And Final Vindication for *Octopus giganteus* 1909-1994,” *OSAS* 17:4 (Winter 1995), pp. 221-225; “*Octopus giganteus*: Still Alive and Hiding Where? Lusca and Scuttles of the Caribbean,” *OSAS* 18:1 (Spring 1995), pp. 5-12; “Him of the Hairy Hands: *Octopus giganteus*—Speculation on the Eared Octopus,” *OSAS* 18:2 (Summer 1995), in press.
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Another view of the Florida carcass. Author Richard Ellis interpreted the horizontal material in the center foreground as an appendage, extending from part of the body at lower right. Debunker S. K. Pierce imagined that Ellis was referring to the vertical pole with attached cables seen at upper right. Another pole appears in the upper right corner.

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⁷ Jeff Hecht, “The Sea Monster that Never Was,” *New Scientist* #1972 (April 8, 1995), p. 7; Constance Holden, “One Monster Down,” *Science* 268:5208 (April 14, 1995), pp. 207, 209; Pierre Rossion, “La pieuvre géante livre son secret,” *Science et Vie* #933 (June 1995), p. 10.

⁸ Forrest Glenn Wood and Joseph F. Gennaro Jr., “An Octopus Trilogy,” *Natural History* 80:3 (March 1971), pp. 15-16, 18, 20-24, 84, 86-87.

⁹ Roy P. Mackal, “Biochemical Analyses of Preserved *Octopus giganteus* Tissue,” *Cryptozoology* 5 (1986), pp. 55-62.

¹⁰ Mangiacopra, “*Octopus giganteus* Verrill: A New Species of Cephalopod,” *OSAS* 6:1 (Spring 1975), pp. 3-10, 51-52.

¹¹ Raynal and Michel Dethier, “Le ‘monstre de Floride’ de 1896: cétacé ou poulpe colossal?” *Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise des Sciences Naturelles* 114 (1991), pp. 105-115.

¹² Mackal, “Biochemical Analyses,” p. 60.

¹³ John M. Gosline and Robert E. Shadwick, “Molluscan Collagen and Its Mechanical Organization in Squid Mantle,” in Karl M. Wilbur, *The Mollusca* (New York, London: Academic Press, 1983), vol. 1, Metabolic Biochemistry and Molecular Biomechanics, pp. 371-398.

¹⁴ S. Hunt, M.E. Grant, and S.J. Liebovich, “Polymeric Collagen Isolated from Squid (*Loligo peallii*) Connective Tissue,” *Experientia* 26:11 (November 15, 1970), pp. 1204-1205.

¹⁵ Mackal, “Biochemical Analyses.”

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁷ J. Pikkariainen and E. Kulonen, “Comparative Chemistry of Collagen,” *Nature* 223:5208 (August 23, 1969), pp. 839-841.

¹⁸ Mackal, “Biochemical Analyses,” pp. 58 and 60.

¹⁹ Richard Ellis, *Monsters of the Sea* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), pp. 303-322, 362-363 concern the Florida monster.

²⁰ Pierce, letter to author, May 12, 1995.

²¹ Ellis, *Monsters of the Sea*, p. 312.

²² In Michael T. Shoemaker, “Cryptozoological Mystery Deepens,” *INFO Journal* #73 (Summer 1995), pp. 46-47.

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FATE, Nov. -85

Cattle-Killing UFO of 1896

The object we saw that night was the most terrifying thing we'd ever seen—until the next day's sickening surprise.

By Pearl Chenoweth as told to Shannon Graham

I WILL never forget the terrifying experience my family and I had with a UFO in Missouri when I was nine years old. Our sighting took place, as I recall, in August 1896.

My parents Ezra and Serepta Vickers, my brother Ben and I lived on a farm in Howell County and had lots of cattle and horses. We worked hard and in the evening, when the chores were done and supper was over, we would sit in the yard resting and trying to pick out the different constellations like the Big and Little Dippers. It was a favorite game for Ben and me.

The night we saw the UFO, the sky was clear and a million stars were twinkling. It had been a hot, dry summer and we needed rain.

All at once we saw flashing lights. At first we thought they were a star shower. But the "stars" stayed in a circle as if they were all strung together like beads. Meteors scatter when they fall, so we soon realized we were seeing something else. The circle of lights just kept whirling and falling toward us. In my mind I can still see those bright lights.

They were brighter than any star.

As small as I was, I remember thinking there was nowhere to run or hide from this thing. What was it going to do to us? For some reason I thought it was unfriendly, that it meant only to do us harm.

I ran to my mother and clung to her skirts, crying and shaking so hard that I could barely stand. I'm sure she was as frightened as I but she tried to comfort me.

At that time I had never seen a balloon, airplanes were in the future and nothing belonged in the sky but the sun, moon and stars. We watched fascinated. We could not take our eyes off the object as it moved west right toward us, turning and falling out of the night. Just when we thought it would crash in the yard, it stopped and hovered over the barn. We could now see it was a large saucerlike shape. Its lights were blinding. The whole barn lot lit up like day.

My father grabbed up the baby who was sleeping on a pallet and we fled into the house. None of us dared voice our fear that God had returned, that this

as the end of the world. My father handed the baby to my mother and went into the kitchen to look out the window. The lights were still hovering there. We could see no sign of life, no forms moving out of the object. If there was a door, it was on the other side.

My parents gathered us children in the living room and we huddled together absolutely terrified, waiting for a knock at the door or for the door simply to burst open. My father started to pray, tears running down his cheeks as he begged all of us. It was one of the few times I ever saw him cry.

I don't know how long we knelt there. All I know is that it seemed like hours. Except for my father's voice murmuring in prayer, there was no sound. The silence was the worst of all. We waited helplessly, not knowing what was going on outside, wondering what might happen to us at any moment.

At last my father got up the courage to go back to the kitchen and look outside. The thing had gone.

We slept very little that night. Was the saucer gone for good? Would it come back? Lying wide-awake in my bed, I could hear my parents downstairs as they talked far into the night. Every so often my father would go to the door and look out. And the horror was not over.

The next morning when Ben took his dog Cappie and went out to the pasture to bring up the milk cows, as he always did, he came running back to the house scared out of his wits.

Mother and I were getting breakfast when he appeared in the kitchen door so pale I thought he was going to faint. He kept pointing toward the barn, stammering words that made no sense.

Finally Mother got him seated in a chair and bathed his pale little face with cold water. Then he told us what he saw.

As he and Cappie neared the gate that opened into the pasture, Cappie stopped in his tracks, whining and barking. The grass was almost knee-high to the cows, so the animals were not immediately visible to a 10-year-old boy. But in a large patch of burned grass were three of our steers lying dead on the ground. Their bodies were beginning to bloat from the heat; their legs were poking out stiff as boards. Cappie snarled, showed his teeth and refused to go near them. That was when Ben ran back to the house.

Father, who had come into the kitchen while Ben was talking, ordered us to stay in the house while he went out to the pasture. When he came back he was as shocked as Ben. He told us he had examined the steers and as far as he could see there was only one thing wrong with them: they had been completely drained of blood. The only marks on them were some dried blood on their throats from two puncture holes in the jugular vein; these looked as if they had been made by a two-tined fork.

The idea that something or someone had dropped out of the sky to take the blood of animals sickened us. Had they drunk the blood, put it on their food, used it for medicine? What might have happened if they had found us? Would we too have been killed? We were too frightened and nauseated to eat the breakfast sitting on the table in front of us. In those days you didn't waste good food but we could not eat.

Father tried to assure us it was

nothing to worry about. He said that probably some wild dogs or wolves had done it. We didn't believe it and we could see he didn't believe it either. We had seen too many animals attacked by dogs and wolves. They always tore the animals apart. They didn't drink their blood.

I was always a nosy child, always eavesdropping when the grown-ups thought I was somewhere else, so I listened to my parents talking about the possible ways the steers could have been killed.

Had a neighbor killed them and been frightened away by the lights before he could cut it up? A neighbor would have had to shoot the animals and in that isolated country a shot could be heard half a mile away. If someone had punctured or cut the animals' throats, he first would have had to tie them up. There were no ropes. In any case, animals don't die at once when their throats are cut; the wounded animals would have bawled their heads off. The other cattle would have stampeded and made a terrible racket. We had heard nothing.

America was in the middle of a depression that summer and nobody would have left the animals' hide. A cowhide was worth about 50 cents—a day's wages for a man that year. If a neighbor had killed a steer, it would have been to feed his family. These carcasses were just left.

Furthermore, a beef has to be hung up in order for the blood to drain, not

left lying on the ground. That's what was so strange. How did the aliens, that's what they were, drain the blood? There was no blood anywhere; every drop was gone. Had this happened only to us or had they killed other stock in the area?

Later that week, when the newspapers came from St. Louis, we had our answer. There were several stories of just such incidents all over Missouri that night.^{*} People had seen the hovering lights and in each case only three animals were drained of blood no matter how many cattle were in the pasture. Where the saucers had hovered, grass was burned away by the heat of the object. In our pasture where the ground was burned, nothing ever grew again. The patch was bare. It still is as far as I know.

My father never spoke of that night again and he did not let the rest of us speak of it either.

A note from Shannon Graham:

I am certain that my grandmother Pearl Chenoweth's account of her 1896 UFO experience is an accurate one. At the time she related this story, she was dictating her memoirs for the Missouri Historical Society and was helping people with genealogical research. Everyone who worked with her was amazed at her accurate recall of dates, places and people. She was alert and active until her death in 1984.

^{*}A check of St. Louis newspapers for August and September 1896 uncovered no UFO-related stories.—*The Editors.*

A REAL SPEED FREAK

DRIVING AT speeds approaching 200 mph helped Al Unser, Sr., take eighth place August 19, 1984, in the 500-mile CART auto race at Pocono International Raceway. The next day the racing great won an \$82 ticket for speeding 75 mph on Interstate Route 80 in Pennsylvania.

was explained that fish in northern Wisconsin lakes grew fur like that to protect them from the cold weather. I think that I believed the story at the time. Some years later I ran across the same exhibit, or something very like it, and by then I had caught on to the joke.

MUTILATIONS

The creatures that populate American tall tales have many sources. Some are the products of original imagination, and others are borrowed from far older legends, probably passed on as folk tales in Europe and then brought to the New World.

Typical of the genre of monster is the hodag, a man-eater of the Wisconsin swamps. The creature had huge claws, bulging eyes, large horns, and a line of sharp spikes which ran down its back. But the most unusual feature of the hodag was that it could never lie down, for it had no joints in its legs. It slept by leaning against a tree and the best way to catch one was to cut into its favorite tree so that when the hodag leaned against it to sleep, both monster and tree fell over.

This last characteristic was also attributed to the achlis, a creature mentioned in the works of the ancient Roman naturalist Pliny. Pliny had tried to be factual, but his works contain descriptions of many creatures that turned out to be mythical. Pliny's beast, unlike the man-eating hodag, was an inoffensive vegetarian. Whether the characteristic of being unable to lie down was carried straight from the pages of Pliny to the swamps of Wisconsin, or whether the hodag received his jointless legs as the result of independent invention is unknown.

A real live hodag was supposedly captured near Rhinelander, Wisconsin, in the late nineteenth century. The whole hodag capture was a hoax planned and executed by a

man named Eugene S. Shepard, who threw a spike studded horsehide over a large dog and then charged admission to see the "hodag" that was housed in a dimly lighted cage. When the story of the hodag's capture was sent to the newspapers the theory was advanced that the hodag was "the long sought missing link between the ichyosaurus and the mylodon of the Ice Age" -- a statement that is simply double talk.

According to Curtis D. MacDougall in his book *Hoaxes*, "after the original hodag's death a stuffed successor was exhibited at fairs for two years. Whenever a convention meets at Rhinelander the fame of the monster lives anew, stuffed hodags being manufactured for floats and other displays. Luke Sylvester Kearney in 1928 published a book *The Hodag*. W.J. Lemke, head of the news bureau of the University of Arkansas, states that during his boyhood at Wausau, Wisconsin, 'large photographs of the hodag on a fallen log, surrounded by a group of his captors armed with axes, pitchforks, etc., were fairly common. Many of them were used as decorations in the saloons.'"

Lemke could have found a very hardy monster in his own adopted state of Arkansas. This was the gowrow, so named because of the horrible growling noise it made. A copy of the *Arkansas Gazette* of Little Rock in 1897 mentions the killing of one of these creatures by a posse in Search County, Arkansas, after the monster had terrified the countryside, and killed off a large number of cows and horses. According to the paper, the creature was twenty feet long, with a ponderous head, two enormous tusks, short legs, webbed feet with claws, green scales, a back bristling with short horns, and long thin tail.

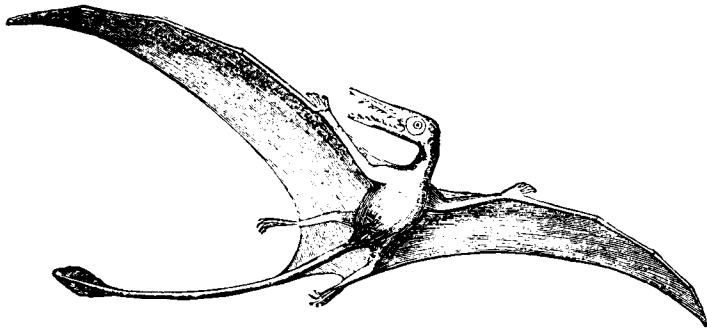
More widespread in America was belief in the hoop snake. This was

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DE → "ANIMALS"

showed the Africans a book with pictures of pterodactyls, they "immediately and unhesitatingly" identified them as kongamoto.

Chief Kapiji Mpangu Mwandwe assured Melland that one of these animals had been shot by a sportsman on safari, a "George Grey," in 1897 near Fort Jameson. While Melland does not identify "George Grey," perhaps thinking it unnecessary, the chief was probably referring to Albert Henry George Grey, the fourth Earl Grey, Administrator of Rhodesia from 1896 to 1897, and later Governor-General of Canada. If the Chief was "putting one over" on the Magistrate, he would hardly have implicated such an important person as the Administrator of the Colony.



The animal's habitat was alleged by the Africans to be the Jiunda Swamp, a desolate region shunned by Africans and Europeans alike. Melland wrote, "I have mentioned the Jiunda Swamp as one of the reputed haunts of the kongamoto, and I must say that the place itself is the very kind of place in which such a reptile might exist, if it were possible anywhere. Some fifty miles of swamp, formed by an inland delta... The whole of the swamp is covered with dense vegetation: big trees that grow to a great height, tangled undergrowth with matted creepers... Nowhere else on high well-drained ground have I seen such a morass: nor could one conjure up a more perfect picture of a haunted forest."

In size and appearance, Sanderson's olitiau matches Melland's kongamoto. Even the reddish color of kongamoto is suggestive, for Sanderson saw his animal in poor light and in darkness red can appear black, accounting, for example, for the blaze-orange clothing now required for hunters in many American states rather than the traditional red.

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The great distance between the Cameroon and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) poses little problem, for an animal such as kongamoto would be most likely to occur in small, concentrated, and widely dispersed populations, hanging on in those few isolated spots where environment and proximity were suitable and far from human settlements or activity.

At the end of the last century, a young Englishman, H.G. Seeley, attended a lecture on fossil pterodactyls. He was so fascinated that he abandoned a promising legal career and devoted himself to the study of these creatures. The result was *Dragons of the Air*, published in New York and London in 1901.

Seeley set down all that was known of the pterodactyls in his day. Of the appearance of these creatures would present in life he wrote, "If this series of animals could all be brought together they would vary greatly in aspect and stature, as well as structure... These flying reptiles frequently have the proportions of the limbs similar to a bat." So, a living pterodactyl need not present the classic form we are used to from museum displays and horror films and might look much like a bat — accounting neatly for the vivid impression Sanderson received of the animal he saw in the Assumbo Mountains in 1932.

Seeley may have harbored some hope that pterodactyls could still survive, for he included in *Dragons of the Air* the following strangely prophetic words: "The final disappearance of these animals from the Earth's history... may yet be modified by future discoveries." Some future explorer of the Jiunda Swamp or the Assumbo Mountains may yet prove him right.

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spaventato il bestiame ed alcuni animali domestici. (H. T. Wilkins: Flying Saucer on the Moon, p. 207).

4 - Robertson County, Tennessee, U.S.A. tra il 1817 e il 1821.

La fattoria di John Bell era, si dice, infestata dagli spiriti, con fenomeni di « poltergeist » e di « luci vaganti ». Tra i numerosi visitatori che si recarono a vedere la « casa degli spiriti » ci fu anche il generale Andrew Jackson. Quando egli si avvicinò alla casa su una carrozza tirata da cavalli, le ruote sembrarono immobilizzarsi all'improvviso e i cavalli furono incapaci di muoversi fino a quando una voce metallica e acuta non si fece sentire da dietro i cespugli: — Benissimo, generale. Che la carrozza avanzi! — e in quel momento le ruote si rimisero in movimento. (F.S.R. nov.dic. 1968, p. 16, John Keel: Is the « E.M. » effect a Myth?).

5 - Horton, Wiltshire, Inghilterra Giugno 1857.

Il giornale « Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette » del 2 luglio 1857, riferisce che un fattore, certo W. Brown, si stava dirigendo verso un « mulinello ». Non c'era alcun soffio d'aria, e le condizioni meteorologiche non erano tali da determinare un vero « mulinello ». Il cavallo ne fu ugualmente atterrito, si diede alla fuga e il Sig. Brown fu quasi gettato a terra. (F.S.R. nov.dic. 1966, p. 18).

6 - Swaffham, Norfolk, Inghilterra 15 genn. 1869.

Qualcosa veduto nel cielo e delle misteriose esplosioni, che non erano di origine meteorica, atterriscono centinaia di pecore. (H. T. Wilkins: Flying Saucers on The Moon, p. 311).

7 - Bonham, Texas, U.S.A. 1873.

Alcuni raccoglitori di cotone sono stati terrorizzati da un oggetto splendente come l'argento, piombato su di loro. — « Esso serpeggiava nel cielo come un grande rettile d'argento, dichiarò uno dei testimoni, e picchiava su di noi senza interruzione, continuamente ». — Un tiro di cavalli si diede alla fuga e il conducente fu gettato sotto le ruote e ucciso.

7bis - Fort Riley, Texas, U.S.A. 1873.

Lo stesso giorno, circa un'ora dopo

cosa o un oggetto simile piombò dal cielo sulle truppe di cavalleria a Fort Riley, mentre erano in piena parata. I cavalli ne furono terrorizzati a tal punto che la rivista terminò nel più grande caos. (Frank Edwards: Stranger Than Science, p. 198).

8 - Berkshire, Inghilterra, 20 nov. 1887, 20,20.

Un oggetto sconosciuto nel cielo e delle misteriose esplosioni provocarono la fuga di greggi su una superficie di circa 210 miglia quadrate. (H. T. Wilkins: Flying Saucers on The Moon, p. 311).

9 - Valle del Tamigi, Inghilterra, notte del 13 novembre 1888.

Alcune greggi si diedero alla fuga su un territorio di circa 22 mila miglia quadrate. Esse furono ritrovate la mattina seguente in lontane fattorie, ancora ansimanti di terrore e ammucchiate sotto alcune siepi. (H. T. Wilkins: Flying Saucers on The Moon, p. 311).

10 - Chiltern Hills, Inghilterra, 25 ottobre 1889.

Su una zona di circa 40 miglia quadrate alcune centinaia di pecore fuggirono contemporaneamente da alcuni recinti chiusi e da alcuni ovili. Il panico fu contagioso quantunque le fattorie e i recinti non fossero vicini, ma al contrario sparsi su diverse miglia. (H. T. Wilkins: Flying Saucers on The Moon, p. 311).

11 - Leroy, Kansas, U.S.A. 19 aprile 1897, 23,30.

Gli Hamilton furono svegliati dal trambusto del loro bestiame e dei cani della casa. Essi uscirono e videro sopra le loro teste il « Vascello del Texas », che aveva legato con una corda una delle loro giovenche. (J. Vallée: Anatomy of a Phenomenon, p. 16).

12 - Rockland, Texas, U.S.A. 22 aprile 1897, 23,30.

A Rockland, Mr. John M. Barclay, essendosi ritirato per dormire, sentì il suo cane abbaiare furiosamente e nello stesso tempo con un tono lamentoso. Diede un'occhiata fuori e vide una grande macchina (il Vascello del

terra. Uscendo dalla macchina, un uomo s'avviò verso di lui chiedendogli dell'olio lubrificante, uno scalpello temprato e del solfato di rame. Barclay gli domandò da dove venisse e dove andasse. « Da ogni dove, ma saremo in Grecia dopodomani », fu la risposta del misterioso essere. (D. B. Hanlon and J. Vallée: Airships Over Texas, F.S.R. gen.-feb. '67, p. 23).

13 - Dallas, Texas, U.S.A. aprile 1897.

Il « Dallas News » del 28 aprile 1897 ha pubblicato un articolo di un testimone anonimo (un uomo di legge), che stava per mettersi alla guida del suo calessino tirato da un cavallo, di notte, allorché il « Vascello » gli passò sopra la testa. Il cavallo sbuffò, indietreggiò e caracolò pazzamente, rovesciando quasi la vettura; poi rimase immobile, tremando come una foglia. (D. B. Hanlon: Texas Odyssey of 1897; F.S.R. set.-ott. 1966, p. 8).

14 - Hot Springs, Arkansas, USA; notte del 6 maggio 1897.

Due ufficiali di polizia, Sumpter e McLemore, provarono ad avvicinarsi ad un U.F.O. che era atterrato, ma i loro cavalli rifiutarono di avvicinarsi oltre i cento metri. (Jerome Clark: The strange case of the 1897 Airship, F.S.R. luglio-agosto 1966, p. 15).

15 - Seal Rocks, Sutro Heights, San Francisco, U.S.A., 22 novembre 1897.

Il « Vascello » è passato sopra la Cliff House ed ha proiettato un potente fascio luminoso su Seal Rocks (Le Rocce delle Foche); le foche furono prese dal panico e si gettarono in acqua. (Lore and Denault: Mysteries of the Skies, p. 7).

16 - Marais, sull'estuario del Tamigi, Inghilterra 1901.

Ancora panico tra le greggi. Esse partirono tutte verso Ovest, allontanandosi dal Mar del Nord. (H. T. Wilkins: Flying Saucers on the Moon; p. 311).

(continua)

1.896-97

2

L'AERONAVE E LA VACCA

di robert j. m. rickard

Una delle storie più importanti del catechismo ufologico è quella dell'aeronave che si librò sulla fattoria di Alexander Hamilton, nel Kansas, la sera del 19 aprile 1897.

Riproduciamo integralmente il resoconto apparso sull'edizione del 23 aprile del settimanale Farmers Advocate, pubblicato a Yates Center.

"L'Onorevole Alexander Hamilton di Vernon è venuto in città mercoledì scorso /il 21 aprile/ creando una certa agitazione con l'annunciare d'aver avuto un'esperienza con l'aeronave, di cui si parla molto. Il signor Hamilton è un vecchio colono, è stato membro dell'assemblea legislativa in passato ed è noto per tutte le contee di Woodson, Allen, Coffey ed Anderson. L'onorevole ci ha raccontato la seguente storia:

"La notte di lunedì scorso, verso le dieci e mezza, venimmo svegliati da rumori provenienti dalla mandria. Io mi alzai pensando che forse il mio bulldog ne stava combinando qualcuna delle sue, ma arrivato alla porta osservai con mia indicibile sorpresa un'aeronave che stava scendendo lentamente sulla mia mandria, a circa 40 metri dalla casa.

"Dopo aver chiamato il mio aiutante Gid Heslip e mio figlio Wall, brandendo delle asce corremmo al corral. Nel frattempo l'aeronave era dolcemente scesa fino a circa 30 metri da terra, e a non più di 50 metri da noi. Consisteva d'una grande porzione sigariforme lunga forse 100 metri e di un carro attaccato sotto.

"Il carro era fatto di pannelli di vetro o di qualche altra sostanza trasparente, divisi da strisce sottili di qualche altro materiale. L'interno era brillantemente illuminato e si vedeva chiaramente tutto. C'erano tre luci: una come un immenso riflettore e due più piccole, una rossa ed una verde. Quella grande poteva essere fatta ruotare in tutte le direzioni.

"Era occupato da sei degli esseri più strani che io abbia mai visto. C'erano due uomini, una donna e tre bambini. Stavano ciarlando fra loro ma non riuscimmo a capire una parola di ciò che dissero. Tutte le parti del vascello aereo che non erano trasparenti erano d'un colore rossastro scuro.

"Rimanemmo ammutoliti per lo stupore e la paura, finché un qualche rumore attrasse la loro attenzione ed essi puntarono il

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riflettore su di noi. Appena ci videro, misero in moto una qualche ignota forza ed una grande ruota di turbina di circa 10 metri di diametro che stava girando lentamente sotto l'aeronave cominciò a ronzare con lo stesso suono del cilindro d'una scrematrice, e l'apparecchio si sollevò con la leggerezza d'un uccello.

"Quando si trovò a circa 30 metri sopra di noi, sembrò fermarsi, e si librò proprio sopra ad una giovenca di tre anni che mugghiva e recalcitrava apparentemente imprigionata in una staccionata. Dirigendosi verso di lei scoprimmo che aveva un cavo dello spessore d'un dito, della stessa sostanza rossa, annodato a capio intorno al collo dell'animale, e proveniente dall'aeronave e impigliato nel filo spinato.

"Tentammo di spezzare il cavo o di liberarlo, ma non ci riuscimmo, così tagliammo il filo spinato e rimanemmo a bocca aperta a guardare nave, vacca e tutto sollevarsi lentamente ed allontanarsi scomparendo verso nordovest. Tornammo a casa, ma ero così spaventato che non presi sonno, e martedì mattina mi alzai, montai a cavallo ed uscii in cerca di qualche traccia della mia bestia. Tornando da LeRoy a sera scoprii che Lank Thomas, che vive nella contea di Coffee a circa tre o quattro miglia ad ovest di LeRoy, aveva trovato la pelle, le zampe e la testa nel suo campo, quella mattina.

"Pensando che qualcuno aveva macellato una bestia rubata e aveva gettato via la carcassa, egli aveva portato i resti in città perché fossero identificati, ma era rimasto molto sorpreso di non trovare alcuna traccia sul terreno soffre tutt'intorno. L'altra notte son tornato a casa ma tutte le volte che sto per addormentarmi vedo di nuovo quella cosa maledetta con le sue grandi luci e quelle orrende persone. Non so se erano diavoli o angeli o cose d'altro, ma noi tutti l'abbiamo vista e tutta la mia famiglia ha visto la nave e non voglio aver più a che fare con loro."

Il resoconto del Farmers Advocate continuava:

"Il signor Hamilton ha tutta l'apparenza di non essersi interamente ripreso dallo shock e tutti quelli che lo conoscono sono rimasti convinti che è stato sincero in ogni parola.

Ma dal momento che ci sono ora, come sempre ci sono stati e sempre ci saranno, scettici ed increduli ogniqualvolta viene esposta la verità su qualcosa che confina con l'improbabile, sapendo che qualche persona ignorante o sospettosa dubiterà della sincerità della dichiarazione sopraesposta;

quindi, noi, i sottoscritti, facciamo la seguente dichiarazione firmata:

che abbiamo conosciuto Alex Hamilton chi per quindici chi per trenta anni, e che per quel che riguarda la sua sincerità e verità non abbiamo mai sentito mettere in dubbio la sua parola, e che noi crediamo fermamente che la sua dichiarazione sia vera

ed esatta.

E. V. Wharton, Ispettore Petrolifero Statale

H. H. Winter, Banchiere

H. S. Johnson, Farmacista

Alex Stewart, Giudice di Pace

F. W. Butler, Droghiere

H. C. Rollins, Direttore dell'Ufficio Postale

M. E. Hunt, Sceriffo

E. K. Kellenberser, Dottore

J. H. Sticher, Droghiere

Jas. L. Martin, Direttore dell'Ufficio del Registro

"Sottoscritto e giurato davanti a me questo ventunesimo giorno di aprile, 1897. W. C. Willie, Notaio Pubblico".

Dopo aver riprodotto integralmente la storia di Hamilton, il Daily News di Burlington pubblicò un'altra dichiarazione firmata:

"Noi, i sottoscritti, residenti di Burlington nel Kansas, certifichiamo con la presente che abbiamo conosciuto il signor Alexander Hamilton fin da quando venne espulso dal Missouri in quanto coinvolto nella controversia tra schiavisti e antischiavisti; che egli è stato il primo Cancelliere della Contea di Coffee; che egli è sotto tutti i punti di vista un uomo perfettamente sincero e credibile. E nessuno che sia amante della verità metterà mai in dubbio una qualsiasi dichiarazione di lui.

J. M. Lane, H. E. Cowgill, Orson Kent, Wm. Manson, M. E. Grimes, J. M. Baldwin, David Grimes.

"Sottoscritto e giurato davanti a me questo ventinove d'aprile, 1897. H. B. Cheney, Notaio Pubblico".

A parte il vigile occhio di Charles Fort, che scrisse anche una lettera ad Alexander Hamilton, chiedendo ulteriori dettagli, senza ricevere alcuna risposta, nessun altro studioso dell'insolito ha disturbato il sonno di questo rapporto, nei polverosi archivi della redazione del Farmers Advocate.

Ma col nascere del fenomeno "dischi volanti", sempre maggior interesse venne prestato dagli "ufologi" ai casi del passato che sembravano implicare una presenza extraterrestre in tutta la storia del nostro pianeta.

Il primo riferimento al caso Hamilton lo troviamo in una conferenza tenuta nel 1960 dal dottor Joseph Allen Hynek. Ma il vero scopritore del "calf-napping" è senz'altro stato il dottor Jacques Vallée, che pubblicò per intero la storia nel suo secondo libro (1). La storia destò l'interesse d'un gruppo di ricercatori, e portò alla "scoperta" di tutto il flap del 1896-97.

Da allora, la storia è sempre stata ritenuta di grande importanza nello studio dell'aspetto ufologico delle "aeronavi", sia per la correlazione UFO-rapimenti d'animali (di cui questo caso sarebbe il predecessore) sia per la descrizione dei "sei esseri

dei più strani mai visti".

La maggior parte degli studiosi, da quelli cautamente scettici a quelli apertamente e acriticamente 'credenti' nel racconto, è poi sempre rimasta impressionata dai dettagli della storia, dal l'imponente dichiarazione firmata da una decina delle persone più in vista della contea, e dal fatto che la storia è stata apparentemente investigata e riportata tante volte senza che mai nessuno abbia mai trovato un motivo fondato per dubitare della sua veridicità, data anche la posizione di grande rispetto di cui godeva Hamilton nella sua comunità. (2)

Affascinato, come molti, dalla storia dell'aeronave, Jerome Clark, uno dei più noti esponenti dell'ufologia americana, fu spinto a rintracciare qualche parente di Alexander Hamilton (deceduto nel 1912), e trovò Elisabeth Hamilton Linde, figlia del Wallace che secondo l'Advocate era presente al fatto.

La signora Linde gli disse che alla sua famiglia piaceva credere che la storia fosse vera, che erano a conoscenza dei resoconti pubblicati e che tutti si ricordavano di Alex come d'un uomo dotato d'una straordinaria immaginazione. Benché non avesse mai sentito parlare né il padre né il nonno della "leggenda di famiglia", Elisabeth ricordava d'aver sentito dire parecchi anni prima da amici del nonno che la storia era stata architettata da Alex e dal direttore del Farmers Advocate.

Le cose rimasero comunque com'erano, e la storia del "rapimento della vacca" continuò ad apparire su giornali, riviste e libri specializzati. (3)

All'inizio del 1976, uno studioso inglese, Robert Schadewald, scrisse alla Kansas State Historical Society a proposito del caso e ricevette in risposta un ritaglio del Buffalo Enterprise (un settimanale del Kansas) del 28 gennaio 1943. La settimana precedente lo Yates Center News aveva riproposto ai suoi lettori la storia di Hamilton, ed in seguito a ciò l'Enterprise ricevette una lettera da Ben Hudson, direttore del Fredonia Daily Herald e figlio di F. Hudson, amico intimo di Hamilton e direttore del Farmers Advocate nel 1897. Nella lettera l'Hudson figlio affermava che "Hamilton e papà inventarono la storia durante una discussione, un sabato", ed includeva la seguente dichiarazione firmata da suo padre:

"Avevo acquistato un motorino a benzina, il



Una delle ricostruzioni in chiave ufologica del caso Hamilton. La vignetta fa parte d'una popolare storia dell'ufologia a fumetti distribuita (dietro abbonamento) ai giornali americani col titolo di "Our Space Age" dall'ufologo Otto Binder. La vignetta qui riprodotta apparve nella settimana del 26 febbraio 1968.

primo, credo, che si fosse mai visto a Yates Center, e l'avevo installato al giornale per far andare le rotative. Invitai alcuni amici a vederlo funzionare, e fra loro era Hamilton, il quale vedendolo esclamò: "Ora si potrà volare", e di qui venne fuori la storia che ci inventammo. Dopo che io la pubblicai, fu ripresa dai più importanti giornali sia americani che europei, alcuni dei quali la illustrarono con disegni immaginari. Ci furono poi centinaia di richieste d'informazioni provenienti da tutto il mondo. Qualche anno dopo ci furono i primi esperimenti di volo, ma io ho sempre reputato Alex Hamilton il vero inventore del volo umano".

Il ritaglio venne passato a me, ed io lo inviai a Jerome Clark, che fece pubblicare una lettera sullo Yates Center News il 16 settembre 1976, chiedendo informazioni sul caso.

In risposta, Jerry ricevette una lettera dalla signora Donna Steeby, di Wichita, la cui madre 93enne, Ethel Howard Shaw (amica d'una delle figlie di Hamilton, Nell) ricordava d'aver sentito raccontare la storia da Alex Hamilton in persona. In una seconda lettera la Steeby inviò la seguente dichiarazione firmata dalla madre:

"Ricordo benissimo quello splendido pomeriggio, come se fosse stato ieri. Allora aveva 14 anni, ed ero in casa Hamilton con la moglie e la figlia di Alex, quando egli tornò dal paese, mise il calesse nella stalla, si sedette nel soggiorno e incominciò subito a raccontare alla moglie: "Ho inventato una di quelle storie... e l'ho raccontata ai ragazzi, giù in città; verrà fuori sull'Advocate di questa settimana". Sembrava parecchio eccitato da ciò che aveva fatto, ma la moglie era piuttosto scandalizzata mentre lui raccontava, e di tanto in tanto diceva "Oh, Alex!" e "Perché, Alex?", ma noi ragazze non ci facemmo molto caso, dato che in fondo era una bella storia.

"Mentre tornavo a casa però ci pensai un po' sopra e raccontai tutto ai miei, che non ci diedero peso e mi dissero: "Non farci caso; è solo un'altra delle sue storie". Si diceva infatti che avessero formato un club fra amici e l'avessero chiamato "Ananias". Si riunivano di tanto in tanto e ciascuno raccontava la storia più grossa che s'era inventato dall'ultima volta. Per quel che mi ricordo, il club venne sciolto subito dopo che la storia dell'aeromane e della vacca venne fuori. Credo proprio che li abbia battuti tutti, ed in ogni caso gli Hamilton s'acquistarono un posto nella storia della contea".

Clark informò della cosa la nipote di Hamilton, chiedendo il suo parere. La signora sembrò riluttante a smentire la divertente "leggenda della famiglia", ma disse: "Se lei dice che è così, deve essere così".

Alcuni ufologi hanno obiettato che queste dichiarazioni sono a loro volta un falso, ma Jerome non lo crede. "E' straordinariamente improbabile che la signora Shaw ed il signor Hudson abbia-

no mentito entrambi. A che scopo poi? Un corrispondente mi ha suggerito che l'hanno fatto per "salvare il buon nome degli Hamilton". Ma, come dice mia moglie, non sarebbe un po' tardi farlo adesso? E se poi fosse proprio così, perché a farlo dovrebbero essere il defunto Hudson e la Shaw, e non un discendente diretto come la signora Hamilton-Linde, la quale vorrebbe invece credere all'"incidente"? Per di più, che razza di tentativo di salvare il buon nome della famiglia sarebbe, se si ammette che il patriarca era un bugiardo?"

Inoltre ci sono troppe persone, troppo lontane fra loro nel tempo e nello spazio, coinvolte in questo "smascheramento". La verità è che molte persone sono arrivate ad avere un'incrollabile fede in quella che è stata definita "la storia più convincente di tutta la saga ufologica", e si rifiutano di credere che possa essere un falso.

Un esempio di questa tendenza è la reazione di John Keel: "Adesso siamo proprio nei guai. E' sempre stata la storia migliore di tutte quelle del 1897. Se crolla questa, possiamo seriamente mettere in dubbio tutti gli altri casi".

A mio parere, questo dovrebbe essere fatto comunque, se veramente vogliamo approssimarci alla verità.

Basta guardare Hamilton: con credenziali impeccabili, amante degli scherzi, e capace di convincere 10 dei suoi amici, tutte persone di grande responsabilità di Le Roy e Yates Center, a firmare una dichiarazione sulla sua veridicità.

Possiamo ben dire che lo scherzo è stato fatto a tutti noi che ci abbiamo creduto.

Ed è stato uno scherzo riuscito.



Disegno di C.B.Vos da UFO Information n.1, 1973

NOTE

1. Jacques Vallée, "Anatomy of a Phenomenon", 1965.
2. Per un "curriculum" completo delle referenze e delle credenziali di Hamilton vedere Gordon Lore & Harold Denault, "Mysteries of the Skies".
3. Fra le innumerevoli fonti ufologiche da notare Frank Edwards "Flying Saucers - Serious Business" (tr.it. "La verità sui dischi volanti"); Lucius Parish su Fate, aprile 66; Jerome Clark su FSR vol.12 n.4, agosto 66; J.Clark su Fate, febbraio 77.

FSR

brightly lighted within and everything was plainly visible - it was occupied by six of the strangest beings I ever saw. They were jabbering together but we could not understand a word they said.

"Every part of the vessel which was not transparent was of a dark reddish color. We stood mute with wonder and fright. Then some noise attracted their attention and they turned a light directly upon us. Immediately on catching sight of us they turned on some unknown power, and a great turbine wheel, about thirty feet in diameter, which was revolving slowly below the craft, began to buzz and the vessel rose lightly as a bird. When about three hundred feet above us it seemed to pause and to hover directly above a two-year-old heifer, which was bawling and jumping, apparently fast in the fence. Going to her, we found a cable about half an inch in thickness made of some red material fastened in a slip knot around her neck and going up to the vessel from the heifer tangled in the wire fence. We tried to get it off but could not, so we cut the wire loose to see the ship, heifer and all, rise slowly, disappearing in the northwest.

"We went home but I was so frightened I could not sleep. Rising early Tuesday I started out on my horse, hoping to find some trace of my cow. This I failed to do, but coming back in the evening found that Link Thomas, about three or four miles west of LeRoy, had found the hide, legs and head in his field that day. He, thinking that someone had butchered a stolen beast, had brought the hide to town for identification, but was greatly mystified in not being able to find any tracks in the soft ground. After identifying the hide by my brand, I went home. But every time I would drop to sleep I would see the cursed thing, with its big lights and hideous people. I don't know whether they are devils or angels, or what; but we all saw them, and my whole family saw the ship, and I don't want any more to do with them." Dated April 2, 1987

There follows the affidavit signed by 10 prominent citizens of the county as to Hamilton's veracity and that Hamilton had been a member of the House of Representatives.

What better eye-witness could any court ask? Farmers also are good judges of size and distance because of constant observation of fields, animals and wildlife.

The case is somewhat like the celebrated Snippy the horse's death in Colorado a few years back, and also a series of incidents near the author's hometown of Hartington, Neb., a few years ago. Farmers found dead cattle with strange mutilations, and also observed strange lights in the sky at night.

The mutilations were never solved. People thought weird cultists from Sioux City or Omaha killed the cattle, and the

lights were on helicopters, which have been used here for cattle rustling. But thinking back now, I'm not so sure.

The year 1897 continued active for sightings, every night in May bringing reports from somewhere. Near Aurora, Tex., one airship supposedly crashed. Recent investigations of fragments of metals found near the site brought forth nothing strange about the metal.

What and who were in our skies in 1897 is uncertain; what is certain is that it was the first "UFO flap" in American history.

1890s

(Continued from Page One)

watch. Observers on the hills nearby saw fins on the craft, estimated its length at 180 feet, its diameter at 50 feet and said red, white and green lights flashed on and off as the ship sped up.

Meanwhile, the most fantastic of all observations was occurring outside the little eastern Kansas town of LeRoy. LeRoy is 220 miles south of Villisca, Ia., and 240 miles southeast of Clay Center, Neb.

A prominent farmer, Alexander Hamilton, in a sworn statement co-signed by 10 prominent citizens, said:

"Last Monday night about 10:30 we were awakened by a noise among the cattle. I arose, thinking that perhaps my bulldog was performing his pranks, but upon going to the door saw to my utter astonishment that an airship was slowly descending upon my cow lot, about forty rods (660 feet) from the house.

"Calling my tenant, Gid Heslip, and my son Wall, we seized some axes and ran to the corral. Meanwhile the ship had been gently descending until it was not more than thirty feet above the ground, and we came within fifty yards of it.

"It consisted of a great cigar-shaped portion, possibly three hundred feet long, with a carriage underneath. The carriage was made of glass or some other transparent substance alternating with a narrow strip of some material. It was

The 1890s "Flap"

By Jerry Mathes

(Continued from the December, 1976 issue)

Then came sightings in Perry, Okla. and many cities in Texas, while other ships were seen in Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and West Virginia.

The night of April 16, for example Benton, Tex., citizens saw a cigar-shaped ship cross between them and the moon.

On April 19 at Sistersville, W. Va., bit past 9 p.m., a luminous red object shaped like an immense cigar approached from Ohio (to the northwest). When it flashed at least two extremely brilliant searchlights on the little town, the sawmill whistle brought everyone out to

(See 1890s - page Five)

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(H)

Saucer Reader. The final two chapters deal with the famous (?) Capt. Peter Killian sighting, Feb. 24, 1959 (14 years ago). He was told it was a tanker re-fueling operation. He claimed the three objects he saw over Ohio were 3 TIMES THE SIZE OF ANY TANKER OR BOMBER.

Your article claiming the "saucers" are domestic products, piloted by midgets, IS AS ABSURD AS ALL THE OTHER "SECRET WEAPON" EXPLANATIONS. Argosy magazine showed what I consider extremely bad taste when they ran a similar article last summer while our boys were on the moon.

The author's listing of patent numbers means nothing. We have a 15 year old lad here in town who built his own laser this winter, with \$75 worth of equipment. All these TV movies are preceded by a long list of names also, in case an Oscar is mentioned. I saw a "toy flying saucer" on the Johnny Carson show, that just barely cleared the floor with an adult riding it.

I remember Henry J. Taylor on the radio, reassuring the God-fearin' people they were built in Maryland, No sane man "swallowed" it then; even less so the past two decades. How many midgets would have to be employed to account for the MILLIONS of sightings, over a MILLENIUM of time?

WE HAVE NO TROUBLE

"CRAMMING" THREE MEN IN OUR SPACE CAPSULES.

A bright light was seen high in the sky on the eve of my last birthday, over the Ohio River. TV weather men attributed it to the setting sun (7:30 P.M.) on two layers of clouds—seen over a 4 state area? Another miniature sun was seen on the Louisville to Chicago flight, a few nights later. (Another "interstate meteor"?)

That elderly lady's "flying cucumber" report in FATE, isn't too far removed in time and space from my own father's sighting at the turn of the century. He was watching his mother hang out a wash, when this little frame-work contraption, resembling a garage that hasn't been sided yet, WITH A LITTLE GUY Huddled in one corner at the controls, come gliding silently over the old homeplace.

The surviving witnesses of the '97' flap must all have vivid memories of those unforgettable days. The sense of "awe and wonder" was still strong in men, then. It's hard to excite anyone with something worthwhile, anymore.

Reese Mikel
P.O. 92
Alexandria, Ind.

Dear Mr. Palmer:

On the night of the moon launch, April 16, 1972, there occurred a particular phenomenon which might interest you or your readers. The

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Ne fa fede la seguente dichiarazione sotto giuramento rilasciata davanti a un notaio il 21 aprile 1897:

"Hamilton risiede da molto tempo nel Kansas ed è conosciuto dappertutto nelle contee di Woodson, Allen, Coffery e Anderson. Egli è stato membro della Camera dei Rappresentanti. Ha giurato sull'onore che la sua storia è vera.

"Siccome vi sono, vi sono stati e vi saranno sempre degli scettici e degli increduli per mettere in dubbio la verità di tutto ciò che rasenta l'inverosimile, e sapendo che ci saranno ignoranti e sospettosi che dubiteranno della veridicità della suddetta dichiarazione noi sottoscritti facciamo qui appresso la dichiarazione sotto giuramento:

"Che noi conosciamo Alessandro Hamilton da uno a trenta anni e che per quanto riguarda la verità e la veridicità noi non abbiamo mai inteso mettere in dubbio la sua parola e che noi siamo veramente convinti che la sua dichiarazione è vera ed esatta, firmato: E. W. Wharton, ispettore dei petroli dello Stato.

M. H. HUNT, sceriffo

W. LAUBER, sceriffo aggiunto

H. H. WINTER, banchiere

H. S. JOHNSON, farmacista

J. H. STITCHER, avvocato

Alexander STEWART, giudice di pace

F. W. BUTLER, droghista

James W. MARTIN, cancelliere

e H. C. ROLLINS, ricevitore postale (vedi on citata)

ATTERRAGGIO IN AMERICA IN UNA FATTORIA NEL 1897

1.896-97

Un ricco coltivatore di Le Roy (Kansas), Alessandro Hamilton, in una dichiarazione fatta sotto giuramento il 21 aprile 1897, racconta:

La sera di lunedì scorso, verso le 10,30, eravamo stati risvegliati dalle bestie che facevano rumore. Pensando che era, senza dubbio, il mio bulldog mi alzai, ma, aprendo la porta, io vidi, con mio grande sbalordimento, un vascello aereo discendere lentamente nel mio prato, a circa 200 metri dalla casa.

"Chiamai il mio fattore, Gid Keskip, e mio figlio Wall e, impugnando delle asce, corremmo verso il cortile. Nel frattempo il vascello era disceso dolcemente fino a una decina di metri dal suolo. Noi ci avvicinammo a meno di 50 metri.

"Esso era a forma di sigaro di cento metri di lunghezza circa, con un carrello al di sotto. Questo carrello era di vetro o di un'altra materia trasparente con alternate strette bande di materia opaca. Era brillantemente illuminato nell'interno e tutto era perfettamente visibile: era occupato da sei esseri, i più strani che io abbia mai visti. Parlavano fra loro, ma io non potetti capire una parola di ciò che essi dicevano.

"Tutte le parti del vascello che non erano trasparenti erano di colore rosso cupo. Restammo muti dallo stupore e dalla paura. Poi un rumore attirò la loro attenzione ed essi diressero un faro dritto su di noi. Appena ci videro, essi accesero non si sa quale fonte di energia ed una grande ruota di turbine, di circa 10 metri di diametro, che girava lentamente al di sopra dell'ordigno, si mise a rombare e il vascello si alzò lentamente come un uccello. Quando fu a un cento metri sopra di noi, sembrò fermarsi e restare sospeso proprio al di sopra di una giovenca di due anni che muggiva e saltava e che sembrava attaccata al recinto. Andammo verso di essa e notammo una fune, spessa circa un centimetro, di una materia rossa che faceva un cappio intorno al collo della bestia e aveva l'altra estremità legata al vascello. Noi tentammo di cacciar fuori la bestia dal nodo, ma, non riuscendovi, tagliammo il filo dal recinto e vedemmo il vascello e la giovenca elevarsi lentamente e scomparire verso nord-ovest.

"Rientrammo, ma io ero così spaventato che non potetti dormire. Il martedì mi alzai presto e mi recai a cavallo per tentare di ritrovare la mia bestia. Non trovai nulla ma, rientrando la sera, scoprii che Link Thomas, che abita a cinque o sei chilometri da Le Roy, aveva trovato lo stesso giorno, nel suo campo, la pelle, i piedi e la testa. Pensando che qualcuno avesse sgozzato una bestia rubata, egli aveva portato la pelle in città per farla identificare, ma era rimasto assai sbalordito di non trovare alcuna impronta sul suolo morbido. Avendo identificato la pelle grazie a un mio contrassegno, rientrai a casa mia. Ma, ogni volta che mi addormentavo, vedevo questa dannata cosa con le sue grosse luci e gli esseri orribili. Non sapevo se questi sono dei demoni o degli angeli, ma noi li abbiamo tutti visti e tutta la mia famiglia ha visto il vascello ed io non voglio più

"WATKERS"

1.897

CELESTES EN EL S.

Un interesante caso, que destaca entre los avistamientos de naves extraterrestres sobre Estados Unidos durante 1896-97, es el de un supuesto robo de ganado efectuado desde una nave suspendida sobre LeRoy, Kansas. Durante el incidente un prospero granjero, llamado Alejandro Hamilton, y otros dos testigos, presenciaron cómo un gigantesco Objeto Volador No Identificado descendía sobre su granja la noche del 19 de abril de 1897. Los ocupantes del vehículo lanzaron una vaquilla y luego la nave se elevó y alejó flotando con su presa. Al día siguiente se encontraron pedazos del animal en un campo cercano.

Esto fue ampliamente divulgado por revistas y periódicos especializados en el asunto de los platillos voladores. Durante mucho se supuso que era el único suceso de tal naturaleza en ese tiempo, pero actualmente ya se tiene noticia de un suceso similar.

UN INCIDENTE SIMILAR

A principios de 1978 quien esto escribe comenzó a coleccionar informes de naves extrañas como parte de un proyecto de investigación conjunta con el ufólogo canadiense Howard Gontovnick, de UFO Canadá, organización especializada en el fenómeno. Mientras revisaba un montón de viejos periódicos maltratados y sin encuadernar, descubrí un relato muy similar al episodio de LeRoy, Kansas. El artículo se encontraba en la edición del 20 de mayo de 1897 del *Minonk Dispatch*, un pequeño semanario del centro de Illinois.

El encabezado era "Nave Espacial que Roba un Novillo", y decía: "Un vagabundo que fue encarcelado la otra noche relató que una nave espacial robó un novillo de dos años en la granja de John Geisert, en Peoria. El vagabundo, que estaba pasando la noche con los Geisert dijo que el bramido del ganado los despertó. Cuando salieron vieron un gran objeto, con luces brillantes, suspendido sobre el corral de las vacas. Geisert y su hijo corrieron hacia él, gritando y hacha en mano.

"La nave se elevó llevándose un novillo atado al extremo de una cuerda. Al día siguiente Geisert

encontró la piel del animal como a diez millas al sur de su granja. El dice que la nave era como de 300 pies de largo*, y a bordo se encontraban tres hombres y mujeres y dos niños.

"Evidentemente había sido día de lavado a bordo de la nave pues las mujeres estaban recogiendo ropas de un tendedero. Uno de los hombres tenía un acordeón y estaba tocando".

Este artículo apareció en un periódico de poca circulación, el *Pekin Times* que se editaba en Pekin, Illinois, que ya no existe.

ENORMES COINCIDENCIAS

La información es menos detallada y más reducida que la del relato de LeRoy aparecido en el *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* el 21 de abril de 1897. (Dos días después apareció en el *Yates Center Farmer's Advocate*), pero los dos artículos coinciden en varios puntos importantes.

Los tres testigos del incidente de Peoria fueron despertados por "los bramidos del ganado"; de la misma forma, hubo "ruidos entre el ganado" como a las 10:30 de la noche que pusieron sobre aviso a los testigos, que también eran tres, en el episodio de LeRoy, Kansas.

Las descripciones de los vehículos aéreos son prácticamente idénticas. El relato de Illinois habla de "un objeto largo con luces brillantes... como de 100 metros de largo"; Alexander Hamilton testificó que la nave vista sobre su granja en Kansas estaba "brillantemente iluminada", con "una parte en forma de puro, posiblemente de 100 metros de largo", que llevaba una "canastilla" en la parte de abajo. Las dos naves llevaban pasajeros.

El suceso de Peoria terminó cuando "la nave se elevó llevándose a un novillo de dos años atado al extremo de una cuerda". En Kansas, "una vaquilla de tres años" fue levantada con un cable como de media pulgada de diámetro... amarrada con un nudo corredizo alrededor del cuello, e introducida dentro de la nave. Hamilton y los testigos vieron desaparecer la nave en el oscuro cielo de la noche.

Un conocido del señor Hamil-

*Unos cien metros.

ton recobró "piel, patas y cabeza" de la res robada la noche anterior, como a "tres millas al oeste de LeRoy". Los restos fueron localizados en un campo de tierra suelta en, el que no se apreciaron huellas o pisadas: De acuerdo al resumen del *Minonk Dispatch*, la "piel" del novillo robado apareció como a diez millas del condado de Peoria.

LA MUSICA DE LOS CIELOS

Incluso las reacciones de los observadores fueron similares. En ambos relatos las personas empuñaban hachas. Posiblemente éstas fueron las armas que encontraron más a mano al salir de la casa.

De la extraña música de acordeón que se menciona en el incidente del condado de Peoria no se tiene noticia en el relato de Kansas. Sin embargo, los lectores familiarizados con los avistamientos de 1890 saben que las melodías de los navegantes de las alturas son un aspecto misterioso, y muchas veces importante, dentro de las características de esas naves.

Finalmente, los relatos coinciden en que son el único caso conocido de robo de animales vivos desde objetos voladores. El relato del condado de Peoria fue descubierto por casualidad; tal vez otros relatos similares se encuentren escondidos entre montones de periódicos viejos esperando sólo ser descubiertos.

No se conoce la fecha exacta del incidente de Peoria. La noticia sugiere que probablemente sucedió en la primera mitad del mes de mayo, pocas semanas después del incidente de Kansas, como a 350 millas de distancia.

Con el paso de los años resulta extremadamente difícil declararse a favor o en contra de la validez de estos relatos, especialmente cuando sólo se cuenta con una publicación y sin ninguna otra clase de evidencia; testigos presenciales, relatos verbales —cualquier cosa— que refuerza la investigación. Los intentos para localizar a alguna persona del clan Geisert han sido infructuosos. Los Geisert, el vagabundo desconocido y el objeto volador, se han desvanecido en el tiempo.

Sólo nos queda un testimonio de prensa, amarillento, y su susurro de misterio.

1.896-97

MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIPS: COMMENTARY II

By Louis Winkler, Ph. D.*
(MUFON Consultant in Astronomy)

The commentary made by Don Berliner (No. 169, March 1982) regarding my article on the Mysterious Airships of 1896-7 is instructive and stimulating. Both of our write-ups appeared in the March issue. His comments provide an aviation history reference which is needed in this most complex UFO flap.

Although Berliner indicates the article was "thorough," this is not the case. As I mentioned, it is only a

*Research for this commentary was supported in part by the Fund for UFO Research

sampling of the mountain of data appearing in newspapers regarding balloons and airships. Much of these data concern accidents and deaths resulting from experiments, and are presently ignored both by ufologists and historians of aviation. From the dozens of articles I found in just the *New York Times* and *New York Tribune* over the period 1887-1897, I estimate the general data on balloons and airships are at least ten times more abundant than the data on the 1896-7 airship sightings.

It is important to note that Berliner and I have different perspectives in

our discussions. While he is concerned with details of the technical and logistical aspects of the craft, I am only concerned with demonstrating that a number of craft were in the air for sustained periods and over many places during 1896-7 period. In this way I hope to show that some of the 1896-7 airship sightings were man-made, rather than conclusively established details of the complex early stages of aviation history in America.

It appears that Berliner chooses to disbelieve or ignore the vast majority
(Continued on next page)

Oregon, Continued

nocturnal lights several times near Gray Butte. Often a single very bright, whitish light with a reddish glow to it would appear toward or in front of the crest of the butte, hover, move up and down, and then travel straight up and angle off, streaking over the horizon. Sighting duration—approximately 5 to 10 minutes. Hawkins' brother checked with the Redmond, Oregon, air center several times to determine if aircraft activity was a source for the lights; however, no helicopters were reported operating in the area.

At this time, Hawkins also learned that other law enforcement officers had encounters with UFOs. During these sightings, the officers' automobile engines stalled, undergoing electromagnetic effects. Additionally, cattle mutilations were reported between 1974 and 1977 in Prineville, Madras, and Burns, Oregon. According to Hawkins, the brand inspector for the Jefferson County sheriff's department inspected several mutilated cattle found in isolated, inaccessible rural areas that could be entered only by horseback or on foot. The inspector believed that UFOs were involved.

Jack Hawkins and his brother also

witnessed a bright nocturnal light near Madras off Highway 26 during a year that Jack cannot remember. Reported initially by a deputy as a bright light hovering and maneuvering in a canyon, the Hawkins brothers raced to the scene and observed a light above the rimrock of the canyon, which they pursued off the highway. When they arrived where the light was last seen, the hair stood up on their necks and they were assailed by a "terrible smell" as if of something dead. Unsettled, they left the scene, giving up their pursuit of the light. The next day they checked the area for rotting carcasses but discovered none.

Comment

We often read that the sighting of a UFO is a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Yet the stories described above (although dated) indicate otherwise. At least with some law enforcement personnel, the sighting of several UFOs over a span of a few years during flap periods, or over one or two decades during an officer's career, can be a commonplace experience. Yet Jack Hawkins, like so many UFO witnesses, stated that I was the first person (outside his immediate family) that he ever confided in regard-

ing his UFO sightings. I emphasize that I never met Hawkins before. His September 1961 sighting was referred to me through a MUFON investigator who, although he knew Hawkins for several years, had never told him (Hawkins) of his interest in the UFO subject. Conversely, Hawkins never spoke to the MUFON investigator about his sightings.

How many law enforcement personnel hold secretly within themselves countless UFO experiences that they dare not relate to outside observers for fear of ridicule and the threat to their jobs? How much valuable scientific data has been lost during isolated UFO sightings or flap periods when several law enforcement personnel have witnessed UFOs, communicated the sightings to each other or to their superiors, and then have fallen silent through fear or pressure, thus preventing accurate documentation of the sighting and immediate followup? Could a central key to an explanation of the UFO phenomenon lie with officers who patrol potential UFO "hot spots" a night and who, because of their nearubiquitous presence in primary UFO flap locales, could serve as the most "ideal" witnesses to ongoing UFO activity?

Airships, Continued

of technical and logistical accounts of craft reported in newspapers. However, from my extensive use of newspapers in the field of seismic histories and the history of astronomy I choose to believe the vast majority of what I read. It is much more reasonable to believe that nearly all the newspapers in the country are reporting what the populous believes rather than stories conceived in the minds of newspaper employees.

An example of an airship which far exceeds what Berliner is ready to accept is found in the *New York Times* of December 2, 1897 with technical and logistical detail. The Atlantic and Pacific Navigation Company of San Francisco was organized to manufacture an airship basically like the one Hiram S. Maxim flew round-trip between San Francisco and Cleveland in three days during the summer of 1897. Maxim indicated he could achieve 100 m.p.h. with his 105 h.p. naptha engine without straining it. The airship consisted of a 90 ft long and 38 ft diameter cylinder with a 50 ft cone up front and a 40 ft cone in the rear. The ship weighed 5,000 lbs and could carry a 1-ton cargo. It was controlled up and down with a "tail like that of a bird" and from left to right by a rudder. A "big order of aluminum" had been placed with the Pittsburgh Reduction Company for the double-layered skin which would enclose hydrogen gas. The president, C. A. Smith, and secretary, M. A. Terry, of the company noted that many people observed the ship in its cross-continent voyage. Smith is also the officer of the company who in November of 1896 indicated an airship would soon be sent from San Francisco to the east coast (April 12, 1897 *New York Herald*).

The problem of navigation at night or even day doesn't seem as critical as Berliner suggests. The objective of these pioneers presumably would be just to stay aloft and cover as much ground as they could, rather than navigate from point to point. If they did navigate it could be done with compass and recognition of natural and man-made features. Errors in-

CRITIC'S CORNER

By Robert Wanderer

There are general theories. And there are specific theories. Each needs to be judged by its own standards.

A general theory takes in a large area of subject matter, like the theory that seeks to explain the broad experience of UFO close encounters and "missing time" by suggesting that these people are "abducted" onto a UFO and later returned.

A specific theory zeroes in on a particular aspect of a larger situation. Like Alvin Lawson's hypothesis that "missing time" people who are hypnotized and tell "abduction" stories may be reflecting primarily the memory of birth trauma rather than anything in the "objective reality."

Both kinds of theories are useful. General theories give us an overview that covers the entire sweep of a problem. Specific theories hone in on one point, and provide something that can be tested.

The "abduction" theory is based, almost entirely, on what people say they think they experienced—and what they say may be distorted by

hypnosis or by some unusual state of consciousness following the strangeness and shock of a UFO close encounter. As far as I know, there is no generally accepted physical evidence of any "abduction"—no one has brought back an artifact from the UFO they believe they were on, nor has there been a case where a "neutral" witness, not involved in the close encounter incident, happened to come on the scene while the subject was being taken onto the UFO, and who could testify about this later. The "abduction" theory depends on the numbers of verbal reports; there are no experiments to test this theory.

Lawson's specific theory, however, gives us something testable. He has conducted studies, including one of a group of people born by cesarean section who told "abduction" stories which lacked the tube/tunnel imagery which is characteristic of hypnotized subjects born in the conventional manner. He invites others to conduct

(Continued on page 18)

roduced at night could be corrected during the day with greatly improved visibility or even a landing if necessary. Because the duration of daylight in the summer is more than twice the duration of night, Maxim may have chosen summer for his voyage partly for this reason.

Examples of airships flights of appreciable length associated with the 1896-7 sightings briefly involve the following:

1. The pilot-inventor Wilson from New York who landed at Lake Charles, Beaumont, Uvalde, and Kountze during the period of April 19-23 (April 21, 25 *Houston Post*; April 24, 28 *Galveston Daily News*; April 26 *San Antonio Daily Express*; May 16 *Dallas Morning News*).

2. Airship Pegasus which dropped letters in the states of Kentucky, Ohio, and Wisconsin describing its construction and travel plans (April 14 *New York Herald*, April 15 *Milwaukee Sentinel*; April 25 *Cincin-*

nati *Commercial Tribune*).

3. Barnard's trips in Tennessee on May 6 of 15 miles in 1½ hours and on May 13 of 12 miles in ¾ hours, being described as achieved or exceeded by at least "fifty other contrivances" (May 7, 15 *New York Tribune*; May 11 *New York Times*).

Unfortunately I have provided little for a definitive solution to the mysterious airships of 1896-7. All I have shown is that there were numerous airships about, and therefore the 1896-7 sightings were probably in part due to nan-made objects. The impact of this is then simply that it is less likely that the 1896-7 sightings are something exceedingly interesting or important such as being extraterrestrial in origin. Perhaps Robert G. Neeley, who is conducting a systematic collection and analysis of airship accounts, state by state, will be able to provide a better explanation of the sightings. □

1.896-97

In Others' Words

By Lucius Farish

MUTILATIONS

The **NATIONAL ENQUIRER** for October 29 carries a report by Henry Gris, stating that a fleet of seven UFOs were observed over the city of Kiev, USSR on May 26, 1985. A Soviet jet fighter, dispatched on an intercept mission, suffered engine failure upon nearing the UFOs. The pilot ejected as the plane spiraled downward and crashed.

The October issue of **OMNI** reviews Betty Hill's story of her 1961 UFO abduction and subsequent UFO experiences in the Anit-Matter/UFO Update section of the magazine. **JOURNAL** editor Dennis Stacy contributes an article on the financial perils of UFO research in **OMNI's** November issue.

A fascinating-if-true story of a cattle-killing UFO can be found in the November issue of **FATE**. The report

alleges that a large disc-shaped UFO was seen at close range on a Missouri farm in August, 1896. When the UFO departed, three steers their bodies completely drained of blood, were found in a patch of burned grass. Several other such incidents are claimed to have occurred in the state at the same time although preliminary newspaper research has failed to substantiate this claim. The same issue of **FATE** also contains Part 2 of Hilary Evans' article on "balls of light."

Bob Girard of Arcturus Book Service has recently published a small booklet detailing his own thoughts on UFOs and the human race's place in the cosmic scheme of things (perhaps with an emphasis on "scheme"). Is "the entire human life cycle...subordinated to the needs of an unperceived macrospecies"? Is there some sort of

conspiracy to "keep us human," as Girard speculates? This is all quite interesting food for thought, even if nothing can be proven, pro or con. In the final chapter of his booklet, Girard makes some very telling points, reminding us of the insanities we take for granted in our "normal" lives. As he says, the "true human" strives to leave the herd and to experience life from a "cosmic perspective."

Agreement with all of Girard's premises is not necessary in order to enjoy reading **THE COSMIC SHEEPDOG**. It will give you something (else) to think about, at the least. Copies are available for \$5.95 (plus 85¢ postage & handling) from Arcturus Book Service - P.O. Box 2213, Scotia, NY 12302.

LETTERS

OPEN LETTER

Dear Jenny Randles:

I just finished reading your last exchange with Ian Ridpath in the September, 1985, issue of the MUFON UFO Journal, and I feel compelled to ask you to refrain from pursuing this matter any further.

There is no purpose in attempting to have a rational and logical discussion of issues with Mr. Ridpath, as his interest does not lie in finding the truth, but in creating as much controversy and confusion as possible. Like other pseudo-debunkers, he uses whatever information he can think of, banking on the ignorance of the public, which cannot distinguish between milliroentgens per hour and

milliroentgens, and finds nothing suspicious if Venus is in the sky after midnight. He operates by innuendo, changing even the dates of events ("clearly in error") to suit his purposes, ignoring the data that demonstrates the lack of substance of his ideas.

It is a waste of time to reply to his letters and to the specious arguments put forward in his papers, as this will only provide him with new material to harp on. Like all the other members of the CSICOP club, he will never answer a point directly but will labor around it to fire the argument; and under no circumstances will he admit to having been wrong, even if he has to fib a little — to put it nicely.

So, Jenny, I strongly suggest that you ignore his barbs and use your

valuable time for your UFO research. Mr. Ridpath and his fellow club members will get what is due them without any help, as has already happened in the cases of the "Mars connection" and the "flying fishing boat" of New Zealand fame. It is bound to happen to Mr. Ridpath also, unless he sees the light — which I doubt — and realizes that one does not investigate a UFO report by visiting the place years later to play tricks with a TV camera, by not talking to the witnesses and by ignoring all significant information.

Sincerely,
Dr. Willy Smith
CUFOS, UNICAT
Project

M D 85

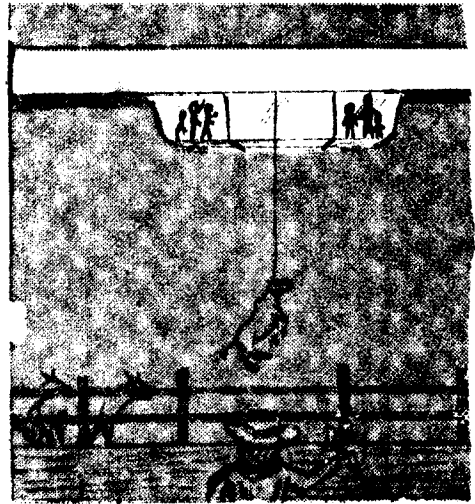
AIR SHIP TAKES COW

The Thrilling Experience of a Woodson Stockman

Hon. Alex Hamilton of Vernon, Kansas, came to town last Wednesday (April 21, 1897) and created quite an excitement by announcing that he had been having some experience with the much talked about airship. Mr. Hamilton is an old settler, was a member of the legislature in the early days and is known all over Woodson, Allen, Coffey and Anderson counties. He stakes his sacred honor upon the truthfulness of the story. Mr. Hamilton said:

"Last Monday night about half past ten o'clock we were awakened by a noise among the cattle. I arose, thinking perhaps my bull dog was performing some of his pranks but upon going to the door, saw to my utter amazement an airship slowly descending over my low lot and about 40 rods from the house. Calling Gid

Heslip, my tenant, and my son Wall, we seized some axes and ran to the corral. Meanwhile the ship had been gently descending until it was not more than 30 feet above the ground



came up to within 50 yards of
consisted of a great cigar-shaped
portion possibly 300 feet long with a
carriage underneath. The carriage was
made of panels of glass or other
transparent substance, alternating
with a narrow strip of some other
material. It was brilliantly lighted
within and everything was clearly
visible. There were three lights; one
like an immense search light and two
smaller, one red the other green. The
large one was susceptible of being
turned in any direction. It was
occupied by six of the strangest beings
I ever saw. There were two men, a
woman, and three children. They were
jabbering together but we could not
understand a syllable they said. Every
part of the vessel which was not
transparent was of a dark reddish
color. We stood mute in wonder and
fright, when some noise attracted
their attention and they turned their
light directly upon us. Immediately
upon catching sight of us, they turned
on some unknown power, and a great
turbine wheel about 30 feet in
diameter which was slowly revolving
below the craft, began to buzz,
sounding precisely like the cylinder of
a separator, and the vessel rose as
lightly as a bird. When about 300 ft.
above us it seemed to pause and hover
directly over a three year old heifer
which was bawling and jumping,
apparently fast in the fence. Going to
her we found a cable about half an

inch in thickness, made of the same
red material, fastened in a slip knot
about her neck, one end passing up to
the vessel and tangled in the wire. We
tried to get it off but could not, so we
cut the wire loose and stood in
amazement to see ship, cow and all
rise slowly and sail off, disappearing in
the northwest. We went home but I
was so frightened I could not sleep
but arose early Tuesday morning,
mounted my horse and started out
hoping to find some trace of my cow.
This I failed to do but coming back to
Leroy in the evening found that Lank
Thomas who lives in Coffey county
about three or four miles west of
Leroy had found the hide, legs and
head in his field that day. He, thinking
some one had butchered a stolen beast
and thrown the hide away, had
brought it to town for identification
but was greatly mystified in not being
able to find a track of any kind on the
soft ground. I went home last night
but every time I would drop to sleep I
would see the cursed thing with its big
lights and hideous people. I don't
know whether they are devils or
angels or what but we all saw them
and my whole family saw the ship and
I don't want any more to do with
them."

Mr. Hamilton looked as if he had
not entirely recovered from the shock
and every one who heard him was
convinced he was sincere in every
word.

ARE PSYCHIC PEOPLE MORE LIKELY TO SEE UFOs?

A case history, in the witness's own words with commentary

Janet Bord

1.896-97 ←



Our grateful thanks to Lucius Farish for introducing us to the story and claims of Charlie Jones. At our suggestion Mrs. Bord corresponded with Mr. Jones and obtained much additional information. Recently married, our contributor was well-known to readers as Miss Janet Gregory.

NOW that more and more UFO researchers are beginning to consider the possibility of a link between UFOs and a whole range of occult phenomena, it is interesting that deeper investigation of UFO witnesses quite often reveals that a witness has had more than one UFO sighting, and has also experienced what are generally termed psychic phenomena. It would appear that a certain "sensitivity" is in operation, and those who have it are likely to see all manner of strange things invisible to most human eyes.

One man who comes into this category is Charles Jones. He lives in a pleasant, rural area of Indiana, U.S.A., and has seen UFOs fairly frequently during the last twenty-four years. "My first observation of UFOs was early in 1947, which was a huge, dark orange-coloured sphere which flew around Indianapolis, Indiana, three times before it began to turn red and quickly sped off to the south-east. From then up into 1952 I watched several bluish-white UFO light streaks in the western sky flying south. I did not pay much attention then until sometime in 1964 . . . During 1966 and 1967, several UFOs flew by our house over our neighbour's field (to the east) to around 1,000 feet. At

the north end of our woods, they would turn west. The turns which I observed were of a high degree radius turn, never sudden 90 degree angle turns. Once in a while one would have trouble and zigzag some before proceeding on west."

During the 1960s, Charlie took some photographs of the lights he saw at night. The area was especially rich in sightings during that decade, with a flap lasting from the end of 1965 until 1969. Several different types of UFO were seen, including the frequently observed disc-shaped craft, one of which flew over Charlie's house just above tree-top height, on November 13, 1965.

UFO and humanoid sighting near Sheridan

It was only a month later that Charlie had his most spectacular sighting. He saw a UFO at close quarters, and a "man" sitting inside it. It was Saturday, December 11, 1965, shortly after 1.00 p.m. Charlie was driving home from Sheridan where he had been Christmas shopping, and was travelling south along the Lamong Road. The weather was overcast with a white cloud cover at the time, and it had rained before noon. "What caught my attention," he said, "was a small white light

(Continued from page 19)

pointed toward the earth. A similar object was observed twice over Cruz Alta, Brazil, in December of the same year. When it reappeared in July 1937, its "head" had become a ball of fire.

Then there was the great scare of 1857-58, when in the late dusk one evening a giant serpent hovered above a steamboat slowing for a landing along the Missouri River in Nebraska. It seemed to be breathing fire, say accounts, and it had "lighted streaks" along its sides. Sightings must have continued, for some years later a song passed into local folk tradition:

'Twas a dark night in Sixty-six

When we was layin' steel.

We seen a flyin' engine come
Without no wing or wheel

It came a-roarin' in the sky
With lights along the side . . .

And scales like a serpent's hide.

By the turn of the century Nebraskans were no longer confusing serpents and UFOs. In February 1897 "airships" started flying over the state and in the years ahead stories of a giant creature in Alkali Lake near Hay Springs, first told by Indians to the first white settlers in the area, were revived. One alleged observer said

that "its head was like an oil barrel, shiny black in the moonlight. Its flashing green eyes were spitting fire."

With incidents like those recounted above, we are moving into new and uncharted territory, where the line between "machines" and "animals" becomes blurred; so does the line that divides the various types of Fortean phenomena. The moral may be that research which concentrates on UFOs alone, ignoring the other mysteries of the physical world, is pointless. Perhaps what we need in the meantime is a report of a UFO dumping large, moving objects into the waters of Loch Ness!

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ANO 1972

MES MAY-JUN

MES MAY-JUN

1897

on Animals and Birds" crops up in the discussion. The "E.M. Effect" does not in fact worry them too badly, because their stock explanation is that the engine was not stopped by a UFO, but was stalled by a neurotic or psychotic driver who *imagined* that he was seeing a UFO. They have a point, which we can willingly grant them in a few cases at any rate. But they remain far less happy about the birds and animals, for here no such easy escape solution is at hand. The only safe position for our opponents is consequently to maintain resolutely that no such weird and abnormal behaviour by animal or bird can ever be proved to have occurred except where there is a good cast-iron explanation. Thus squawking chickens are always squawking because there is an eagle or a sparrowhawk overhead. Panicking sheep have been set in motion by that ubiquitous agency the common dog. Cattle are rushing about because maddened by bot-flies. And so on.

THE CATALOGUE—(i) B.C. TO 1946 A.D.

1. **Middle East** (*Reign of Alexander the Great*, 356-323 B.C.) A historian of the reign of Alexander the Great allegedly tells of two strange craft that dived repeatedly at his army, until the war elephants, the men, and all the horses panicked and refused to cross the river where the incident occurred . . . The historian describes the objects as "great shining silvery shields, spitting fire around the rims . . . things that came from the skies and returned to the skies."

Frank Edwards: *Stranger Than Science* (Pan Books, London), p. 198.

2. **Rutland, England** (September 15, 1749) Fiery object like a waterspout, whirling and roaring, frightened cattle and rustics.

H. T. Wilkins: *Flying Saucers On The Moon*, p. 207.

3. **Robertson County, Tennessee, U.S.A.** (between 1817 and 1821)

The farm of John Bell seemed to be haunted, with typical poltergeist phenomena occurring and "flying lights" being seen.

One of the many visitors who came to see the haunted house was General Andrew Jackson. When he was approaching in a horse-drawn wagon, the wheels of the wagon suddenly seemed to "freeze", and the straining horses were unable to move it until a "sharp metallic voice" from behind some bushes cried: "All right, General. Let the wagon move!", whereupon the wheels began to turn again.

FSR, November/December 1968, p. 16.

(See notes.) John Keel: *Is the "E.M." Effect a Myth?*

4. **Horton, Wiltshire, England** (June 1857) The *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* of July 2, 1857, reported farmer Wm. Brown rode towards a "whirl-puff". There was no rush of wind, and the conditions did not resemble a real whirlwind. Horse was terrified, staggered, and Mr. Brown almost lifted out of the saddle.

FSR, November/December 1966, p. 18.

5. **Swaffham, Norfolk, England** (January 15, 1869) Something seen in sky, and "mysterious explosions not of meteoric origin", stampeded hundreds of sheep.

H. T. Wilkins: *Flying Saucers On The Moon*, p. 311.

6a. **Bonham, Texas, U.S.A.** (1873) At Bonham, Texas, in 1873, workers in a cotton-field were terrorised by a shiny, silver object that came streaking down from the sky at them. It swung around, like a great silver serpent, said one witness, and dived at them again and again. A team of horses ran away, and the driver was thrown under the wheels of the wagon and killed.

6b. **Fort Riley, Kansas, U.S.A.** (1873) And on the same day, an hour or so after the incident at Bonham, the same or a similar thing swooped down from the skies at some Army troops on the cavalry parade ground at Fort Riley, Kansas, and terrorised the horses to such an extent that cavalry drill ended in tumult.

Both from Frank Edwards: *Stranger Than Science*, p. 198.

7. **Berkshire, England** (8.20 a.m., November 20, 1887) An unknown something in the sky, and mysterious explosions, stampede sheep over an area of 210 sq. miles.

H. T. Wilkins: *Flying Saucers On The Moon*, p. 311.

8. **Thames Valley, England** (night of November 13, 1888) Sheep stampeded over area of 22 square miles. Found panting in terror and crowded under hedges, on widely scattered farms next morning.

H. T. Wilkins: *Flying Saucers On The Moon*, p. 311.

9. **Chiltern Hills, England** (October 25, 1889) Over a region of about 40 square miles, sheep in hundreds burst simultaneously out of folds and barns. The panic was contagious, though the farms and folds were not adjoining, but miles apart.

H. T. Wilkins: *Flying Saucers On The Moon*, p. 311.

10. **Leroy, Kansas, U.S.A.** (April 19, 1897) The Hamilton household were aroused by a commotion among their cattle and household dogs. Going out, they found overhead the "Texan airship", which had lassoed one of their heifers.

Jacques Vallée: *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*, p. 16.

11. **Rockland, Texas, U.S.A.** (11.30 p.m., April 22, 1897) At Rockland, Mr. John M. Barclay, having retired for the night, heard his dog barking furiously, and also a whining noise. He went out to look, and saw a great machine stationary (the "Texas Airship") a few feet from the ground. A man from the machine, asked him for lubricating oil, cold chisels, and bluestone. Asked where they were from and whither going, the man replied: "From anywhere, but we will be in Greece the day after tomorrow."

D. B. Hanlon and J. Vallée: *Airships Over Texas*, FSR, January/February 1967, p. 23.

12. **Dallas, Texas, U.S.A.** (April 1897) The *Dallas News* of April 28, 1897, had a report of an anonymous witness (a lawyer) who was driving his horse and buggy at night when the "Airship" passed overhead. The horse snorted, reared, plunged madly, nearly overturned the buggy, and stood trembling like a leaf.

Donald B. Hanlon: *Texas Odyssey of 1897*, FSR, September/October 1966, p. 8.

13. **Hot Springs, Arkansas, U.S.A.** (night of May 6, 1897) Two law officers, Sumpter and McLemore, tried to approach the landed UFO on their horses, but the animals refused to go nearer than 100 yards or so.

Jerome Clark: *The Strange Case of the 1897 Airship*, FSR, July/August 1966, p. 15.

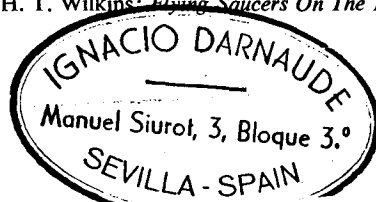
14. **Seal Rocks, Sutro Heights, San Francisco, U.S.A.** (November 22, 1897) The "airship" flew over the Cliff House and projected its powerful beam on Seal Rocks, causing the seals to dive frantically into the water.

Lore and Deneault: *Mysteries of the Skies*, p. 7.

15. **Thames Estuary Marshes, England** (1901) Another stampede of sheep. All fled westwards, away from the North Sea.

H. T. Wilkins: *Flying Saucers On The Moon*, p. 311.

FSR, J-F 1970



Encounters with
the MATAH KAGMI

YETIS

(H)

39

My Grandfather was born in upper California Country near the mountain of Shasta. This was in the year of 1853. He fought in the Modoc Indian War (1872-73) in defense of his homeland, however, it was the same old story-- defeat, and being sent to a reservation.

Grandfather did not like the white man's reservation however, and soon returned to the part of the country that he loved. It was by some very good luck and the help of a white friend in Yreka, California, he was able to buy some land near Tululake up in the mountains. He then built a cabin there, and lived there from then on until his death. He died in 1935. He fell asleep on a river bank and never awakened again.

Grandfather lived a long and eventful life, but not always a happy one.

He told me this story as a child, and I never tired of hearing it.

His first contact with the Sasquatch was one evening in the summer of 1897. He was walking along a deer trail near a lake just about dusk, when he saw up ahead something that looked like a tall bush. Upon coming a little closer he became aware of a strong odor, sort of musky. He then gave a close look at the bush, and suddenly realized that it was not a bush at all, for it was covered from head to foot with thick coarse hair, much like horsehair. He took a step closer, but the creature made a sound that sounded like "Nyyaaaah!" Grandfather now knew that this was one of the ones that he had heard the old ones tell about, a Sasquatch!

Although it was growing darker, Grandfather was able to see quite clearly two soft brown eyes through the hairy head part, then the creature moved slightly, and Grandfather made a motion of friendship and laid down the string of fish that he had been carrying. The creature evidently understood this, as it quickly snatched up the fish and struck out through the timber nearby. It stopped only for a moment and made a sound that Grandfather never forgot--a long, low "Aaagoooooooooummmm!"

Grandfather never told anyone outside the family this story, and he called them people. He referred to them as people called MATAH KAGMI. Now here is something that is most interesting, and doubtful that it could be by chance, and that is that the people in Tibet call the so-

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... much alike.

BELLY ACHES

(The following items were located by researcher Angelo Capparella III.)

Charlotte, N.C. Daily Observer, July 24, 1897.

(Philadelphia Record) "Authentic stories of the ejection of live lizards from the human stomach aren't of infrequent occurrence, but by his performance in that line on Friday last Morris Collins, of Angora, has certainly become a record-breaker. After an ill-duration Collins suddenly became on Friday and vomited no less in size from 3½ inches to ½ lizards Collins rapidly in now able to be about. That can be little doubt, as the several persons who were in the time, and as additional reptiles, which he has pre-bottle. Besides the 36 whole heads and tails of several however, are quite small.... when informed of the number the specimens in the bottle, the most remarkable that had ation. How the reptiles got mystery to Collins, who can presence upon the theory that of their spawn when quenching health has been on the mend covering lost weight rapidly.

Statesville, N.C.

(Testimony of James O. Lack-
" I for several years have in my stomach, and the longer treated by some as good phy-versed with a dozen or more, agree....It seemed that there at length one day I took about three-quarters of a box of Dr. Bachmann's Vermifuge confections. The next day I took a full box, then I was afterwards taking Dr. Dunlap's Liver Regulator and Blood Cleanser for some days after. I passed something of the spring lizard tribe, it being somewhat decayed, so its size around I could not get, but its length was exactly ten and three-quarters inches. Its color was near perfect white, and I am happy to say to you today that since then I have not had any more spells and have not even felt the symptoms but am not stout by any means and never will be again."

March 1972

Hanoi: Monster Removed From Man

Reuter

HONG KONG, March 17—North Vietnamese doctors have killed a ten-inch long "monster" with head, tongue, teeth and legs growing inside a 22-year-old man, the North Vietnamese news agency reported today.

"The monster was located between the liver, the right kidney and the right lung," the news agency said.

"It weighed 1.5 kilograms (3 pounds, 5 ounces) and measured 25 centimeters (10 inches) in length. It had a monstrous tongue capping the head which had a cyclopic eye and vestiges of the jaw with well-formed teeth," the agency said.

The agency did not identify the patient, nor did it say whether he was feeling any better.

ness of several weeks came sick at the stomach than 36 lizards, varying inch. After vomiting the proved in health, and is the case is genuine there lizards are vouched for by the house with Collins at proof the man exhibits the served in alcohol in a reptiles, there are the others, all of which, The attending physician, of lizards, and when shown pronounced the case to be ever come under his observ- into his stomach is a only account for their he must have swallowed some his thirst at a spring. His since Friday and he is re-

Landmark, May 27, 1886.

ney; Alexander County, N.C.) been suffering with a pain the worse. I have been sicians as we have and con- and it seemed as if none would was no relief for me...when

A. SUMMER - 72

"One of our aldermen from the fifth ward said to him it bore a resemblance to a big frog, all aglow with iridescent fire. A popular musician saw it but to him it bore the appearance of a translucent bee hive, lighted with electric lights. Now what on earth did these good people see?"

A couple of days after the object's initial appearance, "The Elgin Evening Dial" came out with perhaps the most objective story about the mystery and offered what appears to be a plausible explanation:

"Men who claim to have seen the 'air ship' with its colored lights that has appeared simultaneously over Illinois, Iowa and Nebraska were again numerous in Elgin last evening and who would laugh at the idea had an argument on his hands immediately.

"The light that was seen by men who believe it is an 'air ship' is described as having an indulating motion. It moved off toward the northeast vanishing by degrees. Red, white and green colored lights were displayed.

"Astronomers laugh at the idea and Professor George Hough of the Dearborn Obser-

vatory in Evanston has an outline of the course of the star Alpha Orionis. He said.

"This is the air ship. It has been roaming through its regular course in the firmament these 10,000,000 years and why it should have been settled upon these last three weeks and pointed out as the headlight of a mysterious aerial vessel is a thing hard to explain.

Alpha Orionis appears on the meridian at five o'clock and becomes visible at eight o'clock. At that time it resembles a strong white electric light. It first becomes noticeable in the central southwest portion of the sky. At an unusual rapid rate for a star it takes its course toward the northwest, finally disappearing in that corner. As the star begins to sink, the atmospheric conditions cause it to appear to be of a reddish hue on the under side and green on the upper portion when seen through a glass. The center of the body is white."

End of the mystery? Well, not quite. According to Don Tuttle, director of the Elgin Planetarium, Alpha Orionis

would not be a suitable explanation for those objects spotted in the eastern sky. He suggested that the Yerkes Observatory in Wisconsin could help find the answer to the riddle, but John Lester at the observatory reported that it would be hard to mistake a planet for an air ship on this particular date.

"There was nothing extraordinary on this date," Lester said after reviewing planet positions for April 16, 1897. He added that Venus, often mistaken for an unusual celestial object, was pretty well out of site. He did mention reports of an extremely bright meteor shower in the earlier part of the year.

Tuttle also said it could have been a special case of a large meteor coming very close to the earth "but there's no way of checking."

John W. Gunderson of 525 South Commonwealth Ave., Elgin, 17 years old at the time, cannot recall the specific commotion about the mysterious object. He was living on a farm just five miles south of Elgin in 1897.

But Gunderson, extremely alert for a man of 92, does re-

member a heavy amount of meteor activity during the late 1890's and says the objects could very well have been these meteors.

Another long time Elgin resident, Elmer Gylleck, was born in 1898 but speculates about the likely cause of all the strange sightings.

Gylleck says many youths used to launch paper balloons filled with hot air by a small torch.

"The hot air would fill the balloon and lift it high in the sky," Gylleck explained. "They were especially popular around the Fourth of July, but they were very dangerous to play with and the farmers didn't like them."

He said from a distance people could not identify these floating balloons and they were easily mistaken for strange floating objects.

Stars, air ships, hot air balloons or meteors? Nobody will ever know what Elgin residents saw during those April nights of 1897. But it sure gave the people plenty to talk about those days.

Wilkesboro, N.C. Chronicle, October 13, 1897

STOLE A STONE WALL

Two of the most unique cases of thieving on record are being investigated in Haverhill, Mass. One is the stealing of 15,000 live fish and the other is the theft of a big stone wall surrounding the cemetery of the Hebrew Burial Assoc. This is the first instance ever chronicled of the larceny of a stone wall from a graveyard. Last fall Charles Goodrich constructed an artificial lake on his estate, and stocked it with "shiners" which he intended to sell this winter. Yesterday he had a sale and went in search of the fish but found that they had all gone. The lake was still there, and as there is no outlet there was only one explanation of the mystery.

The Hebrew Burial Association purchased twenty acres of land near the Whittier homestead two years ago. It inclosed the lot with a stone wall. The wall has taken wings just as mysteriously as did the fish in the artificial lake. The members of the board, however, deny that they touched the stones at all, and say that they got their stone from a lot of land which they purchased. The stolen wall was about a half mile long. It is estimated there were nearly 1000 cords of stone in the wall.-- New York Press.

LETTERS

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U.S.O.S

Dear Editor,

My attention has recently been drawn to the UFO report made by Betty Cash and Vickie Landrum (after an alleged incident near Huffman, Texas, on 1980 Dec. 29). My source of information is John Schuessler's article "Blind terror in Texas" in *The Unexplained* 9(107) 2121-25, (1982).

Looking for an astronomical explanation I noticed that the given time (9 p.m.) could not be correct; the witnesses reported seeing the Moon, but the Moon did not rise until just after 1 a.m. Nor is it likely that, after dining out, they were returning home as early as 9 p.m. A more likely time is near midnight.

Just after midnight Canopus, the second brightest star in the whole sky (magnitude -0.71), lay at only 7° altitude directly south (180°). Highway FM 1485 runs in a dead straight line almost due south for 4 miles on a slight downward gradient (1 in 621 on average). With forest on either side of the road, this would have given the travelers a head-on view of Canopus if they were on that road at the time Canopus was lined up with it.

At that low altitude, the light from Canopus would have been both refracted (into spectral colors) and distorted (with streamers to the ground). The description given is consistent with other accounts of stars seen at low altitude. The conclusion must be that Cash and Landrum, not knowing that they were looking at a star, concluded that it was a UFO, ideas about which influenced their perception. Their conclusions that the car became hot and that they suffered burns must be the result of hysteria.

One would have liked to know how much alcohol they had consumed and what UFO lore they had already absorbed. One would also have liked to know whether or not the road surface (where they imagined the UFO to be) was affected by heat. I predict that no

such damage will have been found.

Although it is alleged that the object later moved "away over the tree tops" it must be concluded that this later object was not Canopus, which would have disappeared behind the forest. It is not clear from Schuessler's article exactly where subsequent objects were seen, but Jupiter (at magnitude -1.8) later rose in the west (accompanied by Saturn in close conjunction). The witnesses may have thought that Jupiter was the same UFO.

Yours faithfully
Steuart Campbell
Scotland

TO ALL OF THE MUFON GROUP,

Just a note to thank all of you for your very hard and time-consuming work that you have done for Vickie, Colby (Landrum) and myself. Without each of you, I really don't know what we would have done.

Please accept my apologies for such people that you have to listen to such as Steuart Campbell. People like that are to be pitied. He said he even doubted our credibility — well I doubt his mentality. All I can say is that it is such a shame it was us. It should have been him and then we would see if he would have said it was a star. Just one day of what we have suffered would have been too much for him — not even speaking of the years.

May God bless each and everyone of you for your great work.

Betty Cash
Alabama

Dear Editor,

Thought you might be interested in this passage I came across in Mary Kingsley's *Travels in West Africa* (London, Virago Press, 1982, from a turn-of-the-century original edition), p. 254. Ms. Kingsley was on an 1895 exploration at Lake Ncovi between the Ogowe and Rembwe rivers, then in the

region of the Niger Protectorate and Gabon, when she went out at night alone to bathe and canoe on the lake waters. Then:

"...I saw a strange thing happen. Down through the forest on the lake bank opposite came a violet ball the size of a small orange. When it reached the sand beach it hovered along it to and fro close to the ground. In a few minutes another ball of similarly colored light came towards it from behind one of the islets, and the two waver to and fro over the beach, sometimes circling round each other. I made off toward them in the canoe, thinking — as I still do — they were some brand new kind of luminous insect. When I got onto their beach one of them went off into the bushes and the other away over the water. I followed in the canoe, for the water here is very deep and, when I almost thought I had got it, it went down into the water and I could see it glowing as it sunk until it vanished in the depths."

Later, on asking the natives in this very remote region, they explain it as an "Aku" — a devil. There is no further explanation or discussion of the incident.

I'd tend to dismiss it as an insect too, except for its underwater dive. Ms. Kingsley is an eminently practical, matter-of-fact, not in the least fanciful observer and a highly intelligent and perceptive travel writer. This incident recalls other "tiny UFO" oddities of the sort reported by Fort and others.

One more point: the use of the word "aku" in West Africa — there's the same correspondence noted in other vocabulary to similar terminology in Polynesia (and elsewhere???) . One might speculate about possible widespread dissemination of the same or similar names for spirits in prehistory. But that's really getting into deep waters!

-Robert Coltman
S. Chelmsford, MA

M, JN-PC

of a heavy artillery salute, and was heard for twenty miles. The cylindrical shaped ball of fire was forging along in a south-westerly direction when first discovered. The hissing sound of the fire could be heard for miles, and the smoke gave the meteor the appearance of a burning balloon.

When the meteor exploded the pieces flew in all directions, like a volcanic upheaval, and solid walls were pierced by the fragments. David Letsure was knocked down by the force of the air caused by the rapidity with which the body passed before it broke. The blow rendered him unconscious. One horse had its head crushed and nearly torn from the trunk by a fragment of the meteor, and another horse in the next stall was discovered stone deaf.

The coming of the meteor was heralded by a rumbling noise, followed in an instant by the hissing sound, and immediately the ball of fire, spitting and smoking, burst into full view, and before the people had time to collect their senses, the explosion occurred.

New York Times, March 11, 1897.

1. MAY-74

Remarkable Atmospheric Manifestation in the South of Russia.

The superstitious peasants of the Ukraine were lately terribly alarmed by an unusual atmospheric phenomena which appeared two hours before sunrise in a village called Loomlino, situated near the river Don. Many of those who were awake at the early hour stated that the "apparition" was of a brilliant red color, and assumed the shape of a crescent. It only lasted a few minutes and gradually faded away into a light blue color. Many of those who witnessed this remarkable appearance in the heavens state that it was accompanied by a loud rumbling similar to thunder. Others, who have more imagination, aver that the red crescent resembled a large dragon in its shape, and that it is a sure portent of a coming war or a great plague.

"Miscellany," Eclectic Magazine, March 1890, pp. 431-32.

1. MAY-74

Atmospheric Phenomenon.

Oshkosh, Wisc. March 19th. A most remarkable atmospheric phenomenon occurred here at 3 P.M. The day was light, though cloudy, when suddenly darkness commenced settling down, and in five minutes it was as dark as midnight. General consternation prevailed, people on the streets rushed to and fro, teams dashed along, and women and

children ran into cellars, all business operations ceased until lights could be lighted. No breath of air was stirring on the surface of the earth. The darkness lasted from 8 to 10 minutes, when it passed off, seemingly from west to east, and brightness followed. News from cities to the west say the same phenomenon was observed there in advance of its appearance here, showing that the wave of darkness passed from west to east. Nothing could be seen to indicate any air currents overhead. It seemed to be a wave of total darkness passing along without wind.

PAGE 34

from: Daily Republican, La Crosse, Wisc., March 20, 1886.

On Monday, September 24, about 9 P.M., a remarkable phenomenon occurred at Karingon, in the province of Bohus, Sweden. During a perfect calm a violent whirlwind suddenly arose from the south-east, carrying with it a quantity of sand, earth, and straw, when suddenly a bright light lit up every object and made the night as clear as day. This was caused by a magnificent meteor, egg-shaped in form, which appeared in the zenith and which at first seemed to consist of myriads of large specks, gradually changing into a star shining with a blinding lustre, and which burst, with all the colors of the rainbow, in the north-west, four to five metres above the horizon. When the meteor had disappeared the wind suddenly fell, and it was again perfectly calm. The phenomenon lasted about sixty seconds. The wind had throughout the day been south and very slight.

from: Nature, Nov. 1, 1893, vol. 29, p. 15.

A Remarkable Meteor.

A remarkable meteor was seen in Western Australia on Feb. 1 this year. The following account has been forwarded to me by Mr. S. Worsley Clifton, Collector of Customs at Freemantle:

"A small black cloud on a clear day appeared in the east, travelling not very swiftly towards the north-west, which burst into a ball of fire with an apparent disk the size of the full moon, blood-red in colour; it left a train of black or dark-coloured vapour across the heavens which was visible for three-quarters of an hour. No sound was heard, sky perfectly clear, and thermometer 100° F in the shade."

Observatory, Melbourne, April 16
Robt. J. Ellery

from: Nature, June 5, 1879, Vol. 20, p. 121.

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of a heavy artillery salute, and was heard for twenty miles. The cylindrical shaped ball of fire was forging along in a south-westerly direction when first discovered. The hissing sound of the fire could be heard for miles, and the smoke gave the meteor the appearance of a burning balloon.

When the meteor exploded the pieces flew in all directions, like a volcanic upheaval and solid walls were pierced by the fragmen David Letsure was knocked down by the force of the air caused by the rapidity with which the body passed before it broke. The blow rendered him unconscious. One horse had its head crushed and nearly torn from the trunk by a fragment of the meteor, and another horse in the next stall was discovered stone deaf.

The coming of the meteor was heralded by a rumbling noise, followed in an instant by the hissing sound, and immediately the ball of fire, spitting and smoking, burst into full view, and before the people had time to collect their ~~senses~~, the explosion occurred.

New York Times, March 11, 1897. 1. MAY. 1

for an unscheduled explosion. The view of the intelligence agencies in the United States was that either Pakistan or South Africa had exploded a test weapon, but owing to the location of the explosion South Africa was blamed. News of the South African flash did not reach the public until late October, but the United States was unable to produce any substantial evidence of an atomic explosion when the South African government denied having tested such a device.^{42 43}

On October 30th, 1979, the South African Embassy in Ottawa was furnished with information indicating other electrical phenomena, such as that at Lance Cove, had been similarly registered by Vela satellites. Superbolts of lightning had been detected on 17 occasions from January 21st, 1972, up to April 13th, 1975.⁴⁴ Two days later, the New York Times also suggested that "superbolts" might have been responsible. The leading proponent of the "superbolt hypothesis" was Dr. Gordon J. MacDonald of the MITRE Corporation. He suggested that an explosion heard over Long Island, New York, on October 10th was the result of a superbolt. The weather conditions near South Africa were "not very different" from those associated with the destructive superbolt at Lance Cove, according to Dr. MacDonald; but he offered no particulars as to what conditions were conducive to the generation of superbolts.⁴⁵

The Ministry of Transport may not have taken note of the discussion by scientists in the United States concerning superbolts, for on October 31st and November 1st of 1979, Neil Standen was in Filton, England, to discuss the measurement of sonic booms produced by the Concorde. British Airways, Air France, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, Transport Canada, and other agencies were concerned with reducing the sonic booms experienced in New England and Nova Scotia. The British and French representatives were puzzled by the number of "startle complaints" in North America when similar conditions in Cornwall, England, elicited very few complaints.⁴⁶ Earlier, Standen had announced in January 1979 that 77% of the booms reported by way of a "toll-free boom line" in Nova Scotia started in October 1978; but in September 1978 Standen had already announced that the source of the mystery booms was the Concorde.⁴⁷⁻⁴⁸ Even

though the study was publicly said to seek the identity of the mystery booms, its true purpose was to keep track of where sonic booms from the Concorde were still disturbing Nova Scotia communities.

The Ministry of Transport received more than telephone calls from Nova Scotia residents and radar tracks of Concorde from NORAD. Only the Halifax office of Emergency Planning Canada retained a letter to the editor in the St. John Telegraph-Journal of 1 June 1978.^{50 51} Once before, on 3 December 1973, Truro, Nova Scotia was shaken by a "loud noise" which was first thought to have been a boiler explosion. Telegraphic enquiries failed to locate its source, but revealed that it had been heard in many surrounding communities. The event was considered to be an earthquake although the noise came from above.⁵² In the Bay of Fundy area, "remarkable sounds, like gun reports" were recorded by naturalist W.F. Ganong and Samuel W. Kain at the turn of the century. Their mysterious origin was a subject of speculation in Scientific American and the Monthly Weather Review (U.S.).⁵³⁻⁵⁵ Kain's record of earthquakes in New Brunswick contain a number of claims of cannonading sounds preceding earthquakes including those of 14 February 1897 and 28 February 1904.^{56 57} Other newspaper reports provided to Standen included more current booms over the skies of Montreal and Mississauga. On August 2nd, 1952, a blast shattered windows in Montreal setting off fears of an earthquake. Although blame was directed towards a sonic boom, one woman reported seeing a "ball of fire" coming down out of the sky.^{58 59} On August 8th, 1974, the switchboards of the Peel and the Halton Regional Police were swamped with calls about a loud explosion at 5 a.m., but no cause for the blast could be found. One man claimed to have seen "a white fluorescent, oval-shaped disc" speeding across the sky at the same time.^{60 61} Whether the mystery booms were the result of earthquakes, exploding meteors, or UFOs —or if they happened away from the Atlantic near Cornwall— all data involving aerial detonations where Concorde was not flying were kept out of the Ministry of Transport study.

The most puzzling aspect of the Lance Cove phenomena was the electrical disturbance and flash of light, but twice in the next few

1, J-Feb 84 DE → "UFOCATS = SONIC BOOMS"



UNA CIUDAD RETRATADA EN EL CIELO

Como dijimos en el número anterior, los "espejismos celestes" tal vez fueron los misterios espaciales más impresionantes que documentó para la posteridad el inefable Charles Fort. Luego de recopilar cientos de casos de este tipo en varias partes del mundo, Fort especuló que podría tratarse de visiones (hoy diríamos "avistamientos") de "ciudades" o "islas" (hoy diríamos "colonias espaciales") que se desplazan a través del espacio sideral, y que algunas veces pasan muy cerca de la Tierra, por lo que pueden ser observadas por nosotros.

La explicación de Fort pecaría de ingenua si no estuviera apoyada por la casuística con que siempre acompaña sus especulaciones. Respecto al rigor con que documentaba e investigaba sus casos, basta como ejemplo el pasaje de Nuevos Mundos (New Lands) que hemos seleccionado para este número, y que se refiere al avistamiento y a la fotografía de una "ciudad suspendida en el cielo", en 1908.

"En *English Mechanic* del 10 de septiembre de 1897, es citado un corresponsal de *Weekly Times and Echo*. Apenas acababa de llegar de Yukón En los primeros días de junio de 1897, vio una ciudad retratada en el cielo de Alaska. Nadie de nosotros podía saber ni remotamente en qué parte del mundo podría estar esa ciudad. Algunos creyeron que era Toronto, otros Montreal, y alguien sugirió que se trataba de Pekín. Pero aunque esa ciudad exista o no en algún mundo desconocido al otro lado del Polo Norte, el hecho es que este espejismo maravilloso aparece de tiempo en tiempo cada año, y no somos los únicos que hemos visto este espectáculo. Por ello, evidentemente debe ser un reflejo de un pueblo construido por la mano del hombre'. Según este corresponsal, el espejismo no se parecía a ninguna de las ciudades mencionadas, sino que era 'una inmensa ciudad del pasado'.

"En el *New York Times*, del 17 de febrero de 1901, se afirma que los nativos de Alaska relataban que

ocasionalmente se aparecía una ciudad suspendida en el cielo, y que un explorador, llamado Willoughby, que había oído los relatos, investigó y vio el espectáculo en el año de 1887. Se dice que, después de intentar fotografiarlo varias veces, Willoughby finalmente mostró una toma de una supuesta ciudad aérea. En su obra *Alaska* (pág. 140) Miner Bruce dice que Willoughby, uno de los primeros exploradores de Alaska, y quien le dio su nombre a la Isla Willoughby, le habló de este fenómeno, y en los primeros días de 1899, acompañó a Willoughby al lugar en que afirmaba que se repetía el espejismo. Parece que no lo vio, pero cita a un miembro de la expedición del Duc d'Abruzzi al Monte San Elías, realizada en el verano de 1897; el señor C. W. Thornton, de Seattle, que vio el espectáculo y escribió: 'No se necesitaba hacer un esfuerzo de imaginación para comparar esto con una ciudad, pero era algo tan claro que se requería tener mucha fe para convencerse de que no era una ciudad real'. Bruce publicó una reproducción de la fotografía que tomó Willoughby, y dice que la ciudad se identificó como Bristol, Inglaterra. Esta reproducción es tan clara y tan diferente a un espejismo

(muestra detalladamente árboles y muchos edificios) que se puede creer que el original haya sido la fotografía de una gran ciudad terrestre, quizá Bristol, Inglaterra.

"En el capítulo décimo de su libro, *Maravillas de Alaska*, Alexander Badlam ha tratado de explicar el asunto. Para ello publicó una reproducción de la fotografía tomada por Willoughby, que es la misma de Bruce, excepto porque todos los edificios están invertidos, o en la posición de un negativo. Badlam no quería acusar de fraude a Willoughby: creía que algún bromista desconocido le había venido una placa fotográfica a Willoughby, que en parte representaba a la ciudad de Bristol. Creo que algo así ocurrió, y esta fotografía, muy involucrada en los relatos de los espejismos repetidos, no tiene relación con éstos. Badlam muestra otra fotografía. Cuenta que dos hombres, cerca del Glaciar Muir, en una cacerola con mercurio vieron el reflejo de una ciudad desconocida, y creyeron que se encontraba en el fondo del mar cerca del glaciar, que se reflejaba en el cielo y que el reflejo regresaba y se reproducía de nuevo en el mercurio. Esto es muy complejo. Un fotógrafo llamado Taber

Continúa en la pág. 49



"La primera identificación de la fotografía de Willoughby como representación de una parte de la ciudad de Bristol, aparece en el *New York Times* del 20 de octubre de 1889. Me parece que esta fotografía fue para engañar a alguien.

Pero no era similar al panorama frecuentemente contemplado en el cielo de Alaska, según las descripciones. En el *New York Times* del 31 de octubre de 1889, el señor L. B. French, de Chicago, hace un relato de esta aparición espectral, como él la vio, cerca del Monte Fairweather: 'Pudimos ver claramente las casas, las calles y los árboles. Aquí y allí se levantaban altos capiteles sobre grandes edificios, semejantes a mezquitas o catedrales antiguas. . . No parecía una ciudad moderna, sino una antigua ciudad europea'.

"Cada año, entre el 21 de junio y el 10 de julio, una 'ciudad fantasma' aparece en el cielo, sobre un glaciar en Alaska; sus edificios parecen ser los de la ciudad de Bristol, Inglaterra; por ello se supuso que era un 'espejismo' de Bristol. Se dice que durante generaciones los nativos de Alaska han conocido estas representaciones repetidas y que, en mayo de 1901, una expedición científica partió de San Francisco y fue a investigar. Se dice también que, excepto por ligeros cambios, año tras año el panorama es siempre el mismo. Jour. Roy. Met. Soc. 27-158.

"Varios científicos salieron de Victoria, B. C., al Monte Fairweather, en Alaska, a estudiar un espejismo repetido de una ciudad en el cielo, que fue descubierto por el Duc d'Abruzzi, quien lo vio y lo dibujó. *La Nature*, 1901-1-303".

Viene de la pág. 14

APOYO DE...

me tomó muchos años convencer a las personas del CNES para que le ~~temo~~ran en cuenta, por eso me ~~temo~~ que no podemos esperar ver los resultados el día de mañana".

LOS CIENTIFICOS:
LA MEJOR CARTA
DE PRESENTACION

Jacques Vallée expresó su opinión en los siguientes términos: "Pienso que la reunión fue muy

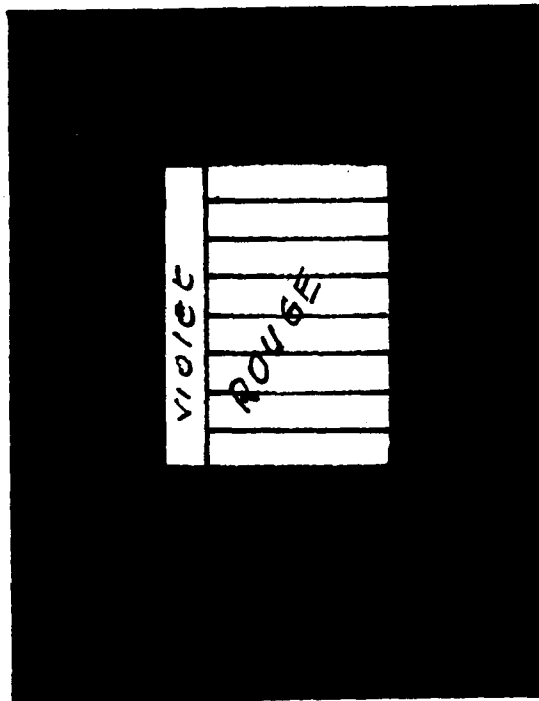
Un curieux Phénomène

Consultant une ancienne revue des Sciences et de leurs applications : «COSMOS - LES MONDES», j'ai eu la surprise de découvrir dans le n° 712 du 17 juillet 1898, une curieuse observation, dont je vous donne le texte, ci-dessous, ainsi qu'une reproduction que j'ai faite du dessin qui l'accompagnait.

CURIEUX METEORE

Le 4 septembre 1897 au soir, sortant de chez moi à 8 h 35 (20 h 35 sans doute) je découvrais entre la Grande Ourse et la Petite Ourse, une étoile rouge de l'apparence de Mars. La lumière était tranquille. Sachant que cela ne pouvait être une planète, je pris une jumelle qui me montra un disque bien conformé de 1 millimètre au plus. Cela me fit supposer que ce point lumineux devait être assez près de la terre. A l'aide de ma lunette astronomique, et avec un grossissement de 75, le disque disparut et fit place à une partie lumineuse rectangulaire. Sur un côté existait une bande couleur violette, et le reste était rouge avec des raies noires, assez régulièrement espacées. De chaque côté on devinait une partie noire sur le fond du ciel. Pendant que je plaçais un grossissement de 150, le point lumineux diminuait d'intensité. Lorsque la lunette fut au point l'étoile jeta encore quelques éclats et disparut. Il était 8 h 45. Je vis ce phénomène pendant dix minutes. Il était certainement visible depuis quelques temps, mais non la veille. Ce n'était point un bolide, car il resta stationnaire le temps de mon observation. Sa distance était plutôt dans les espaces planétaires : le grossissement de 75 fois le montrait un peu plus gros que Jupiter. Le peu de durée du phénomène ne me permit point de faire d'autres remarques. Je vous signale ce fait, espérant que d'autres personnes l'auront vu dans des meilleures conditions.

CHUSTREMAN



Dessin d'un phénomène observé vers 20 h 35 entre la Grande et la Petite Ourse par M. CHUSTREMAN le 4 septembre 1898 à Lille (France).

M. FIEFFE a fait des recherches mais n'a rien trouvé qui correspondait au phénomène observé. Il est à signaler cependant que des recherches sur des ouvrages de 1897 à 1899 ne manqueraient pas d'intérêt car de nombreuses observations d'objets étranges ont été relatées à cette époque, tant en France qu'à l'étranger.

Suite de la p. 21 :

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Nous serions reconnaissants aux lecteurs qui voudraient nous aider en nous adressant :

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Responsable «Techniques et Recherches» :
Christian De Zan - 53, le Parc - 78540 VERNUILLET.

FIDUFO (Fichier Informatique de Documentation sur les UFO a besoin de nombreux participants pour l'établissement de fiches et leur traitement sur ordinateur : travaux de secrétariat, traductions toutes langues, analyse programmation, perfo-vérif. Quelques heures de travail chaque moi suffisent. Ceux qui peuvent aider à l'élaboration de cet outil indispensable pour la recherche seront les bienvenus, Secrétariat, FIDUFO, 5 Villa Chateaubriand 94230 CACHAN (timbres réponse S.V.P.)

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L, Feb -81

LDLN

La «nube» luminosa sobre Madrid en 1.896

arturo gómez villalba

Dentro de la investigación histórica y precediendo a la gran oleada de 1897 se presenta este caso, casi desconocido en la Ufología hasta el momento, que tuvo lugar en Madrid el día 10 de febrero de 1896 y que fue interpretado por algunos de los más destacados científicos de la época como fenómeno natural, entre ellos José de Castro Pulido, Catedrático de la Universidad Central (que expondría curiosamente una explicación por los rayos globulares), pero el caso, ciertamente no da síntomas de ello como tal fenómeno natural. Se publicó un boletín al respecto, reflejándose la noticia en algunos periódicos locales, así como en una revista de divulgación científica denominada «La Naturaleza» (febrero 1896), siendo estas las fuentes de investigación.

El suceso se desarrolló de la siguiente forma, tal como nos lo describe un testigo presencial:

«...El testigo, persona de buen criterio y gran ilustración que se hallaba en aquel mismo instante mirando a Oriente en el Paseo de Santa Engracia de esta corte, se anunció a las 9 h. 29 m. 30 s. de la mañana con un resplandor vivísimo, cuya intensidad competía con la luz solar, y que iluminó fuertemente las fachadas de los edificios que a la sazón estaban en sombra. En aquel momento vio por su derecha, como en medio de la calle, a la altura de un tejado (efecto de la perspectiva) un cúmulo de nubes casi redondo de unos tres decímetros de diámetro aparente, blanquísimo y de materia muy densa, del cual seguidamente empezó a desprenderse por la parte superior izquierda un como rizo, que terminaba en forma redonda y ensanchaba; este fue alargándose juntamente con otro que después apareció por la derecha, y al cabo de pocos segundos formaba ya él toda una masa nublosa en forma de pera invertida, que tendría una altura aparente de un metro, poco más o menos; continuó creciendo en todas direcciones, aunque más en la vertical que en la horizontal, al mismo tiempo que marchaba hacia Oriente, hasta que llegó a su desarrollo máximo, tomando una apariencia fantástica y siniestra. Entonces conservando siempre la forma antedicha, alcanzaba ya una altura aparente quizás superior a tres metros, y terminaba en una aureola espléndida, en cuyo centro se veía un disco blanquísimo de dos a tres decímetros de diámetro. La trepidación de la atmósfera (explosión) llegó a tierra en ese momento (9 h. 30 m. y 45 ó 50 s.) seca y terrible al principio, más suave y acompasada después, obligando al testigo a dar, a pesar suyo, uno o dos pasos hacia la izquierda. Desapareció con esto el globo interior, y la nube se diluyó y empezó a teñirse de escarlata y violeta, produciendo un efecto encantador (véase lámina adjunta), palideciendo al mismo tiempo que se deformaba y adelgazándose hasta llegar a conseguir unos seis grados en el sentido longitudinal y

uno y medio aproximadamente en el de su anchura, mostró en su extremidad S. E. un pequeño apéndice oscuro como de denso humo, que se asemejaba en su color sombrío a las nubes de tempestad. Empujada por los vientos superiores, pues la región inferior estaba en calma, dicha nube única que se destacaba sobre la bóveda celeste, a la sazón purísima orientada de N. E. a S. S. O. desde el punto correspondiente al S. S. O. y a unos 11 grados de distancia cenital en que se hallaba situada, caminó muy lentamente hacia el E. N. E., disolviéndose a medida que avanzaba y quedando bastante después del mediodía con la apariencia de un cirrus ligero, a unos 65 grados del cenit.»

Posteriormente a la explosión se encontraron supuestos fragmentos, de pequeñas dimensiones encontrados en sitios diferentes. El primer fragmento tiene un volumen de 20 cm.³, siendo encontrado cerca del Hipódromo e incrustado en el suelo, la superficie externa era lisa e irregular, de color oscuro. Un segundo grupo compuesto de dos fragmentos encontrados en el km. 7 de la carretera de Madrid-Castellón y en la calle Serrano, fueron adquiridos por el Observatorio Astronómico, el primero pesaba 19 gramos y el segundo 52 gramos, ambos estaban cubiertos de una capa negro mate delgada.

Haciendo referencia al análisis de los datos meteorológicos, el día 9 de febrero, a las 9 de la mañana, la altura barométrica era de 777,3 mm., la temperatura de 2'5 °C sobre O. El día 10, día del suceso, a las 9 de la mañana la altura era de 772,6 mm. y la temperatura de 4'5 °C, aunque hubo un hecho extraño a la misma hora, primeramente una repentina subida en el barómetro de 1 mm. y 7 décimas, pasando posteriormente a situación normal y bajando más tarde a 7 décimas de mm. El día 11 la altura fue de 777,1 mm. y la temperatura de 4'9 °C. Dato en común a los tres días era una pequeña fuerza de viento E. N. E., así como el cielo totalmente despejado.

Así pues, aquí se presenta un caso más de sustento a las bases del fenómeno, cuya principal particularidad es la fecha aproximativa a la oleada de 1897. Puntos a destacar en el caso es el rizo desprendido, la forma de pera invertida, el disco blanquísimo, la explosión y ante todo ese camuflaje en forma de nube que ya ha sido observado desde siempre a lo largo de toda la casuística.

Los fragmentos son otro dato importante, pero desgraciadamente no queda prueba patente de su evidencia física.

Por fin, como indudable prueba de carácter científico, nos encontramos ante ese extraño cambio brusco de altura barométrica.

Madrid, 12 de diciembre de 1979.

And now we can complete the transition by considering a case which by no stretch of the imagination can be explained away as a slow moving green fireball, and is even less like ball-lightning.

Case 7. On the morning of December 20, 1895, a strange appearance in the sky was observed from Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. A brilliantly white luminous body passed overhead from west to east, until at about 15 degrees above the eastern horizon it seemed to stand still in the skies for about fifteen minutes or more. Some descriptions referred to "an enormous wheel"; according to others, whatever it was, appeared to be the size of a table. The noise of its passage through the air was reported to be heard, and eventually it just disappeared without any audible or visible explosion.

This last case is as unlike the familiar flying saucer reports as it is unlike ball lightning or green fireballs, and it may be some entirely new phenomenon. This is the important thing to note. It is quite certain that many UFOs are lenticular

clouds, others are motor car headlights, Will-o-the-Wisp, Venus, Jupiter, slow moving green fireballs, or ball lightning. This does NOT, however, mean that all sightings can be reduced to this, or any other circumscribed list of standard ' explanations . It is even more fatuous to attempt to reduce the extraordinary variety of appearances, conveniently lumped together under the heading of UFOs, to any one of these categories.

Almost all scientists now admit the overwhelming probability that life of some kind is widely distributed throughout the entire Universe, and although it is only about ten years since space flight was described as "utter bilge", it is also widely admitted that manned spacecraft will explore the solar system, and unmanned probes reach for the nearer stars, within the next twenty years. In these circumstances, it is far more "un-scientific" to try to dismiss all unexplained aerial appearances as familiar phenomena than it is to hold the open minded view that some of them may be the artefacts of extraterrestrial communities.

1895

CONGRATULATIONS

Our readers will be pleased to learn that our valued friend and contributor, Jacques Vallée, has successfully concluded his latest university course, and has been awarded his Ph.D. in Computing Science.

Dr. Vallée has now taken a post at an important computing centre in Chicago.

PIECE FOR A JIG-SAW

L. G. CRAMP, M.S.I.A., A.R.Ae.S.

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6

Manos de fuego

1.897

IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS

Cabeza del Rey Don Pedro, 9 - 2.º B
41004 - SEVILLA (Spain)

por Elsie Dubugras
Brasil

D-109

El sello del purgatorio

A partir de la devoción y piedad por las almas del purgatorio, ocurrieron los fenómenos que se conocen como "manos de fuego". Las almas, invitadas por los fieles a manifestarse, provocaron la aparición de pequeñas manos impresas como si fuese al fuego en tejidos y papel, pañuelos y libros. Algunos intérpretes dicen que este fuego, aunque sea purificador, no es de la misma naturaleza que aquél que conocemos aquí en la Tierra.

A mediados de 1893, el padre misionero Vittore Jouet, devoto de las almas del purgatorio, erigió en Roma un pequeño oratorio donde se celebrarían misas y oraciones en sufragio de tales espíritus en sufrimiento. Cuatro años más tarde tendría lugar allí el primer fenómeno que, en la interpretación del padre y de los fieles, comprobó la existencia de aquellas almas y la certeza de que ellas conocían y sentían los efectos benéficos de sus trabajos espirituales.

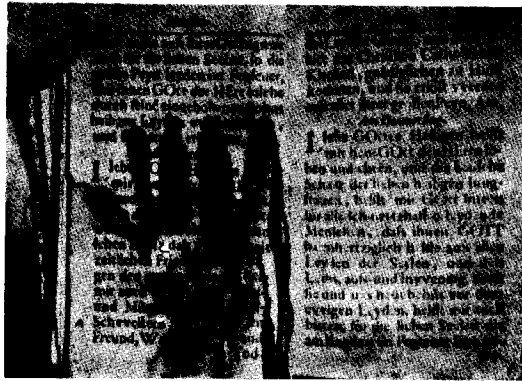
El fenómeno ocurrió de la siguiente manera: el día 15 de noviembre de 1897, fecha escogida para una fiesta de beneficencia, la pequeña capilla estaba repleta de fieles. El servicio religioso ya había comenzado cuando, en el altar adornado para tal ocasión, irrumpió una llama. Una vez apagada ésta se vio en el lateral izquierdo, claramente impreso, el rostro de un sufridor. Esta interesante pieza, que fue conservada cuidadosamente, se puede ver en el Museo del Purgatorio, en Roma. Sin embargo, las autoridades eclesiásticas nunca se pronunciaron a favor o en contra de su autenticidad, dejando que cada cual lo interprete a su manera.

El Padre Jouet, intrigado con el fenómeno, emprendió viajes por Italia, Francia, Alemania, y Bélgica para descubrir si comprobaciones semejantes existían en otros sitios. Sus viajes fueron exitosos ya que dio con las más diversas pruebas.

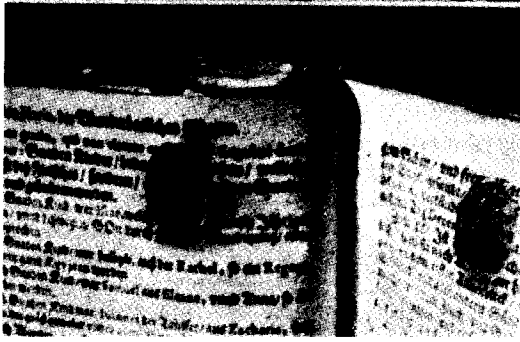
Las visiones de la vieja beata

Una de las más curiosas se relaciona al caso de una beata de la ciudad de Geilaschein, cerca de Baden, en Alemania. Margarete Schaeffner, según sus conocidos, era una mujer profundamente mística que mantuvo contacto durante sesenta y ocho años con las almas del purgatorio. Estos contactos no eran sólo místicos. Ella veía los espíritus en sufrimiento, y los describía tan minuciosamente que las personas que habían conocido a los muertos se sorprendían de su exactitud. También tuvo pruebas materiales, manos que dejaron señales de fuego en objetos que le pertenecían.

Margarete, según declaraciones de personas del lugar, era católica ferviente y acostumbraba a narrar sus experiencias al cura de la iglesia, pero ni éste ni los misioneros que pasaban por allí, otorgaban la menor importancia a lo que ella relataba. Muy por el contrario. Decían que todo no iba más allá de su propia imaginación, estimulada por la superstición popular. Llegaron a prohibirle que repitiera sus historias a otra gente y, en cierta ocasión, incluso le impidieron comulgar por un período de tres meses. Desgraciadamente para Margarete, ni siquiera aquellos con quienes convivía creían en lo que ella hablaba. Estos hechos la entristecieron profundamente, haciendo que finalmente le



¿Fuego de remordimiento? ¿Fuego purificador? ¿O simplemente un fuego corriente?



Los viejos libros sagrados de oraciones son objeto preferido para las marcas de las manos de fuego.

pidiera a las almas que le diesen una prueba concreta de su existencia, del sufrimiento del purgatorio, y de que las oraciones y las misas a su favor las ayudaban. Con tal evidencia esperaba convencer a los incrédulos de que los relatos no eran fruto de su imaginación y de que tampoco era víctima de influencias demoníacas, como pretendían algunos.

Emma Schubert, una enfermera que conoció a Margarete muy de cerca, presenció una prueba y supo además de otras.

Schubert relata que una de las pruebas tuvo

lugar durante un servicio religioso. Margarete fue a misa y, en profundo recogimiento, se arrodilló para aguardar la comunión. Sostenía un pañuelo entre las manos y, cuando el padre se acercó con la hostia notó una mancha oscura en el mismo que aumentaba de tamaño. Margarete no percibió nada, por estar con los ojos cerrados. Después de comulgar, volvió a su sitio y, arrodillada, continuó rezando. El padre, impresionado con la mancha en el pañuelo, buscó a Margarete después de la misa, pidiéndoselo para examinarlo. El pañuelo estaba en su bolso y cuando fue abierto ambos vieron con gran sorpresa que una mano de fuego estaba impresa en él. Margarete sabía que esto era la respuesta a su oración y pensó que el sacerdote se convencería de la verdad. Pero no ocurrió tal cosa. La duda del sacerdote persistió, incluso después que fuesen exhibidas semejantes pruebas.

Margarete recibió otras pruebas además de la del pañuelo. Una de ellas es especial y digna de tener en cuenta ya que fue presenciada por Emma Schubert. Cuenta ella que Margarete, al sentir que las almas necesitaban oraciones y misas, volvió a pedir nuevas pruebas, pues con ellas esperaba convencer a otros de que hicieran intercesiones y misas. Después de algunos días obtuvo la respuesta. Debía colocar un trozo de cuero sobre una mesa en otra sala. Cuando, siguiendo siempre las instrucciones de las almas, fue a buscar el trozo de cuero, vio que dos manos estaban impresas en fuego. Esta prueba fue enviada a las autoridades eclesiásticas de Friburgo, en presencia de Emma Schubert. El cuero grabado se encuentra hoy en la parroquia de Gerlachsheim (Alemania), donde ha sido fotografiado varias veces. El pañuelo impreso durante la misa estaba en los archivos eclesiásticos de Friburgo, pero fue devuelto posteriormente al Museo por el arzobispo Grobes.

Libro de oraciones del siglo XVIII

Otra prueba que debería constar en el acervo del Museo del Purgatorio, como se le conoce hoy, se encuentra en la Baja Baviera, en poder de la familia Hackenberg. Es un pequeño libro de oraciones del siglo XVIII. Tiene 10 centímetros de largo por 6 cms. de ancho. Está bien conservado, a pesar de haber servido como "prueba de fuego" para un caso semejante al de Margarete. Se observa en las páginas 12 y 13 la impresión de

dos pequeñas manos. Se pueden distinguir los cinco dedos, la pequeña palma y parte de la muñeca. Un detalle interesante es que los dedos dan la impresión de estar descarnados, de que son manos de un minúsculo esqueleto.

Respecto a este caso se cuenta la siguiente historia: Cierta vez, un miembro de la familia Hæckenberg hizo una peregrinación a Grulich, un gran centro religioso. La peregrinación fue hecha en homenaje a su fallecido padre que el romero sentía que necesitaba oraciones. Después de cumplir la promesa, el joven regresó a casa, volviendo por un atajo a través del bosque. Cuando estaba a medio camino, se le apareció la figura del padre, que agradeció las oraciones y la intención con que habían sido hechas. Como prueba de su gratitud, grabó dos pequeñas manos en el libro que su hijo llevaba.

Existe otro caso semejante, mucho más reciente. El libro forma parte del acervo de una iglesia en la región del Sarre, en Alemania Federal. Se cuenta que durante una misa en sufragio de un alma, un fiel —que debía ser clarividente— vio aproximarse a un espíritu. El espíritu, una vez cerca, señaló el misal con un dedo y desapareció. Después de la misa, movido por un impulso que no supo explicar, la persona volvió a abrir el libro para examinarlo y vio, en la página en la que se implora misericordia e indulgencia divina para las almas sufridoras, que se encuentran en las profundidades del infierno, la impresión en fuego de una mano. Pero hay otro aspecto del fenómeno que debe observarse. El misal estaba en latín, lengua poco conocida por los legos pero muy familiar al clero. Sólo un sacerdote conocería además el lugar preciso donde se implora el auxilio que las almas necesitan para su sufragio.

Cuernos en la peluca negra

Otro investigador interesado en fenómenos de esta naturaleza descubrió uno de los casos más curiosos. Bajo una placa de vidrio colocada para protegerla, se ve una mano estampada en fuego. Está en una mesa que debe haber pertenecido al Palacio de Justicia, en Lublín (Polonia). La mano es excepcionalmente grande, no muestra señales de falanges y da la impresión de estar esquemmatizada.

Según la leyenda, hubo en aquella ciudad un litigio entre una viuda pobre y un rico magnate. Este reclamó para sí los bienes de

la viuda y, habiendo sobornado a los jueces, ganó el juicio. La viuda, desesperada por perder todo lo que poseía, levantó la mano en dirección a un crucifijo colgado en la pared y gritó: "Si Satanás hubiese dictado sentencia, ésta habría sido más justa".

Los que se encontraban presentes vieron enseguida a algunos jueces de extraña apariencia entrando en la sala. Sus pelucas eran negras con dos pequeños cuernos. Atemorizado, el secretario volvió a convocar la sesión y el abogado del diablo, con una exposición corta y sobria, dio una explicación respecto de los derechos de la viuda a la fortuna de su difunto marido. El tribunal, en vista de las pruebas presentadas, sentenció a favor de la viuda... sentencia mucho más justa que la anterior.

Fue sólo al día siguiente del juicio que el escribano notó que, en la mesa del Tribunal, había la impresión de una mano descomunadamente grande, todavía visible hoy.

Son variadas las hipótesis para explicar cómo estos y otros fenómenos de dicha naturaleza han tenido lugar. Los libros sagrados hablan de "fuego del infierno". En el Nuevo Testamento está la parábola del hombre rico que murió y, abrasado por las llamas, pidió una gota de agua a Lázaro. Los teólogos y los místicos indagan sobre la naturaleza de dicho fuego, sin llegar a un acuerdo. Todos concuerdan, sin embargo, que el fuego es el elemento purificador. Pero según el pensamiento moderno sería el fuego del remordimiento, del arrepentimiento, del dolor, y no el fuego tal como lo conocemos en la Tierra. Con todo, el fenómeno está allí para ser visto. Manos impresas en fuego o, como ha ocurrido en San Pablo, ropas y muebles incendiándose. Un investigador opina que tiene lugar una materialización rápida, pero no explica cómo la materialización imprime su mano ardiente en objetos.

