

The Great Texas Airship Mystery

By Wallace O. Chariton. Plano, TX: Woodward Publishing Co., Inc. 280 pgs. \$16.95

The tale has been told before, but "The Great Texas Airship Mystery" is a fascinating recapitulation of the way things were in Texas during the months (Nov., 1896-May, 1987) when all America was fascinated by the "mystery airships" being reported in various parts of the United States.

I emphasize "in Texas," because, as Texas historian Chariton found when he began delving into his state's airship reports, Texas was uniquely different from other states whose citizens were also reporting the airship.

As is generally known, the "airship mystery" began in California when, on Nov. 17, 1896, hundreds of people in Sacramento swore they had seen a mysterious light sailing through the night skies. Within days, more reports came in and newspapers throughout the U.S. were carrying "airship" reports.

Except in Texas.

For some peculiar reason—and Chariton, for all his research, is not sure why—virtually all Texas papers, aside from one or two that carried extremely brief accounts of the initial Sacramento sighting, paid no attention to airship sightings until April 12, 1887 when "two men in Ennis, Texas saw a strange flying object pass in front of the moon."

"The mysterious airship," writes Chariton, "had arrived in Texas. It stayed exactly thirty days and was supposedly seen by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Texans." Indeed, reports Chariton, so many people craned their necks looking up that doctors reported having to treat a new affliction called "airship neck." [Has anyone heard, in this modern age, of "UFO neck"?)

And what were people seeing? Like its flying counterparts elsewhere in the U.S., the Texas airships were variously described:

Size—varied from 25 to 200 feet long. Thickness or diameter up to 50 feet.

Shape—Usually, though not always, described as "like a Mexican cigar," which meant, unlike today's almost uniformly cylindrical cigars, a fat midsection tapered at both ends. But "boat-shaped" bodies were also mentioned as were bird-like shapes, which brings us to . . .

Wings—One or two per side, usually a ribbed "bat-like" shape was described. Some wings flapped, others were rigid.

Propulsion—Some witnesses, having found airships on the ground, were given tours of the craft and reported the motive power as "steam" "highly condensed electricity" [!], electric motors or compressed gases." The gases were said to be derived from "splitting" water into its constituent parts and "burning" the oxygen.

Gondolas and other hanging appendages were sometimes reported. These were variously described as "boat shaped" or like a bicycle frame without wheels.

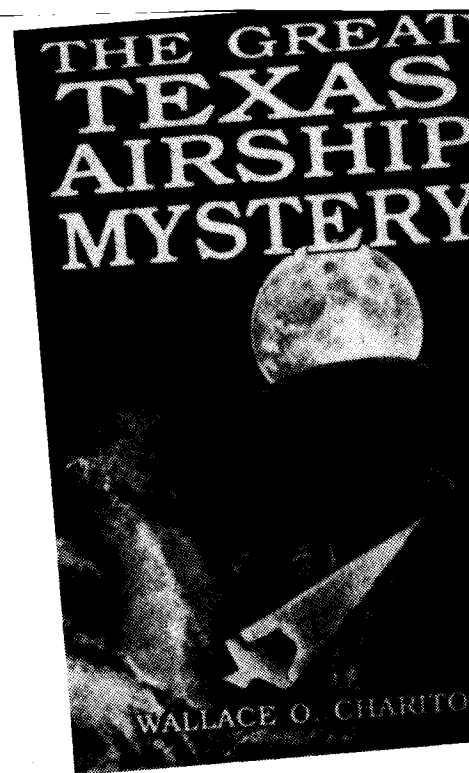
Crews—uniformly terrestrial, speaking English, although some witnesses who heard voices from aloft as airships sailed by, reported "unknown tongues" and, in one instance, "Greek."

Where were they from? One group claimed descent from legendary wandering Jewish tribes, and said they had settled in "North Pole Land" while others more prosaically said they were from small towns in various states including Iowa and New York. Witnesses speculated on more distant lands—the moon or Mars.

But of course no one really knew. No inventor ever appeared to claim credit and to demonstrate his airship, and none of those who claimed close encounters had cameras to record what they said they saw. (There were, of course, numerous drawings made from eyewitness accounts, and Chariton has included many taken directly from newspapers of the day.)

So what can we conclude from all this? Chariton, after "thousands of hours of research" into microfilm files of all surviving newspapers of the time, plus checking the existence of witnesses by reviewing tax records and local histories, says simply "there is no definitive answer that will be universally accepted," and I fear I have to agree.

But Chariton does leave us with



room to speculate. Like any good folklorist, he can (and does) provide reason not to completely discount all those reports from so many folks in so many parts of Texas. He even holds out a tiny (though largely tongue-in-cheek) hope that the famous Aurora airship crash—you remember, the airship that crashed into Judge Proctor's windlass (erroneously identified as a windmill in most accounts) and whose dead pilot was identified as a "Martian" and buried in the local cemetery—might really have happened.

Indeed, he says, he plans to be in Aurora at dawn on April 17, 1997, just in case "some alien creature will return looking for a long-lost father or grandfather who came to earth so many years ago and never returned. If you care to join me," he says, "bring your camera, bioculars, something to sit on, and doughnuts. I'll supply the Dr. Pepper."

In sum, then, *The Great Texas Airship Mystery* is a fascinating and detailed examination of the days when America's citizens, if not her inventors and engineers, were ready for the advent of heavier-than-air flight (to say nothing of possible Martian visitors!). No serious student of either folklore or UFOs should be without this book. —George W. Earley

THE GREAT AIRSHIP MYSTERY by Daniel Cohen
New York, 1981, illus., 212 pp., \$12.95

Reviewed by Robert Barrow

Do numerous airships, witnessed by thousands of observers over numerous areas of the United States in the past century? Unfortunately, neither reader nor author know the answer upon completion of this book. In fact, the author's delight in reading books from back to front is evident in the great in store, for they will pick up the author's point of view and the reasons why he presents his material in the fashion he does far sooner than conventional

readers. It is understood that the author can only go so far on this topic, which relies heavily upon questionable newspaper reports of nearly century-old events. Cohen attempts, generally, to be open-minded about the airship controversy, with which most *Pursuit* readers are certainly familiar, but airship aficionados, content with a few theories that possibly extend beyond the current find portions of this accumulation a bit difficult to accept.

Surprisingly, expecting a routine re-report on airships, I was shocked to pass this one up. However, its pages *did* reveal a surprising quality: Cohen's so-so book about airships is, on the other hand, an informative indication of the less respectable aspects of early American journalism.

Cohen prominently questions, for example, the role of the notorious tycoon William Randolph Hearst played in the discovery of the airship sightings, and, in particular, his puzzling decision to have the phenomenon reported in his *Los Angeles Examiner*, while apparently dismissing the observations as highly credible in his *New York Journal*. Equally as disappointing to the author are the numerous instances where an airship story obviously worthwhile for follow-up suddenly "disappears from the record forever."

Of value, the various incidents and anecdotes presented effectively remind us that journalism some 70 years ago left a legacy to its modern news-reporting colleagues. The "knee-jerk tendency to deal with UFO (or, sorry, airship?) reports by ridiculing witnesses before the questions are conducted.

The book also has an interesting section on Thomas Edison's reaction to the airship stories, makes a valid point about "bar clubs" of the era, and reprints a few satirical, but intriguing, poems about the airborne phenomenon.

In all means, read *Airship Mystery* if the news media is your interest. If the airships themselves are your curiosity, read a couple of the sources Cohen quotes (such as writings by researchers Loren Gross and Lucius Farish); this title, as a reference, is on risky ground—unless one enjoys reading speculation that progresses from century-old airships to modern UFOs with the anemic and dubious theories of UFO debunker Philip Klass and others thrown in for good measure.

"Now, for the first time," claims the book jacket, "UFO expert Daniel Cohen gives the full story of the great airship mystery and explains how it is related to the continuing mystery of the UFOs today." UFO expert? Full story? Explains how? Since this release is as important to

UFO findings as it is wanting about the airships, with little more than a little conjecture and glue binding its pages together, one can easily suggest that—drat—yet another dust jacket has led us astray.

WHOLENESS AND THE IMPLICATE ORDER by David Bohm (Rutledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1987)

Reviewed by Richard D. Wright

David Bohm, whose theory of what he calls the "implicate order" of the universe has caused a stir among physicists, physiologists, and philosophers, accepts classical science within its limits, works its way through the physics of relativity and quantum theory, and produces a startling view of the nature of reality.

As early as 1957, in his book *Causality and Chance in Modern Physics*, he stated that "scientific research does not and cannot lead to a knowledge of nature that is completely free from error. Rather it leads and is able to lead only to an unending process in which the degree of truth in our knowledge is continually increasing." The book reaffirmed the questing nature of science and was hailed as "a return to common sense" within the field.

In the generation since that book (now a minor classic), David Bohm has used that common sense to develop his theory of the nature of reality. Much talked about for the last decade, it received its current statement in 1980 in the book *Wholeness and the Implicate Order.*

Bohm's theory goes beyond the paradigms of classical physics, which is the basic physics learned in high school. Speaking generally, classical physics is built on precepts of order assumed to be permanent. It is a kind of order that may be called a "lens-system" order. To understand what this means, remember that our concept of order is based upon the information perceived by the five senses and particularly by the sense of sight. This perceived information is all-pervasive and timeless. When it is coupled with the learned, logical, linear structure of language, it dominates our thinking. One can understand why this concept of order developed in science at the same time that the lens was developed and became widely used as a scientific tool.

A primary fact about lenses is that they bring details into sharp focus: that is, they objectify. The focus may be on the minute complexities seen through a microscope or the glorious vastness witnessed through a telescope. The use of lenses strengthened man's awareness of the parts of an object and relationships between parts, even those that cannot be seen by the naked eye. Because lens systems allowed one to break things down into ever finer parts of larger units, the tendency developed in science to think in terms of analysis and synthesis. This tendency became so predominant that the classical approach became an analytical approach. It created a framework for the development of the "scientific method," and, within it, the scientific method was shown to be valid. The next step was then to extrapolate beyond the lens system, using the well-established scientific conventions of logic and reason.

This view created what can be called a mechanism approach to reality, which is an approach in which the world is regarded as constituted of separate units, each of which is viewed as if through a photographic lens, with point-to-point imaging even of things that cannot be seen by the naked eye.

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person experiences available to lovers of ghostly lore is that the sites are available for visiting. The 22 ghosts described in the Lincoln guide may possibly be witnessed.

While credible for ghost stories, the book suffers from sloppy editing and presentation. Still, the large typeface is easy to read, and the end is reached perhaps too quickly.

The Complete Roadside Guide to Nebraska is a thorough atlas of unusual events that have occurred during the entire history of Nebraska, and include early UFO episodes in the town of Max in 1884, and in 1897 in Omaha and Vale. At least ten municipalities have been visited by "elliptical, hovering, glowing objects as large as a hanger" since approximately 1900.

Many other accounts of UFO sightings are scattered throughout the book, including one by Air Force Major Paul Duich, at Offutt Air Force Base Strategic Air Command headquarters in 1958 (on pg. 15). He describes a vapor trail that changed colors and metamorphosed into a cigar shape—with 25 witnesses, including officers and civilians. A colonel was able to take photographs, since the object remained in the sky for 10 minutes, but they were never seen by other witnesses.

If you travel in Nebraska, your trip would be made more interesting by bringing copies of these books with you.— Les Stern

Ask Your Angels

Alma Daniels, Timothy Wyllie and Andrew Ramer, Ballantine, NY, Softcover, 1992, 358 pgs., \$10.00

The Angels Within Us

John Randolph Price, Fawcett Columbine, NY, Softcover, 1993, 336 pgs., \$11.00

A Book of Angels

Sophy Burnham, Ballantine, Softcover, 1990, 295 pgs., \$10.00

Angel Letters

Sophy Burnham, Ballantine, Hardcover, 1991, 140 pgs., \$15.00

Numerous similar books offer angel lore and true stories about encounters with angels. If you have to chose one, pick Ask Your Angels. It is full of information about the angel kingdom, much of which is drawn from the personal experiences of the authors.

The book is geared to people seeking to establish rapport with angels. The authors have had ample experience conducting private and group sessions toward those goals, and present their own life experiences—painful, transformative, and joyful—with candor. They explain clearly how they work with angels, and provide specific, usable techniques for others to do likewise.

Ask Your Angels is a great handbook for anyone seeking higher paths to spiritual development. The authors provide numerous options, so that readers can find what suits them best—working with an-

Military Reservation Firing Range and the Hanford Works of the U.S. A.E.C. Reservation. Sightings of UFO's often have been recorded in the vicinity of Atomic Energy Commission installations. However, it cannot be ascertained at this time whether this is a factor in these latest sightings. Moreover, this is not the first time there has been a wave of UFO sightings on an Indian Reservation.

The 1890s "Flap"

By Jerry Mathers

(Cont'd from the Nov. Issue)

Next reports come from almost a thousand miles west in central Nebraska around Hastings. The Feb. 10 Juniata Herald said the craft floated about 500 feet up "and after standing nearly still for about 30 minutes it began to circle about, then took a northerly direction for about two miles, after which it returned to its starting place and sank into oblivion."

A few days later the airship was "standing still" several miles west of Hastings. At first, the Herald said, people thought it to be a star but after careful observation decided that the color of the light showed it to be "artificial." "It certainly must be illuminated by a powerful electric dynamo, for the light sent forth by it is wonderful."

On Feb. 17 the Herald reported "without joking" a very large light in the sky that "seems to be like an electric arc light with a glass dome over it, and floated high in the air, then sideways for a distance, then drop, then disappear and reappear some distance away."

Two hundred miles southwest of Hastings in the extreme corner of Nebraska near the village of Haigler the airship put on a nightly show for about two weeks.

Edna Campbell, 15, walking home from a rural schoolhouse, was astonished by a brilliant light that appeared about a mile away. The light darted forward, stopped, then darted forward again. Several times it circled at high rates of speed.

Edna and her family watched the show between 9 and 10 every night for two weeks; sometimes as many as six circuits, sometimes within a quarter mile.

Sightings were also reported at Cripple Creek, Colo., which might have been the same ship. But about the same time other reports were coming in from as far as Washington, D.C.

On Feb. 25 at Wymore in southern Nebraska about 100 persons saw the phenomenon. "As it approached us the light became so brilliant it dazzled our eyes," said one witness.

(See "Flap" - Page Six)

December 1993/FATE 109

Just the beginning. The door has been opened here, and time will tell what happens next.

Review

(Continued from Page Two)

back in 1970, according to Gordon Creighton's letter to Flying Saucer Review in that year's Sept. - Oct. issue. By publishing it now, however, Stanford was able to include a chapter on the activities and methods of his Project Starlight International, which is

Status LOOKOUT a bright white light which disappeared after moving parallel to Status Creek and US 97. Ranch hands and visitors at a cattle ranch along US 97 have often observes similar lights in this area about the same time each night.

The area encompassed by the Yakima Indian Reservation is certainly noted for mysterious and puzzling occurrences. It has been the location of previous unexplained night lights, humanoid sightings, and auto light malfunctions. All of the above mentioned sightings appear to have occurred within the boundaries of the reservation. Therefore, it is unlikely that they can be ascribed to activities originating in two important adjacent areas to the east. These are the US

APRO, DEC - 76

APRO, DEC - 76

"Flap"

(Continued from Page Five)

Throughout February and March sightings came from "reputable citizens" in Omaha, York, North Platte, Beatrice, Falls City and Kearney. It was as though the object was surveying the south half of Nebraska, an area of 35,000 square miles.

On March 28 the object decided to visit Kansas for a change, naturally picking the capital, Topeka. About 200 people saw it from the steps of the Capitol. Some people hustled off to cellars, fearing the world was coming to an end. Residents of northeast Kansas towns of Atchison, Hiawatha, Holton and Belleville observed the airship about the same time.

The next night a ship was reported at Omaha, 160 miles north. And the night following this, the ship (or was it the Cripple Creek craft?) visited Denver, 480 miles southwest of Omaha.

On April 5 at 9 p.m. the ship reappeared in Omaha "causing a sensation." The motorman and conductor of a streetcar watched the ship hover some 600 feet up. They described the object as about 90 feet long and cigar-shaped, with wings fore and aft. At the front end was a bright light, at the rear a red light.

For a few seconds the thing almost stopped. Then it sped up and disappeared.

Other people saw it. Said the Omaha Bee: "All descriptions tally in regard to lights, for all who were fortunate enough to get a glimpse of the thing which is causing so much conjecture, state that it carried two of them, and that they were red and white."

Initiation ceremonies at the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben, the most prominent of Omaha community clubs, had a special added attraction that night. Reported the Morning World-Herald, April 6:

"About 50 members of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ben were treated to the sight of the airship last evening, the sight being observed twice, and each time for space from five to eight minutes.

"About nine o'clock, while the initiation was in progress, the attention of the members was attracted by a bright light flashing past the west windows of the den. They immediately sprang up to the window and saw a luminary appearing at least 18 inches in diameter, the reflection from which passed along what appeared to be a steel body, the length of which could only be estimated at from 12 to 30 feet.

"The object was about three-quarters of a mile high and a little over a mile west of the den. A stampede was at once made for the south entrance, when the course of the ship was watched for some five or six minutes. Its course was due south

until it reached, so near as could be judged, about the southern limits of South Omaha, the distance from the den being covered in about three minutes." (That's about five miles.)

The World-Herald continues: "It then described a semicircle to the east, following that direction for about a mile, when it turned against the northeast wind and traveled in that direction about half a mile. It then turned east, after some vacillations, and was lost behind a bank of clouds.

"After the initiation, while waiting for the cars, they saw the ship again."

Two days later the paper said "a thousand people in Omaha, more or less, have seen the airship, or rather the lights attached to the airship." The World-Herald then quoted Father Rigge, professor of astronomy at Creighton College (now University) as saying:

"I am satisfied in my own mind that the alleged ship seen about a month ago was the planet Venus . . . The last airship was undoubtedly a balloon which some wag had sent up to enjoy the fun!"

Sound familiar to present-day "scientific explanations"? A Venus 90 feet long with lights on each end which made circles, stopped and started, and could go in any direction certainly should have brought the good astronomer out at night with his telescope.

The World-Herald reported many prominent men saw the airship and no doubt they had their private opinion of scientists after that remarkable statement that completely ignored the observations.

The airship headed east apparently. On April 8 it was seen at Cedar Rapids, Ia., 250 miles from Omaha, at 9 p.m. At 10 p.m. the same night a ship was spotted at Northwood, Ia., near the Minnesota line about 150 miles northwest of Cedar Rapids.

On April 10-11 an airship was reported at various towns in eastern Iowa - Ottumwa at 7:25 p.m. April 10, Eldon at 7:40 15 miles away; and also Reinbeck, Shell, and Waterloo.

It is possible this same ship visited Kansas City and Chicago. It was seen by many around Kansas City April 1 pausing to shoot down a brilliant white searchlight beam. Kansas City is 500 miles east of Denver and 200 south of Omaha where it had been seen previous nights.

The Chicago sighting was on the night of April 9 from 8 p.m. until 2 the next morning. Said the New York Herald: "Thousands of amazed persons declared that the lights seen in the northwest were those of an airship, or some floating object, miles above the earth . . . Some declared that they could distinguish two cigar-shaped objects and great wings."

Two giant searchlights were also mentioned by Chicago witnesses.

Anyway, the ship or ships were back in Nebraska April 12. The sighting

was - coincidentally? - at Ashland, which in 1967 was the site of the sensational Patrolman Schirmer contactee case. The description in the Ashland Gazette of April 16 reported what a lady saw the previous Sunday night:

"Something quite small . . . about the size of an ordinary room. It appeared not far from the ground and was hovering over the western part of town. Its flight was rapid and twice it moved to the north, twice it flashed its brilliant light and shot beyond its range of vision."

The night after, the ship was observed at Deadwood, S.D., 450 northwest of Ashland and at Harrison, Neb., 130 miles south of Deadwood. The "airship of gigantic dimensions" was seen by lawyers, jurors and witnesses who were attending the spring term of district court.

The Omaha World-Herald said that when discovered, it was "sailing in a southeasterly direction at what seemed to be an extraordinary speed when suddenly, to the astonishment of all, it seemed to slacken its speed and careen around in a circle, and then came to a stop and hung motionless as if suspended by a rope for several minutes."

Witnesses said the ship had different colored lights which alternated from white to red, blue and green. Then extremely bright lights shot from either side of the craft and it left.

The same or another ship was spotted "dangerously close" to the Missouri River at Decatur, Neb., which is 400 miles east of Harrison, the same night. It was the second sighting at Decatur.

The following night, April 14, the airship was seen at Plainview, Neb., 80 miles west of Decatur, and also at Red Cloud and Oak, Neb., 160 miles south of Plainview. And sightings came from 140 miles north of Plainview at Canton and Woonsocket, S.D.

The Plainview sighting was described thus in the Omaha World-Herald: "Sioux City, Ia. - Station agent Murphy of the Pacific Short Line Railroad wired today from Plainview, Neb., to his superior, Train Dispatcher Jackson of this place, that the airship passed over that place at 9 o'clock last night. It was in view five minutes, bore two lights and looked like an immense cigar. The whole town turned out to view the phenomenon."

The ensuing night reports came from Columbus, Silver Creek and Clarks in east-central Nebraska, and from Underwood, Ia., just east of Omaha and 90 miles east of Columbus.

The next night reports came from Villisca, Ia., 70 miles southeast of Underwood, and from Clay Center, Neb., 180 miles southwest of Columbus and 275 miles west of the Villisca sighting.

* * * * *

(Continued in
Next Issue)

three "men in black", though even these descriptions are corrupted by such probable fictions as "their eyes shone like tiny flashlight bulbs". Two objections can be raised to Bender's tale. First, the whole tenor of his experience is different than that related in your earlier book. In your book, there is an undercurrent of almost psychic fear that cannot be justified by anything in Bender's book. Secondly, assuming Bender's recent story to be true, the "bad slip" he claims he made in the interview recorded in your book would be very easily located. Clearly, that discovery which held Bender in fear still holds him so, and you could not drag the true story out of him with a Sherman tank! Bender was probably ordered to write the book by the same people who keep him sworn to silence.

I think I know Bender's secret. Roughly speaking, he discovered the following:

That for several thousand years (at least) this solar system has been visited by interstellar and even intergalactic civilizations.

That since circa 1897 this planet has been under sporadic observation by beings from another star, this observation being in three waves - the 1897 "flap", a small "task-force" from 1898 until 1943, and the main visitation since 1944.

That this visitation is by a civilization between two or three hundred years in advance of our own probably from the Eridani system.

That these visitors are humanoid, apparently olive-skinned, in the main very slightly shorter than Earth average.

That among these visitors are a good many "midgets", of much the type usually seen on Earth; they are expert "technicians", who because of their size are valued as space-voyages - that is, they can easily service the engines of the "saucers". They are often employed by terrestrial aircraft companies for just this purpose. These little men are often pilots of very small scoutcraft.

That for the past twenty years Earth has been at war with the flying saucers. While the weapons of the spacecrafts are far in advance of anything on Earth, we are winning the war because of the tremendously-long supply-lines of the

enemy.

Bender's visitors were CIA men, who forbade him to reveal what he knew. The visitors were (and are) afraid of public panic if people learned that their planet was under attack by people from outer space. The CIA agents warned Bender that if he "left the cat out of the bag" that he would go to jail for a very, very long time. If the visitors had been spacemen, they would simply have killed Bender, or spirited him away, perhaps to the home planet.

The space-people have a subversive spy-system on Earth, with agents in various governmental and social circles. The whole thing much resembles the television program, THE INVADERS, which may be a CIA "leak" to "prepare" the public for a future announcement that Earth really is "at war with the flying saucers"!

Sincerely
Name Withheld

INTERCEPTED LETTER

Mr. Riley Crabb, Dir.
Borderland Sciences
Research Associates
P.O. Box 548
Vista, California

Dear Mr. Crabb:

Shortly before the Colorado UFO flap, and almost immediately after the Alamosa incident (Snippy the pony's death, attributed to a UFO), several strange incidents occurred in Las Vegas.

During the weekend of September 17, 1967, a UFO with the same magnitude as Venus appeared in the West. It moved from the West and traversed Northeast, moving ap-

proximately 3-5 degrees per second. The object was an intense electric blue and there was a fuzzy haze around it. Although the intensity of its light made it difficult to determine its actual shape, it did seem to be disc-shaped. It cast a bright reflection on shiny objects on the ground, as well as on a thin layer of clouds overhead. Later that evening I noted a strong odor of burned plastic, along with the stench of iron sulfide.

On the Wednesday following this incident, a more controversial sighting, made by close to a hundred of my fellow classmen as well as some townspeople, occurred. At about 10:30 p.m. Mountain Time a formation of dim-lighted objects passed from Northeast to West of Las Vegas. The speed of these objects surpassed the calculated speed of any migrating fowl. They were circular, at an approximate elevation of 2,000 to 5,000 feet above the city, this calculation being made by referring to the relative positions of the UFOs and the scattered cloud layers. The objects were visible at times when below the lowest cloud layer and beyond visibility when above the clouds. The cloud elevations were tabulated in geology lab the following day, based on weather reports for the evening.

I might add that there is little aircraft regularly over the immediate city, except for some commercial flights and some minor activity from Air Force bases in Colorado.

I call the latter a "controversial" sighting, because some fellow students and I received threats as a result of it. The next day a friend phoned me and reported he

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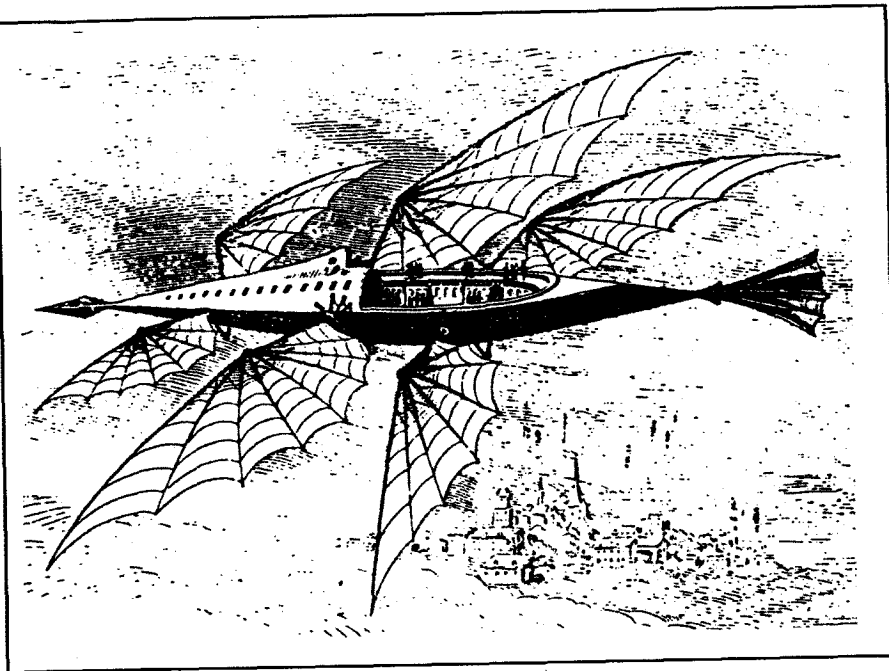


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The Airships of 1897

Hoax, UFOs, or cutting-edge technology?



Airship drawing from 1897.

by J. Allan Danelek

Many people regard the Kenneth Arnold sighting of several flying disks over Mount Rainier in 1947 to be the official start of the modern age of ufology, but that would be incorrect. Actually, it all started earlier than that—almost 50 years earlier, in fact—with the air-

ship flap of 1896–97, which to this day remains one of the most controversial elements of the entire UFO debate.

For those unfamiliar with this brief but curious incident (or series of incidents, as the sightings lasted several months), it all started on the evening of November 17, 1896, when a bright light appeared through

the dark rainclouds over Sacramento, California, and slowly made its way westward over the capitol building, only to disappear once again into the night leaving hundreds of the cities' residents wondering what they had just witnessed. It was described by various witnesses as "cigar shaped" and reportedly sported oversized propellers and rudders on its undercarriage, all visible due to its low altitude and slow progress. Among those who saw the vessel was an assistant to the Secretary of State, who, along with several friends, watched the vessel for several minutes from the capitol dome. One person even described it as having wheels at its side "like the side wheels on Fulton's old steamboat."

The mysterious object was seen over Sacramento again five days later, this time witnessed by thousands of people, including the city's deputy sheriff and a district attorney. Most agreed it was a cigar-shaped object of some size and that it moved slowly but methodically over the city before disappearing to the southwest. It supposedly appeared later that evening over San Francisco, some 90 miles away, where it was seen by hundreds of people and reportedly cruised over the Pacific Ocean, flashing its spotlight toward the Cliff House, one of San Francisco's most famous landmarks.

The area papers quickly caught "airship fever" and began reporting the mysterious vessel appearing elsewhere over California and as far north as Washington State and Canada. The sightings, however, abated by the end of December, and nothing more was seen of the mysterious "airship" for

nearly two months. When it reappeared, it showed up far from California, this time over Hastings, Nebraska, on the evening of February 2, 1897. Soon it was spotted throughout the Midwest, from Texas to Iowa and from Kansas to Missouri. It even supposedly appeared over Chicago on the evening of April 11, where a photograph was reportedly taken (the first UFO photo on record, if authentic) and four days later over Kalamazoo, where it crashed and exploded, according to one local paper. Though reports continued after that, they soon diminished until by summer the airship flap of 1896–97 was over and the world was left with one more mystery to ponder.

Unanswered Questions

To this day, no one is certain what this object (or objects) might have been. Debunkers maintain it was all the product of yellow journalism—the tendency of newspapers to invent stories in an effort to increase sales—mixed with mass hysteria in which people imagined any light in the sky (sometimes speculated to having been an unusually bright Venus) to be the rogue airship. Today many in the UFO community, noting that UFOs are sometimes described as being cigar-shaped, have decided that these were early appearances by extraterrestrials, designed perhaps to test our level of sophistication (and apparently deciding we weren't ready for them yet.) Both explanations, however, leave us with more questions than answers.

The hoax/mass hysteria theory, for ex-

ample, fails to account for the initial sightings over California; newspapers didn't report on the object until after it had been seen by supposedly thousands of witnesses, while the mass hysteria theory fails to explain how such a thing can occur in a generally geographic straight line (moving from California through Nebraska and Iowa and finishing in Michigan.)

Even if we assume that the majority of reports were spurious or mistaken, it is curious how mass hysteria is capable of affecting only people along a particular path. Further, it is uncertain how many Midwesterners would have been aware of the earlier California sightings and so be inclined to imagine that the mysterious airship was headed their way; newspapers rarely picked up general interest stories from other places in the country, preferring instead to stick with national headlines and stories of local interest.

Media coverage of the sightings tended to follow the appearances, not precede them as would be expected if the media was simply priming the country for more stories. Finally, the modern theory of extraterrestrials also seems unlikely, especially in view of the descriptions given by many witnesses that described propellers, wings, rudders, and undercarriages on the vessel—all appendages unlikely to be seen on an interplanetary vehicle.

So what was the thing that crossed the countryside that winter of 1896–97 to cause such a stir?

Interestingly, at the time most thought

the vehicle neither imaginary nor extraterrestrial, but evidence of cutting-edge technology. They saw it as a very man-made machine being put through its paces by some intrepid inventor intent on bringing lighter-than-air flight to humanity. They thought it was a powered balloon or, more accurately, a dirigible.

Most dismiss this explanation, however, as being inconsistent with the capability of the time. The world was still in its technological infancy at this stage; although the lightbulb and the telephone had both been introduced, most people still used kerosene lamps and the U.S. mail to communicate. The Wright brothers were five years away from putting their tiny airplane into the air, and a practical automobile was still under development. The idea that anyone in that era could construct a working dirigible was beyond reason or, at least, so it seemed.

But can we really be so certain that the technology to build an airship was truly beyond the inventors of the late 19th century? A quick look into the history books will demonstrate how presumptuous this statement is.

Early History of Airships

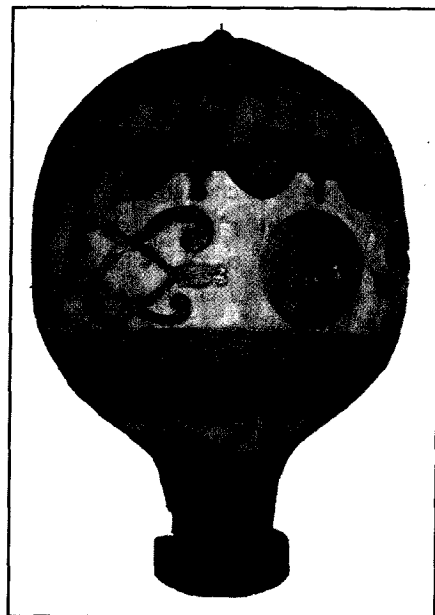
Ever since the Montgolfier Brothers first flew their hot-air balloon over Paris in 1789, humans had been used to the idea of artificial flight.

What differentiated an airship from a mere balloon, however, was the ability to make it steerable, rather than being subject

to the vagaries of air currents and wind. The first experiments to this effect were carried out by Britain's "father of aviation" Sir George Cayley in the 1830s. Unfortunately, Cayley lacked the means to effectively power such a ship and he gave up. Others, however, picked up on his ideas and further developed them until by 1850 a Frenchman, Pierre Jullien of Villejuif, demonstrated a model for a steerable airship. It was up to another Frenchman, Henri Giffard, however, to build and actually fly the first true airship in 1852. At 44 meters in length (almost 150 feet) and powered by a 2.2-kilowatt steam engine, he was able to travel the nearly 27 kilometers between Paris and Trappes, France, without incident, all at the remarkable speed of ten kilometers per hour.

Further development of the airship was made in the 1880s when Charles Renard and Arthur Krebs built an electric-powered model named the *France* that was able to maneuver under its own power. German designer David Schwarz built the first true dirigible (the earlier vehicles being essentially limp, cigar-shaped balloons tethered to a rigid undercarriage) and tested it at Tempelhof airfield in Berlin on November 3, 1897. Three short years later German general Ferdinand von Zeppelin would build his first airship, the LZ-1, and the age of LTA (lighter-than-air) travel was born.

Considering that airships had been under development in Europe prior to the airship flap of 1896-97, what are the chances that an American might have suc-

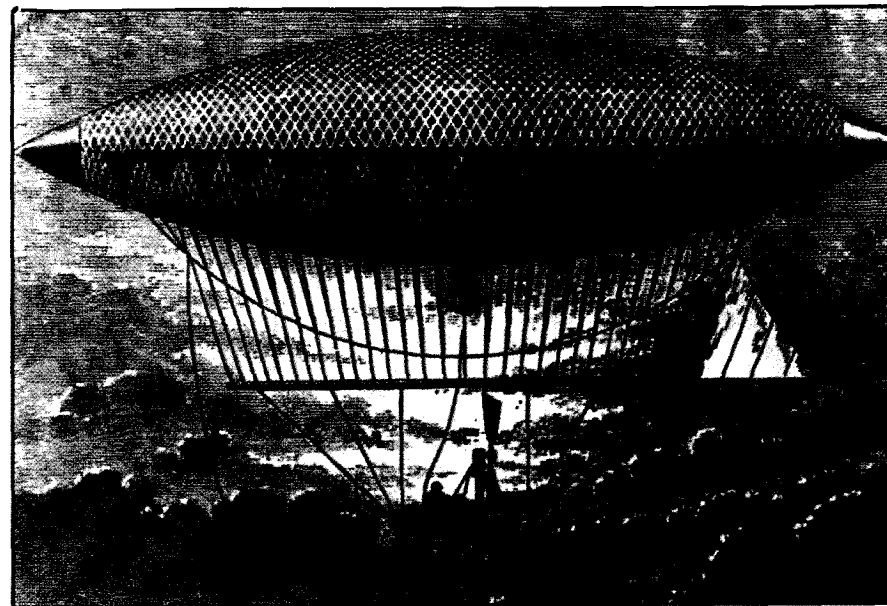


The Montgolfier balloon.

ceeded in creating the first practical and long-range example, the product of which would become the source of six months of sensationalism and rumor? Let's consider the possibilities.

Overcoming the Technological Hurdle

The chief complaint made by many is that the materials and technology needed to construct a working airship were unavailable in 1896. We have already seen that such is not only untrue, but that proof of the concept had been demonstrated almost 50 years earlier. Connecting a series of hydrogen-filled balloons and enclosing



Henri Giffard's 1852 powered airship.

lionaires of any city west of the Mississippi in 1897. It isn't difficult to imagine that a reclusive and possibly even eccentric inventor was able to not only find the required investment capital to build and operate an airship, but could construct the facilities necessary to maintain it (probably somewhere in the San Fernando Valley) in complete secrecy.

Of course, it would require considerable capital to make this work as well as a well-outfitted workshop (and the men needed to operate it), but would that be any more difficult to accomplish than it was for Bell or Edison, contemporaries of the era? The necessary equipment could easily be shipped from the East Coast to

San Francisco, assembled in privacy, and be up and running in short order, all hidden from the general public and the media among the barren hills of Southern California.

The First Flights

The first sightings over Sacramento and San Francisco may have been early test flights of cutting-edge airship technology, a technology easily a decade or more ahead of its time. Clearly, such is not an unreasonable hypothesis, considering that all the elements required to construct and operate a small dirigible (rubber air bags, girder material, steering gear, even various power plants) were all available by the mid-

them within a light but rigid frame of aluminum or wood was well within the capabilities of an 1896 inventor, given adequate resources and a building large enough to house the object. The problem would be finding a powerful enough engine to operate it. Diesel and gasoline-powered engines were still in their earliest stages of development in 1896, so it would have been difficult to make use of either of these two power sources. However, steam engines and electric motors were well known at the time (and, further, Giffard had demonstrated on his airship that a steam engine could be used successfully as a power source.) Other possible power plants include the electric motor, but this would have likely been hugely underpowered, requiring the use of several motors and a considerable number of heavy batteries to extend the range. But this might still be feasible if a person was able to find a way of combining an electric motor with kinetic energy; that is, several men pedaling a generator to charge the battery pack while in flight, thereby extending the range without having to carry too many batteries.

But what if we go beyond these traditional methods? What if, in fact, we are dealing with someone who might be years ahead of the competition, both in terms of airship design and the power needed to run them? Rudolf Diesel had just introduced his revolutionary new power-plant just three years earlier; could someone have gotten hold of one of his early designs and improved upon it? There's also the chance that

either the diesel or the gasoline engine could have been co-developed by more than one person at a time. Is it possible our mysterious inventor successfully developed his engine first and modified it for flight rather than for ground vehicles?

If this is what happened, why did this man not come forward with his invention for all to see? To answer this, we have to understand the mindset of the time.

The Need for Privacy

The last half of the 19th century was a time of remarkable technological advances and tremendous competition among inventors. It wasn't easy being an inventor in 19th-century America; the drive to be the first to the patent office was cut-throat in nature, with stolen ideas and even sabotage fairly common. They had to deal with pressure from investors eager to see a quick and handsome return on their money and, finally, they had the press (who could always be counted on to prematurely proclaim each new gadget a success or failure) to deal with. Considering that a single failure could easily scare away the capital needed to continue working, it is possible that a man would want to work in secret, away from the eyes of the media or potential competitors.

If that were the case with our mystery inventor, California would have been the perfect place to work. It was still remote enough to guarantee privacy and yet it was near enough to a major seaport and sources of capital to make it ideal. San Francisco had the largest number of mil-



One-man "airship" of 1897.

1890s. They awaited only a visionary with the brilliance, vision, and determination to bring it all together.

But if this mysterious inventor wished to work in secret, why fly over two of the largest cities in California and appear to thousands of witnesses, thereby announcing your presence? Simple: the design was nearing perfection and not only needed to be flown over long distances, making the avoidance of multiple witnesses difficult, but to send a message to the vessel's investor(s) that the ship was coming along quite nicely. Clearly, at some point the vessel was going to need to be unveiled to the general public; perhaps the sightings of November and December 1896 were just a sneak preview.

It's interesting that there was a two-month break between the California sightings in 1896 and the sightings in the Mid-

west in February through April 1897. This suggests that after initial test flights were completed, the inventor was ready to unveil his new airship by over-flying America, the one way guaranteed to bring the most attention. By overflying the country, he was telegraphing his new device to the world in the most spectacular manner imaginable,

perhaps with the goal of eventually landing on the East Coast in front of a stunned media.

But something happened that prevented him from completing that goal, something unexpected, sudden, and probably tragic.

A Fiery End or an Icy Grave?

Newspapers reported an explosion in the night skies near Kalamazoo in April 1897, after which the airship sightings petered out and eventually ended. Could the still largely untested airship have exploded over Michigan or crashed into Lake Erie and sunk, abruptly and tragically ending its maiden flight?

Skeptics will point out that no wreckage was ever found. If it exploded (it was, after all, a hydrogen balloon) and fell into a dense forest somewhere in the North-

1897

east, would there really be much left to recover? How much more so were it to have ended its flight in the frigid waters of Lake Erie.

The loss of the only airship and its brilliant inventor would have been irreplaceable; investors would have been unwilling to start from scratch and so pulled the plug, and even the workshops would have been dismantled, the equipment and tools sold in an effort to recoup losses. Perhaps out of fear of ridicule or possible legal actions, the inventor would have been quickly forgotten and the mysterious airship and its crew left to legend, where they could never be either proven nor disproven. It would have been a terrible tragedy, of course, and an incalculatable loss to science, but such would

have been the inevitable result of a noble but ill-fated experiment.

But what of the blueprints and engineering drawings such an undertaking would have produced? It is likely they were destroyed or otherwise lost. Perhaps one day they will be discovered and serve to tell the world that, just as the Anikythera computer demonstrated that technological genius existed 2,000 years ago, so too did we once have our own Archimedes of the skies under our very noses—or, in this case, over our very heads. We just failed to notice him until it was too late. ☺

J. Allan Danelek is a professional graphic artist and illustrator living in Denver, Colorado.

two weird encounters in my life. In 1972, my brother and I just got back from the local mall. I was 17 at the time. It was August. I parked the car, we were going in the house. I looked up in the sky and saw a strange lighted object. It did not move and all of a sudden it was gone.

The next day in the local paper, two police officers changing shifts reported a strange lighted object in the sky the night before. Coincidence?

Flash forward to August 29, 2001. My boyfriend and I went to a seminar at the World Trade Center, then had lunch in the shops below. Thirteen days later, we all know what happened. You never know what can happen in life. Like the saying, maybe it was fate.

Your magazine is exciting and mysterious! Keep up the good work!—Linda Hoski, Easton, Pa.

Airship Mystery

I am writing this in response to the article about the 1897 airship mystery (July 2007). As both a member of the Lighter Than Air Society and one involved in UFO research for over 40 years, I've had an interest in this series of incidents for most of my life. I've done my own research, but to me the true story of the airships was solved to my satisfaction with the publication of Solving the 1897 Airship Mystery by Michael Busby in 2004. It is one of the most remarkable pieces of pure research I have ever read and I can only imagine the amount of digging, time, and leg-

work it took to write this informative book.

Although he mentions several of the sightings around the country, Busby concentrates on the dozens of Texas sightings. He names names of the builder and crew members, reveals their backgrounds, Civil War units, and even census records that confirm their residences. He encloses copies of the patent applications for their designs. In fact, using the design of Dr. Charles A. Smith, I am now attempting to design and build a working (flying, radio-controlled) model of his airship.

Anyone who has an interest in this subject owes it to themselves to read this book.—Richard A. Banks, Crystal, Minn.

Who Discovered America?

Kudos to you for reprinting a fascinating article, W. L. Vallette's "Who Discovered America?" (July 2007).

Anyone who'd like additional information on the author's long list of pre-Columbian visitors to our shores should consult Gunnar Thompson's *American Discovery* (1994). From what Dr. Thompson says, the Japanese, Egyptians, Chinese, Minoans, Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, Welsh, Hindus, Pacific Islanders, Norsemen, Arabs, and Scotsmen arrived prior to 1492. What's more, there's evidence that medieval Basques and Prince Henry the Navigator's Portuguese explorers beat Columbus to the New World.

Again, many thanks for making W. L. Vallette's great article available!—Mary Virginia Devine, Racine, Wisc. ☺

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FATE MAGAZINE

SEPT 2007

Lyonese, Llys Helig, Ravenser Odd, Hartburn, Dunwich and Brighthelmstone? The author must have ransacked museums and libraries for old maps, local histories, engravings and rare photographs with which he so thoroughly illustrates this charming book. This is a work of considerable and most satisfying scholarship with fascinating historical and geographical information on every page.

I cannot recommend this book too highly. It is beautifully printed and exceedingly well written. The historical detail gives the rare experience of traveling in time to watch in terror as huge waves batter the coast and tidal surges rush upon the land to produce yet another 'sunken city.'

While I hope that Forteans will buy this book--did you know that a ship was once sunk by a church?--it should also be required reading for the Corps of Engineers. Nothing built by man can for long withstand the fury of nature.

Phantom Aerial Flaps and Waves

by Nigel Watson. Magonia Occasional Paper No. 1, *Magonia Magazine*, John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW124 8HB England. 20 pgs, quality photocopy, 95p (about \$3.00, including p/h). Make checks out to John Rimmer.

Reviewed by
Raymond D. Manners

he archetypical event that provided the genesis of this booklet is the American Phantom Airship Flap of 1896/7. With hundreds of sighting accounts, conversations with airmen, reports of crashes, discovery of alien bodies and abductions of farm animals, the 1896/7 flap holds all the elements of today's flying saucer mystery, including the fact that no satisfactory explanation has ever been presented. Another important similarity is that there has never been any reliable evidence that a real aircraft or flying machine was responsible.

Public interest in aerial phenomena in that time was heightened by the publication of books by authors such as Edgar Allen Poe (*The Balloon Hoax*), Jules Verne (*Five Weeks in a Balloon*), Charles Fort (*New Lands*) and H. G. Wells (*The War in the Air*). These accounts, combined with the rapidly advancing science of aeronautics and predictions of the amazing feats these wonderful flying machines would be able to perform were often directly responsible for provoking and sustaining phantom airship and airplane flaps.

Nigel Watson presents the results of his researches into a number of sightings before 1947; his data cover the period 1830 - 1946 and include sightings from Europe, Russia, the U.S., Canada, Africa, Japan, New Zealand and Australia. Each event is covered in some detail and is accompanied by a list of references, the majority of which are from readily available books and journals. He also includes sightings of 'angels,' Springheel Jack and the BVM visions at Fatima.

It is the early airship, balloon and airplane sightings that hold the most interest, however. It is not surprising that many of the flaps occurred during the years prior to both world wars. Tensions were high, and a strange aerial machine with bright lights circling a city was naturally considered to be on a spy mission. Many of these machines were fired at, some were seen to crash, others continued their apparently aimless wanderings in the sky, but nothing as concrete as wreckage or a captured airman was ever produced.

The parallels to modern UFO sightings are many, and doubtless many of these early sightings were the results of war hysteria, including the misinterpretation of planets, fireballs, auroral lights and mirages. There remains, though, an element of strangeness in these early reports. Most of the objects were quite unlike modern-day UFOs; they flew very slowly, many carried searchlights, others were seen and followed during daylight, and in some cases conversations were held with the occupants.

Balloons, zeppelins and airplanes were the most frequent visitors, while the Scandinavian ghost rockets and the foo fighters of WWII form a bridge between these early sightings and those of Kenneth Arnold in 1947. We have to wonder if these aerial sightings reflected the social and political conditions of the time, shaped by the general awareness of what was technologically possible.

This booklet is an excellent introduction to those early phantoms of the skies. The price is right and the material is good. Get a copy.

I believe in the imagination. What I cannot see is infinitely more important than what I can see.
-- Duane Michals, *Real Dreams*

**You're NOT coming to FortFest 88?
Change your mind on page 24!**

A-896-97

Media Hoaxes

by Fred Fedler

Ames: Iowa State University Press,
1989, 266 pp., hardback, \$27.95.

Reviewed by Douglas Chapman

If one can cope with Fred Fedler's monotonous writing style, his book *Media Hoaxes* should prove a rewarding grab-bag of fascinating hoaxes from throughout the history of journalism.

Some of the greatest names in literature have turned out amazing outrages. Both Jonathan Swift and Benjamin Franklin put out works which predicted the demises of specific almanac publishers. After the publishers' reported "deaths," Swift and Franklin explained the protests of their "deceased" victims as being those of inept impostors.

Edgar Allan Poe's "factual" story "The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall" detailed a man's travel to the moon by balloon. In 1835, it fooled many; now it is one of his most famous fictions. Even Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" was originally published in *The American Review* in 1845 as if it might be fact. (One could not get Poe to admit one way or the other.)

Fedler does a good job at recreating the rough-and-ready world of 19th century American journalism. With limited news sources, facts did not always stand in the way of a good story. Mark Twain learned various skills in this environment—including practical jokes. Twain once put together an issue of the Virginia City newspaper *Enterprise*, consisting largely of libel of important people, printed only one copy, and sent it to his vacationing boss. That got the man to return to work—in a hurry.

Many know of the Orson Welles "Martian scare" of 1938. Fewer are aware of South American attempts to emulate him. When a station in Santiago, Chile, put out their radio adaptation of *War of the Worlds* in 1944, many were injured. When, in 1949, Station HCQRX in Quito, Ecuador, broadcast their version as a "real" news story about a Martian invasion, panic again resulted. Rioters soon set HCQRX's building afire, and rescuers discovered 20 corpses in the ruins.

Strange readers may be interested in the account of the "Winsted wild man," which Fedler says was the creation of Lou Stone, a New England journalist famous for his whimsical stories. In the next issue of *Strange Magazine*, Michael T. Shoemaker will take a detailed look at this case in his column *Back From Limbo*.

Fedler writes that our present standards of journalistic accountability are a development of this century and that

1.991

STRANGE MAGAZINE #7

The 1897 Airship

Sir,—With respect to Jerome Clark, I suggest that the 1897 "airship" was probably a UFO of the kind for which the designation "Déjàvolant" has been coined in recent years. Most of the anomalies in published accounts of the time are explicable as errors arising out of the preconceptions of witnesses whose only acquaintance with flying machines rested upon the fictions of such as Jules Verne.

The "contactee" narratives centred around the 1897 craft are not more confusing or contradictory than those which afflict us today. Perhaps the UFO-denizens have some method of inducing hallucinatory experiences in the minds of terrestrials who approach a grounded UFO too closely. Furthermore, it must be assumed that publicity-hounds, "nuts" and seekers after the easy-money-that-cometh-by-a-colourful-hoax, were, then as now, quickly in the field.

I am inclined to place Captain James Hooton in one of these latter categories. The object which decorates the cover of your July-August issue looks like the result of a working collaboration between Heath Robinson and Dr. Strabismus of Utrecht. (Whom God Preserve)! I would question the ability of the UFO-denizens or anyone else to coax such an aerodynamic outrage off the ground, much less fly it all over the United States.

—J. Cleary-Baker, Weeke, Winchester.

[Dr. Cleary-Baker is editor of BUFORA JOURNAL.]

C DARNAUD

FSR, Vol. 12, No 6, Nov-Dec 1966

A major study of the 1896-97 "mystery airship" reports in the U.S., by Robert G. Neeley, Jr., is in an advanced stage and is expected to be released in 1986. Research support from the Fund enabled Mr. Neeley to travel extensively throughout the U.S. to visit major libraries and depository sites and to obtain a large amount of new information, despite the fact that several other people have already conducted fairly comprehensive research on this topic. The resulting catalogue and analysis should be the most definitive study yet conducted of what might be called the first wave of UFO sightings in the U.S. If, in fact, there is a conventional explanation for the reports, the information compiled by Mr. Neeley will be an important factor in resolving the question.

M, Mx-82

WORLD SCOPE

In parallel with the U.S. study, the Fund has recently approved a grant to a team of British investigators to compile and analyze data on "mystery aircraft" reports in the British Isles early in the 20th Century. This study also got

(our italics): "What is thought to have been the mysterious airship was seen [at Mount Vernon] by more than a hundred persons. It was first observed about 8.30 o'clock and continued in sight for half an hour. Mayor Wells, who had an excellent view of the mysterious visitor from the observatory attached to his residence, says it resembled *the body of a huge man swimming through the air with an electric light at his back.*"†

Airships appeared at Pittsford, Clayton, and Ann Arbor (all in Michigan) the same evening. At Cadmus, one excitable soul shot at the object, thinking it was a flying dragon.

Three night men employed by the Wallin Leather Company in Grand Rapids reported seeing a bright white light in the western sky. They watched it at intervals over a three-and-a-half hour period, until it disappeared in the north at 3 a.m. on the 17th.

An 1897 "message"

Later in the morning, at 6.15, on his way to work, Mr. C. T. Smith stumbled upon something on the sidewalk. Upon examination it proved to be an envelope on which someone had written "From the Airship Travellers." Inside was a letter, "written," related a news story, "on note paper with a purple indellible [sic] pencil, . . . attached to a piece of stiff wire about five inches long, at the other end of which was fastened, as a weight, one of the iron combination stoppers and bottle openers commonly used to open beer bottles."

The message read:

To whoever finds this. 2,500 feet above the level of the sea, headed north at this writing, testing the airship. afraid we are lost. we are unable to control our engine. please notify our people. think we are somewhere over Michigan.

Arthur B. Coats, Laurel, Miss.
C. C. Harris, Gulport, Miss.
C. W. Rich, Richburg, Miss.

April 16th, '97. 9 p.m.

An unidentified flying object flew over Three Rivers that night.

In another incident involving airships and railroads, persons at Grant Station in Bailey reported watching a

huge object, about 200 feet in length, flying above the northbound evening train. The phenomenon seemed to be about a mile above the earth.

The next afternoon, a strange explosion rocked the village of Saline. Upon hearing the sound, workers just north of town had their attention attracted to a large dark object moving rapidly westward against a strong wind.

Between 8 and 9 p.m. an airship passed over Saginaw at a fast rate of speed, heading in a northerly direction. At Manistique, citizens viewed the craft travelling westward. C. R. Orr, a witness, estimated its speed at 1,000 m.p.h.—which certainly sounds extravagant, considering the relatively slow speeds other observers in other cases had reported. At any rate, the construction resembled, the Sault Ste. Marie News said, "a Washington cigar with a bright light in the centre of it."

Shortly after midnight, a railroad fireman named Widosky left the village of Wakefield and began walking back to his home in Thomaston. He happened to be looking down as he stepped over a mud puddle—and there he saw reflected the swaying lights of something above him. Glancing upward, he caught sight of three lights—red, green, and white—soaring across the sky with an odd undulating motion. The next morning, when he told friends, they laughingly suggested he had taken his first drink. (Mr. Widosky did not indulge.) To back up his story, he saw to it that the next night he had six potential witnesses with him, and, just after midnight, they all observed lights identical to those Widosky had seen 24 hours earlier.

An airship with a light at each end flew over Jackson on the evening of the 21st. The following night, at 11, two men of Hemlock watched an aircraft sailing southward "at a fearful rate of speed."

[This article will be concluded in our next issue]

NOTE

† "I'd like to know what Mr. W. H. Smith saw. Sept. 18, 1877, in the sky, moving over the city of Brooklyn. It looked like a winged human form (New York Sun, Sept. 21, 1877)." Charles Fort, Lo! Ch. 12.

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More on That 1897 Airship

Editor's Note: As our readers have indicated a great deal of interest in "that mysterious 1897 airship", we will continue to publish old newspaper accounts, as they are sent in by our readers. Please send us yours (will return if you request).

THE WILMINGTON MESSENGER
April 6, 1897

WAS IT AN AIR SHIP?

A Remarkable Object Floats
Over Wilmington

Hundreds of People See It - It Was Brilliantly
Lighted and Moved West - Looked Like It had
Rigging - Seen in Cities Out West

Hundreds of people were out on the streets and wharves last night, looking at a brilliant floating mass in the heavens to the west of the city. It was moving very rapidly, and many persons saw net-work about the aerial wonder. Some of our very best and most reliable citizens saw so much of the heavenly stranger that they had not the slightest doubt but that it was the airship which has been reported from other cities. The ship moved to the west at a rapid rate. It seemed to have something like a search-light facing earthwards, and created a sensation among all classes of people.

The ship appeared to come from the ocean and passed opposite to Market street dock, going in the direction of the Navassa guano works. Some gentlemen who saw the ship through field glasses inform us that they could see wires and ropes and rigging about it. To the naked eye many colored lights were visible. Even those who looked at it without glasses admit of no doubt but that it was an airship.
Credit: Angelo Capparella III

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If You See a UFO. . .

The December 1971 issue of SENTINEL includes an interesting article on "What To Do If You See a UFO" and is well worth reading--and especially by the amateur investigator who can profit from the advice given--how to distinguish between a planet and a UFO; how to recognize a weather balloon; tips on photographing a UFO; and some good advice for the close-up confrontation with a space craft and/or occupants.

SENTINEL is published by Aerial Research Systems, P. O. Box 715, Banning, Calif., 92220 and is edited by F. M. Castor. This monthly ufozine is \$4.50 per year. We don't believe this magazine has ever missed a publication date, and we consider that a real "plus" in these days of the many now-and-then publications which are too often "then" and not enough "now."

S, F-72

BEFORE - Pre-1947 Sightings from the Files of Lucius Farish

From the May 1946 issue of AMAZING STORIES, letters-to-the-editor column:quote--

In 1942 I was on a little island outpost off our Southern coast. While on duty at the OP one clear, moonless night, I saw a brightly glowing, unidentified object, like a flare in appearance, travelling horizontally over the sea at moderate speed; I can't even guess at its height, its distance from the OP, or its size.

Possibly thirty seconds or a minute after my first glimpse of it, the object ~~plummeted straight down toward the water~~ and disappeared. I watched the area where it had vanished, and a couple of minutes later it reappeared, rising swiftly in apparently an absolutely vertical line until it was out of sight.

Last winter, when I was with an anti-aircraft battery in Germany I witnessed a recurrence of the incident, with the exception that before the object dove toward the ground, it shot to and fro, short dashes in various directions; the impression that came to my mind was that its erratic movements suggested a search.

At neither occurrence were there any planes in the vicinity, nor do I know of any aircraft capable of such a performance. Furthermore, I make no claim for this yarn, and I have no witnesses; make what you will of it. (Signed) Sgt. Dirk Wylie.

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(Bloque San Leandro)
Sevilla, Spain

Friedman says

Jacobs' history of Ufology well done

EDITOR'S NOTE: Stanton T. Friedman is a nuclear physicist and renowned lecturer and investigator in the UFO field. He was one of 12 scientists who provided testimony on the UFO enigma to the Committee on Science and Astronautics, House of Representatives, on July 29, 1968.

By Stanton T. Friedman

"THE UFO CONTROVERSY IN AMERICA," by Dr. David M. Jacobs (Indiana University Press, \$12.50) is a fascinating volume--a much-revised version of the author's PhD thesis in history at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. It is probably the best overall view of "ufology" in the United States ever written. The period between 1896 and 1974 is well covered from an historical viewpoint.

Jacobs has examined a great deal of material, especially concerning the role of the U.S. Air Force and the private UFO groups such as the National Investigation Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) and the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization (APRO). His is the disinterested third party, objective view. There are more than 50 pages of references and notes, along with an index, and the approach is scholarly.

The author has provided the best description I have seen of the attitudes of a number of older scientists who have become embroiled in the UFO controversy: Dr. James E. McDonald, Dr. Donald Menzel, Dr. Edward U. Condon and Dr. J. Allen Hynek. Also portrayed in some depth are a number of non-scientists like Donald Keyhoe who spent so much effort attacking the Air Force for its secrecy on UFOs, along with the writers for the NEW YORK TIMES and other newspapers who devoted so much time attacking the people who accept UFO

reality.

Certainly neither the scientists nor the journalists are portrayed as the objective truth seekers that both groups would have the public believe they are--and which a careful study indicates they are not.

Jacobs, along the way destroys the myth of the high quality investigative efforts of Project Blue Book.

The 1896-97 wave of sightings of powered airships is presented in depth as a yet-to-be-solved mystery. The descriptions of the objects and their behavior were not a clear chronicling of flying saucers but rather the pronouncements from on high by newsmen and scientists 78 years ago--and sound much like those of our time. Prejudice and character defamation were evidenced far more frequently than objective truth seeking. Technology may change, but the nature of man does not.

Since Jacobs was a graduate student in history when much of this volume was written, it is not surprising that he doesn't dig into such areas as the feasibility of interstellar travel to any degree and that he seems naively to accept the notion that Project Blue Book was the only Air Force organization investigating UFOs.

Considering Blue Book's totally inadequate capability for obtaining data about flying craft as compared with, for example, the Aerospace Defense Command with its 35,000 members, its huge radar net, closed communication and computerized data evaluation systems, Blue Book was much more likely an unwitting cover than the major focus for high quality technical data on UFOs.

Jacobs also has the annoying habit of talking about data

sources without presenting much of the data itself. One example is Project Blue Book Special Report 14, a vital document done for the Air Force in 1955 and containing more data about UFO sightings than all other Air Force documents combined.

The reader would have benefited from the knowledge that 19.7 per cent of the 2,199 sightings investigated were listed as "unknowns"--completely separate from the "insufficient data" cases--and that the better the quality of the sightings the MORE likely they were to have been listed as "unknowns." Also, that the statistical comparison of the characteristics of the "unknowns" versus the "knowns" clearly showed that the two groups were totally dissimilar.

Jacobs mentions the Gallup Poll of 1973, which showed that 51 per cent of adult Americans believe in UFOs. He didn't mention that the poll showed that the greater the education of the individual, and the younger he is, the more likely he is to believe in UFOs. In both cases the data would have helped the reader make his own evaluation of the rhetoric of the skeptical scientists and journalists.

There are a number of minor inaccuracies, including such trivia as the dates of the excellent Dick Cavett show on UFOs (No. 2, 1973) and of the famous Coyne helicopter case (Oct. 18, 1973) over Mansfield, Ohio. Jacobs is wrong about the composition of both the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics Committee on UFOs and the group which appeared on the Today show. But overall Jacobs' work is an excellent source book and required reading for any serious layman or Ufologist.

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an hour before it landed. When it landed, they gathered around and suffered from the heat.

H "A strange man, if man he might be called, was in charge of the ship. He had plenty of clothes but seemed to have no use for them. He was almost naked and suffered from the heat.

"He is judged to be 10 feet tall and his talk, while musical, seems to be a kind of bellowing. One of the braver farmers approached the bellowing being and got a kick that will last him for some time, as his hip was broken.

"Great excitement prevails here. Lots of people are flocking here from Okemos and Locke to view the strange being from a safe distance. No one cares to go near. He seems to be trying to talk to everyone. The people...who have not seen him refuse to believe, although six of the best people swear it is the truth. At 8:10 last evening the ship passed over the village and many people watched its flight. The being returned to the vessel and flew away."

At Sisterville, W. Va., a quiet little town on the Ohio river, a luminous red object sailed in from the northwest at about 9 p.m. on April 19. It flashed brilliant searchlights and immediately began throwing the village in havoc. The sawmill whistle was blowing frantically as hundreds clogged into the streets to glimpse at the fantastic aerial visitor. The craft was like an immense cigar with two protruding fins on either side. Observers estimated it to have been about 180 feet in length and about 50 feet in diameter. All of the witnesses were able to make out flashing red, white and green lights along the side and at the stern.

That same night in Atlanta, Texas, a farmer named Jim Nelson had his hair "stand out with fright" when an airship slowly descended and momentarily hovered above him.

But perhaps the most amazing account is the startling experience of Captain Jim Hooten, a well-known Iron Mountain railroad conductor whose story appeared in the April 22, 1897, issue of *The Arkansas Gazette*, Little Rock. Capt. Hooten had been out hunting near Homan when it became dark: "I started to make my way back to the railroad station. As I was tramping through the brush my

attention was attracted by a familiar sound, like the noise of a locomotive airpump." **SAUCER NEWS, SPRING 1970**

Suddenly he came upon five men repairing an odd-looking machine. "There was a medium-sized man who wore smoked glasses," said Hooten. "I mentioned the noise sounded like a Westinghouse air brake. 'Perhaps it does my friend,' he replied. 'We are using condensed air...but you will know more later on.'" **1897**

Capt. Hooten said the front of the ship ended in an abrupt knife-like edge. He recalled, "The sides of the craft bulged gradually, then receded. There were three large wheels upon each side...arranged so that they became concave as they moved forward...The man said good-bye, the ship rose with a hissing sound...in less than the twinkle of an eye the ship disappeared from sight."

1897 The April 23rd issue of *The Modern News*, Harrisburg, Ark., carried the report of an ex-Senator Harris who also encountered some airship pilots when the vessel landed near his home. The crew consisted of an old, bearded man, a woman, and two young men. Harris was told by his informants that someone long ago had learned how to overcome gravity. The elderly man said he was able to secure the plans and experimented with the airship. They were scheduled to visit the planet Mars before putting the ship on public tour.

Harris declined to take a ride aboard the craft, and seconds later it rose swiftly into the sky.

Daniel Gray, a farmer living near Flint, Mich., was working in his field on April 23 when he heard "a terrible rumbling and whizzing sound directly over his head." Gazing upward, Gray was astonished to see a dark object traversing the sky at a high rate of speed. He was puzzled and rather dazed, but suddenly noticed a newspaper dropping from out of the sky. Upon examining it, he saw the newspaper came from Toronto, Canada, dated Oct. 5, 1896. The paper was dry and very well preserved.

The Daily Texarkanian, Texarkana, Ark., published on the same date as the above happenings, gave the account of Judge Lawrence A. Bryne's face-to-face encounter with oriental-like beings aboard an object

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which was anchored near the McKinney Bayou. The three men spoke in a strange language and had distinctive features like that of someone from the Far East. They motioned for Bryne to join them, to his astonishment.

The machinery was made of aluminum and the gas to raise and lower the ship was pumped into an aluminum tank," recalled Bryne.

The Houston Daily Post of April 28, contained a most interesting account:

1897 "Merkel, Texas, April 26—Some parties returning from church last night noticed a heavy object dragging along with a rope attached. They followed it until in crossing the railroad it caught on a rail. On looking up, they saw what they supposed was the airship. It was not near enough to get an idea of the dimensions. A light could be seen protruding from several windows, and there was a bright light in front like a headlight of a locomotive. After some 10 minutes, a man was seen descending the rope. He came near enough to be plainly seen. He wore a light blue sailor suit, and was small in size. He stopped when he discovered the parties at the anchor, and cut the rope below him and sailed off in a northeast direction. The anchor is now on exhibition at the blacksmith shop of Elliott and Miller, and is attracting the attention of hundreds of people."

(continued on inside back cover)

THE STRANGE B.I.C.R. AFFAIR

Dr. Richard H. Pratt

Science Consultant, SAUCER NEWS

I had no idea last spring that, after I wrote an article for *Saucer News* on the possibility of flying saucers being "time machines," I would stumble upon actual evidence for my claim. However, that is exactly what happened, and I am now so shaken by the implications that it may be difficult to relate the events as they occurred. But I shall try.

After the article appeared (Spring-Summer, 1969), Gray Barker relayed a letter to me from a Mrs. W.R. of a large Massachusetts city. Mrs. R., a UFO hobbyist, related that her husband—an avid investigator who is also an electrical engineer—answered an announcement about a new UFO club which had appeared in Ray Palmer's *Flying Saucers* magazine in early 1969.

Mrs. R., fearing I wasn't a subscriber (lucky, since I am not), typed the announcement as it appeared in that issue. But she didn't specify which month's copy it was, and I have since been unable to locate the actual item. However, as she said, it read in part:

"This year will be hailed in Ufological circles as that in which the disparaging elements of Ufology—the occult groups, contactees, psychotics, the money-hungry—began to vanish. It will also be the year in which a new institution was formed to study the Ufo problem in a scientific and precise

manner.

"If you're an intelligent individual, we need your help; but you must write us as soon as you can, as there will be a waiting list. You will complete a questionnaire and undergo a check of your background before you can be accepted."

This ended with an address for correspondence. Called the BICR (the full name was not given), the group was headed by three men, William A. Gautier, Thomas Harper and R. James Kipling.

After Mr. R. contacted the group he received a letter and questionnaire. He was struck by the letter's change of attitude. Unlike the announcement, this now stressed "the formation of a serious, scientific organization composed of intelligent, trained adults from all countries." The publicized attempt to get rid of occult groups, etc., was now labeled as the group's "secondary purpose."

Even so, Mr. R. was engrossed with the idea, and sent the requested dues with the completed questionnaire to the Michigan address. He had noticed that, on the questionnaire, the group displayed an unusual interest in education and scientific training. He received another letter congratulating him on his acceptance, and now the leaders wanted to have an interview with him.

Mr. R. was surprised by the request, since he thought the group was in

Michigan; however, he found his letters had been forwarded to the actual headquarters, miles away in Worcester, Massachusetts! He therefore reported to the new address in the second letter. Mrs. R. did not tell me this address.

When her husband returned home, Mrs. R. said he was "excited and exuberant" over something which he refused to discuss with her. He said she would be told everything when "it was all right."

All this happened in May. For two months, Mr. R's spare time was spent at work either away from home in Worcester, or shut up in his private study until early morning hours. Then, one Sunday afternoon he returned from Worcester in an irate mood. He said the group had disbanded, and the leaders had "stolen" their work.

At first he didn't want to say more, but after an argument with his wife he said he and twelve others had repaired a "temporal transmitter" under the direction of Gautier, Kipling and Harper. The three claimed they had built the device under a federal grant, but the first trial had damaged it. They had needed immediate help from scientifically trained personnel, and had brought them together in a variety of different ways, one of which was the announcement in *FLYING SAUCERS*.

Debris may be from 1897 UFO

Metal found at crash site has unusual properties

By John F. Schuessler
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS WORLD

Did a cigar-shaped unidentified flying object really crash near Aurora, Texas, on April 19, 1897? Some people believe the whole story was a fabrication by S.E. Hayden, a local cotton buyer; while others are reasonably sure the tragic accident really occurred.

Investigators for the mutual UFO Network, headquartered in Seguin, Texas, have uncovered evidence that raises doubts about the hoax theory.

Sightings of strange airships were

Sightings of strange airships were reported all across the United States during the spring of 1897. The Aurora incident was just another UFO sighting; but with an unusual twist. It resulted in the allegation that an object crashed and left debris as proof of the event.

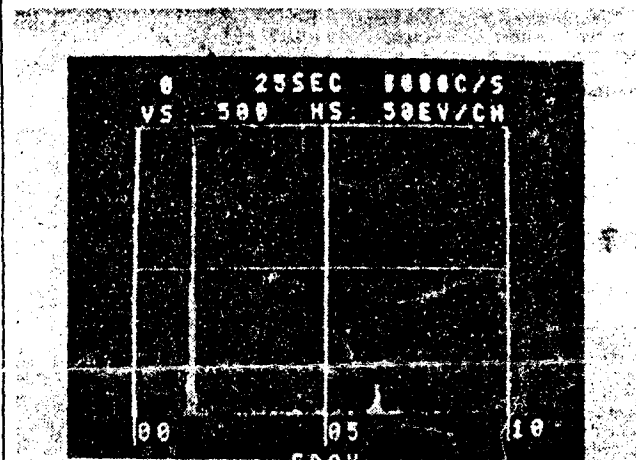
reported all across the United States during the spring of 1897. The Aurora incident was just another UFO sighting; but with an unusual twist. It resulted in the allegation that an object crashed and left debris as proof of the event.

Kin of witnesses remember

Bill Case, a state director for the Mutual UFO Network, discovered family members of the original witnesses were ready to tell what happened that memorable day. Mrs. Mary Evans, about 15 years old at the time, said her mother and father went to the crash site and told her how the airship had exploded and that the pilot was torn up and killed in the crash. He was a small man and was buried later that day in the local cemetery by the men of the town.

Jim Stephens told his son Charlie how the nose of the airship hit the windlass over the water well on Judge J.S. Proctor's farm causing a chain reaction explosion. The flash followed by a fire was visible for more than three miles.

Investigators have reconstructed the events of the sighting and located the crash site. Using sophisticated metal detecting equipment and guided by the eyewitness accounts they retrieved pieces of metal of various size and types. Bill Case said



(TOP AND ON THE COVER) Photograph of a metal sample found 100 feet west of the alleged 1897 UFO crash site in Aurora, Texas. (ABOVE) Electron dispersion x-ray analyzer finds only aluminum and iron in the sample, an anomaly because most terrestrial aluminum contains copper.

"from all indications there was definitely an explosion. The pattern established by metals recovered indicates the craft exploded on the lower right side first blowing bits and pieces over a two or three acre area east and northeast of the well site on top of a rocky limestone hill. Immediately, the rest of the craft exploded throwing other samples to the north and west."

Although it is difficult to deter-

mine which samples may have resulted from the crash, as compared with debris left by people living on the farm during the past three-quarters of a century, some of the samples were unique.

One piece, thought to be a structural member of some kind, was analyzed by a major U.S. laboratory with exciting results. An electron dispersion x-ray analyzer was used to iden-



tify the elements found in the sample. Only aluminum with a trace of iron could be detected.

The sample was retrieved from a location about 100 feet west of the well site beneath four inches of soil. It was lodged directly against the face of the limestone rock and conformed to the exact configuration of the stone, indicating it was in a near molten state when it penetrated the earth and hit the rock where it cooled.

Investigators have reconstructed the events of the sighting and located the crash site. Using sophisticated metal detecting equipment and guided by the eyewitness accounts they retrieved pieces of metal of various size and types. Bill Case said "from all indications there was definitely an explosion..."

X-ray fluorescence analysis determined the sample to be free of zinc. This was an unexpected finding, since the samples retrieved from the east of the well site contained zinc. The soft x-ray spectrographic analysis verified the high purity of the aluminum, the inclusion of iron, and the absence of copper. This also is an anomaly, because commercial aluminum alloys that contain iron usually contain copper.

Photomicrographs of the sample shows the presence of large grains, indicating the sample is stress-free and has gone through a melting and cooling stage. Details of the analysis provide additional clues as to how the material was constructed, the nature of the crystalline structure, and unusual purity. All this is consistent with the allegation that an object exploded spewing debris in all directions, impacting with a tremendous force.

Investigators were able to locate a crude headstone marking a grave in the local cemetery. Metal detecting equipment gave the same readings at the gravesite as they did where the metal was found. The marker and the detector readings seemed to be sufficient for investigators to demand the opening of the grave and exhumation of the pilot's body. Local citizens didn't agree. They blocked opening of the grave. Soon thereafter the headstone was removed and the grave left unmarked and anonymous.

Perhaps the people of Aurora were afraid their longstanding popularity would be diminished if the grave were opened and science proved the whole event was a hoax. On the other hand, what if the grave did hold the remains of an alien pilot? At this time the investigators' files hold sufficient evidence to cast reasonable doubt on the hoax theory.

Strange light may have been a UFO, Ketchumite reports

By SUSAN WHALEY
Wood River Journal

thought initially that the light, about the size of a...

it had come from, Pennay said.

1896-97

GdM 150 — 11

ENERO -84

Marcello Coppetti

Ufologia e strategia

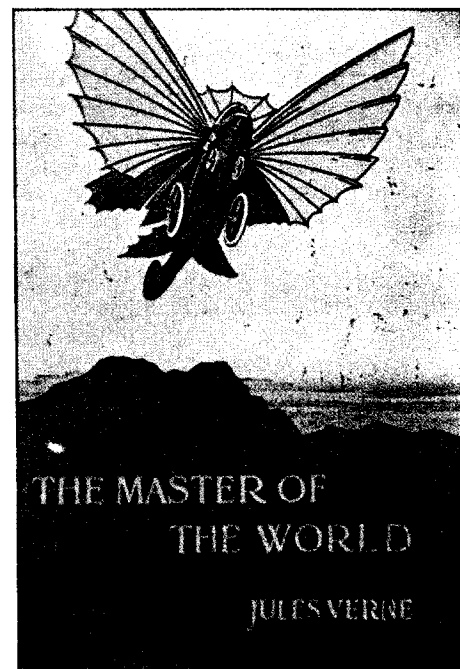
Gli «Airship»

Guerra radiofonica e guerra elettronica - Uno strano fenomeno riscontrato durante la prima guerra mondiale

Gli ufologi che hanno indagato su questo misterioso fenomeno prima del 1947 si sono imbattuti negli «airship», vocabolo inglese che significa astronave. È noto che con questo nome viene genericamente indicato il misterioso (ma poi non troppo, come vedremo) quanto inafferrabile aeromobile avvistato negli Stati Uniti dal novembre 1896 al maggio 1897 e, soprattutto, nell'aprile di quest'ultimo anno. Altre osservazioni di «airship» avvennero nel 1908 in Danimarca e negli Stati Uniti; nel 1909 in Nuova Zelanda, negli Stati Uniti e in Inghilterra; nel 1913, infine, ancora in Inghilterra e negli Stati Uniti. Ho già trattato di questo fenomeno sul GdM n° 113. In quell'articolo concludevo, senza che nessuno mi abbia smentito, con questa frase: «... si ha la netta sensazione che gli oggetti volanti non identificati visti in quegli anni siano macchine terrestri (palloni e dirigibili) e che dietro il fenomeno vi siano i servizi segreti per usarlo come copertura delle nuove scoperte del volo umano e per strumentalizzarlo psicologicamente». A supporto di questa teoria citavo alcuni episodi avvenuti in Inghilterra riguardanti appunto operazioni di spionaggio germanico con dirigibili normali e «tascabili» alcuni dei quali erano anche atterrati. Chi desidera approfondire può rileggere quell'articolo del 1980.

Ma gli «airship», soprattutto quelli avvistati sull'Inghilterra nel 1913 (pochi sanno, però, che misteriosi aeromobili del tipo degli «airship» furono visti in quell'anno anche nei cieli tedeschi), sono, come vedremo, legati agli inizi della «guerra elettronica» («G.E.») anche se è improprio usare questo termine per quel periodo poiché, allora, si trattava di «guerra radiofonica», cioè intercettazione di messaggi in chiaro e in codice trasmessi via radio e disturbo dalla parte avversaria degli apparati di intercettazione, cioè far sentire poco e male o addirittura niente a chi ascoltava sulle diverse frequenze usate dagli alti comandi militari o dagli agenti «sul campo», cioè dalle spie.

L'italiano professor Alessandro Artom



Nel celebre libro di Verne «Il padrone del mondo» viene descritta una nave spaziale assai simile agli «airship» del 1896-97.

aveva inventato un sistema radiogoniometrico dopo aver scoperto l'effetto direzionale di un'antenna a telaio, cioè la capacità che tale tipo di antenna ha di individuare la direzione di provenienza di un'emissione elettromagnetica. Guglielmo Marconi che, dopo l'invenzione della radio, si era trasferito in Inghilterra per le incomprensioni che trovava in Italia, perfezionò la scoperta di Artom. Il radiogoniometro di Marconi riusciva a captare segnali debolissimi, ricercava ed intercettava le diverse emissioni elettromagnetiche individuandone la direzione di provenienza e, quindi, mediante triangolazioni, riusciva a trovare la posizione esatta delle stazioni emittenti. Così il radiogoniometro diventò lo strumento a doppio uso dei servizi d'informazione: serviva al controspionaggio per trovare gli esatti luoghi da dove le spie trasmettevano e serviva allo spionaggio perché, localizzando una stazione emittente dal territorio avversario, che coincideva quasi sempre con la radio di un alto comando militare, significava individuare la località dove si trovava lo stesso co-

THE GREAT AIRSHIP SCARE (continued from page 9)

We must also recall the testimony of Deputy Sheriff John McLemore and Constable John J. Sumpter of Hot Springs, Arkansas who met the occupants of a flying ship on May 13, 1897. An affidavit followed and here is some of that statement:

"While riding northwest from Hot Springs on the night of May 6, 1897, we noticed a bright light high in the heavens. About a hundred yards ahead we saw two persons moving around with lights. Drawing our Winchesters, we demanded: 'Who is that, and what are you doing here?'"

"A man with a dark beard stepped forward and said he and the young woman were traveling through the country in an airship. We could see the outlines of the ship, which was around sixty feet long and cigar-shaped. It was dark and raining and a young man was filling a big sack with water. The woman was careful to keep back in the dark."

The two laymen were offered a free ride in order to get out of the rain, but they declined. The bearded man said he was going to Nashville, Tenn., after seeing the country. Unfortunately, the witnesses left before the ship ascended into the air since they were hurrying to get home.

The airships finally vanished after May, although there were a few reported sightings in 1898 and some activity continuing into 1905. Were they new-fangled contraptions built by some ingenious party of inventors?

It seems unlikely. Did the pilots want us to believe this in order to conceal their real identity and purpose? The angry, bellowing giant in Williamston, Mich.; the strange, oriental men near the McKinney Bayou in Arkansas; and the "little man" seen in Merkel, Texas, all seem to tally with modern-day reports of UFO occupants.

These reports were well documented; they are representative of a large amount of datum, and were published in both the lay and scientific presses.

Through a close scrutiny of the sightings in this period, perhaps we can arrive at some conclusive answers which still awaits us in the mystery of the UFO.

mando. Così, trovando tutte le stazioni radio, lo spionaggio aveva il quadro completo e abbastanza preciso della linea del fronte nemico.

Con quel tipo di radiogoniometro si poteva già riconoscere se la stazione che emetteva, ora da una località ora da un'altra, era la stessa oppure no. Cosicché, se era la stessa, seguendo lo spostamento delle emissioni o tracciando su una carta topografica questi spostamenti, era possibile conoscere i movimenti delle truppe nemiche.

Ciò rese edotti tutti i Servizi d'informazione della necessità di trovare metodi di disturbo e dette un enorme impulso alla tecnica di costruzione di apparati radio, radiogoniometri e accessori sempre più sofisticati e soprattutto di dimensioni tali da essere messi in valige da viaggio molto ridotte (tipo gli attuali «24 ore») e inseriti nei palloni e nei dirigibili.

Quando i tedeschi capirono (fine del 1912) che una guerra con l'Inghilterra sarebbe stata inevitabile e a vicina scadenza decisero che un'operazione necessaria era quella di bombardare Londra con gli «Zeppelin». Iniziarono così nel 1913 con palloni e dirigibili operazioni di ricognizione sull'Isola. I motivi principali erano: risolvere il problema della navigazione per raggiungere l'obiettivo di notte, tenendo conto che, in tempo di guerra, le città sarebbero state completamente oscurate; cercare di ottenere con i radiogoniometri installati sui palloni e sui dirigibili la intercettazione delle radio militari usate dall'Inghilterra verso la Germania e viceversa.

Fu perfezionando questo sistema di intercettazione che i tedeschi risolsero il problema della navigazione notturna. Usando le stazioni radiogoniometriche a terra in Germania e quelle in volo, si accorsero che la navigazione astronomica (impossibile ovviamente quando c'erano nuvole o nebbia) poteva essere so-

stituita con i radiogoniometri, ma purtroppo sorse un nuovo problema. La guida a grande distanza non dava rilevamenti precisi o comunque tali da garantire un effettivo arrivo dei dirigibili sugli obiettivi da bombardare.

Si rese così necessario l'invio di agenti segreti tedeschi in Inghilterra che vi giunsero con ogni mezzo, anche atterrando con palloni (soprattutto poi quando scoppiò la guerra). Ognuno di loro aveva un apparato radiogoniometrico di quelli a misure ridotte. Comunque dovevano essere riforniti ogni tanto, sia di denaro, di pezzi di ricambio e per scambiarsi messaggi in codice con i quali lo stato maggiore tedesco chiedeva informazioni e gli agenti gliele inviavano.

Quando scoppiò la guerra il sistema escogitato dai tedeschi (che si erano sistemati in una villa alla periferia di Londra) funzionò a meraviglia. Infatti, prima dell'inizio del conflitto, durante i voli notturni di ricognizione dei dirigibili «Zeppelin» sulla capitale inglese, gli agenti li rilevavano via radio (cioè per mezzo di un trasmettitore installato a bordo del dirigibile) e quindi, emettendo un segnale che veniva captato dai ricevitori sugli «Zeppelin» riuscivano a guidarli con sufficiente precisione sugli obiettivi da colpire.

L'espedito funzionò per qualche tempo dopo l'inizio della guerra ma poi, quando la sorveglianza aumentò anche nel settore delle emissioni elettromagnetiche e soprattutto il controspionaggio inglese si accorse che le trasmissioni da Londra aumentavano prima dei bombardamenti, capirono che i due fatti (trasmissioni radio e bombardamenti) erano strettamente connessi.

Fu abbastanza facile per il controspionaggio individuare da dove gli agenti tedeschi guidavano i dirigibili e ciò grazie al radiogoniometro perfezionato da Marconi sfruttando il metodo ideato dal

prof. Artom. Infatti i dirigibili trasmettevano sempre sulla medesima frequenza.

Eppure una volta individuati gli agenti, le stazioni tedesche non furono smantellate. Anzi il controspionaggio inglese se ne servì per mandare fuori rotta i dirigibili che, così, credevano di bombardare Londra o qualche obiettivo vitale e, invece, sganciavano le bombe in mare aperto.

Quando poi decisero che questo gioco non valeva più la candela, allora gli inglesi giocarono un tiro mancino ai tedeschi. Approntato un aeroporto di fortuna vicino alle coste del Mare del Nord vi fecero affluire una squadriglia di aerei da caccia e quando si accorsero che era in corso una grossa operazione di bombardamento fecero navigare gli «Zeppelin» ad alcune centinaia di metri dall'aeroporto da dove, nel frattempo, erano decollati i caccia. Fu una strage di dirigibili che, da allora, non furono più impiegati. Ma la necessità aguzzò l'ingegno. Nel frattempo, infatti, i tedeschi avevano subodorato che qualcosa non andava più come al solito ed avevano perfezionato un aereo, il «Gotha», che prese il posto degli «Zeppelin» mentre quest'ultimi, sempre insieme ai palloni, vennero da allora usati esclusivamente per la ricognizione.

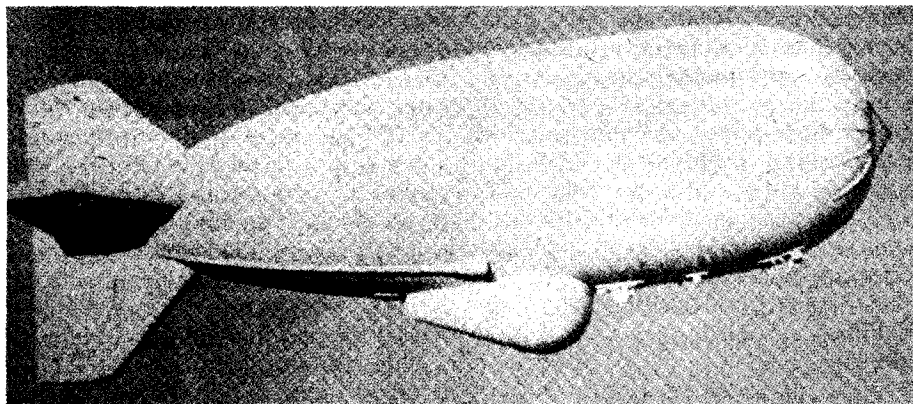
Da un esame della casistica relativa agli «airship» si ricava una interessante constatazione. La percentuale di fenomeni anomali rimasti inesplicabili risulta molto bassa. Supera di poco il 2 per cento. Si ripete così quello che è accaduto quando mi sono occupato degli RPV come possibili cause della osservazione di UFO. Come ho infatti scritto più volte sul GdM e nel mio libro «UFO: arma segreta», dopo avere accertato l'esistenza della serie degli RPV, la percentuale di presunti UFO è calata nettamente raggiungendo il 2-2,5 per cento.

Tutto questo ha un preciso ed interessante significato: sia nel periodo dei cosiddetti «airship» sia nel periodo ufologico contemporaneo la percentuale di casi che possono ritenersi UFO è identica.

Siccome il dato da me ricavato viene da un esame delle notizie riportate sugli «airship» da giornali e libri che si sono occupati dell'argomento, sarebbe veramente interessante sapere che cosa ne pensano gli «addetti ai lavori». Soprattutto, ben lieto di essere smentito su questo strano dato che si ripete e molto più lieto se qualcuno potrà inviarmi dati e notizie che confermano questo mio risultato.

Marcello Coppetti

Alla fine del secolo XIX apparirono i primi dirigibili simili a grossi obici. In coincidenza gli Stati Uniti e l'Europa furono sorvolate da strani oggetti di origine sconosciuta.



aise que j'ai pu trouver et **toutes les** références dont j'ai eu connaissance. Lorsqu'il y a lieu, les contradictions entre sources sont indiquées, qu'elles portent sur la localisation spatio-temporelle ou sur des détails de l'observatoir.

J'ai opté pour un classement strictement chronologique, parce qu'il est neutre vis-à-vis des hypothèses, qu'il met immédiatement en évidence d'éventuelles vagues et qu'une subdivision en types de traces aurait été passablement arbitraire (d'autant plus qu'existent des cas, certes très rares, où plus d'un type de traces ont été relevées).

Comme on le constatera, les informations dont je dispose se ramènent parfois à fort peu de choses : pour une quinzaine de cas, je n'ai strictement qu'un lieu et une date trouvés dans une liste et aucun détail sur la substance de l'observation, car je n'ai pas encore pu mettre la main sur les références mentionnées. Je serais donc très reconnaissant à tout lecteur qui, ayant accès à des sources dont je ne dispose pas, pourrait compléter ma documentation sur l'un ou l'autre cas du présent catalogue et aussi, bien entendu, porter à ma connaissance des cas de ce type qui m'auraient totalement échappé. Si ces renseignements complémentaires revêtent une certaine importance, ils pourraient faire l'objet d'un supplément au catalogue qui serait publié dans LDLN.

1) **Girard (Illinois, USA), 12 avril 1897**

Le premier cas à proprement parler ufologique se situe pendant la fameuse vague d'observations "d'airships" du printemps 1897 aux Etats-Unis. A 18 heures ce jour-là, l'opérateur de nuit du télégraphe de Girard est prévenu par un collègue d'une ville voisine que l'airship venait de passer et se dirigeait vers Girard. Un quart d'heure plus tard, il voit passer le mystérieux engin, en forme de cigare et muni d'appendices latéraux, qui se rapprochait du sol. Avec trois autres personnes, il se met à suivre l'engin, qui disparaît derrière un bosquet. Avant qu'ils y parviennent, l'objet s'envole et ils peuvent apercevoir des occupants à bord. Ayant néanmoins poursuivi leur marche jusqu'au lieu d'atterrissage supposé, ils peuvent "remarquer sur le sol des empreintes de pas d'hommes. Elles ne se trouvaient pas n'importe où et il était évident qu'elles avaient été faites par les occupants de la machine qui avaient dû sauter du bord pour procéder à un probable réglage quelconque". Aucun autre détail n'étant donné sur les traces, peut-on supposer qu'il s'agissait de chaussures tout à fait normales ?

C'est Jean Sider (53) qui donne le récit le plus complet de ce cas, qui vient s'intercaler

entre d'autres observations, dont un autre atterrissage quelques kilomètres plus au sud. Comme ces différentes observations s'enchaînent logiquement, du point de vue horaire et géographique, et vu le nombre de témoins, honorablement connus, Sider conclut qu'il est difficile d'imaginer un canular.

Jacques Vallée (36, cas 15) et Ted Phillips (19, p. 3) citent également le cas, mais parlent simplement de "traces sur une grande surface".

2) **Saginaw (Michigan, USA), peu avant le 1^{er} mai 1897.**

Toujours pendant la vague de 1897, le Saginaw Evening News (journal qui a rapporté de nombreuses histoires d'airship) du 1^{er} mai relate la découverte d'une "chaussure de proportions gigantesques" près d'une ligne de chemin de fer, cette curieuse trouvaille étant, bien entendu, supposée être tombée d'un "navire aérien" (54).

Comme il fallait s'y attendre, on ne nous précise pas ce que cette godasse est devenue... Je concède qu'il ne s'agit pas là vraiment d'une trace de pas : le seul lien (ténu) avec le sujet qui nous occupe est que cette chaussure **aurait pu** être à l'origine d'une telle trace... En outre, Jean Sider, qui est assurément le meilleur connaisseur français de la vague de 1897, m'a confié que ce cas était pour lui peu sérieux. Si j'ai néanmoins évoqué cette affaire, c'est par souci d'être le plus complet possible et aussi, avouerai-je pour introduire une note d'humour trop rare à mon sens dans la presse ufologique.

3) **Monts Sikota Alin (Extrême-Orient russe), 11 juillet 1908.**

L'explorateur russe V.K. Arsenyev raconte, dans un livre publié à Vladivostok en 1947, avoir observé près de l'embouchure de la rivière Gobilli, dans cette chaîne de montagnes parallèle à la côte de la mer du Japon, "une marque sur le sentier qui était très semblable à l'empreinte de pas d'un homme". Son chien se mit à grogner et on entendit quelque chose bouger dans les buissons. Après quelques minutes d'immobilité, l'homme lança une pierre en direction de l'animal inconnu. Alors se fit entendre un battement d'ailes et une grande forme émergea du brouillard pour s'envoler par-dessus la rivière, où la brume se referma bientôt sur elle. L'explorateur ayant raconté cet incident à des habitants de la région, ceux-ci se lancèrent dans un récit animé à propos d'un homme qui pouvait voler dans les airs. Les chasseurs observaient souvent ses traces, qui apparaissaient et disparaissaient soudainement. La seule explication possible était, disaient-ils, que cet "homme" se posait sur le sol, puis s'élevait à nouveau dans l'air (55).

L, J - OCT 86

LDLN

OHIO AIRSHIP REPORTS OF 1897

62 PAGES

QUINCY ALLIGATOR

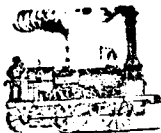
Making Things Lively About the Marsh Lately.

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)

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)

IGNACIO DARNAUDE ROJAS-MARCOS

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

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)

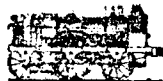
Saw a Man In it.

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.

"DATA-NET" JOURNAL

-7-



1897 "AIRSHIP" - MIDWEST CHRONOLOGY

(Compiled by J.J. Clark from research by Walt Andrus, Director, MIDWEST UFO NETWORK)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DAY/LOCAL TIME</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION (ACTION)</u>	<u>WITNESSES</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>
4-1	Galesburg, Mich.	Thu/2200	High flyover, voices	x	(A)
4-5	Nashville, Ill.	Mon/2000	Flyover	x	(A)
4-6	Omaha, Nebr.	Tue/2100	Maneuvered	Kiplinger, Hawks, Bearket, Hospe, Dietz, Funkhauser, Guion, Newville	(A)
4-7	Wolf Creek Township, Ia.	Wed/Nite	Landed, animal reaction	Butler	(B)
4-8	Btwn. West Liberty & Cedar Rapids, Ia.	Thu/1930	Low, paced train	x	(A)
4-8	Solon, Ia.	Thu/2030	Slow flyby	x	(A)
4-8	Belle Plaine, Ia.	Thu/2100	Maneuvered	x	(A)
4-8	Cedar Rapids, Ia.	Thu/2100	Slow oscillating flyby	x	(A)
4-8	Northwood, Ia.	Thu/2230	Slow oscillating flyby	x	(A)
4-10	Quincy, Ill.	Sat/2300	Maneuvered	x	(A)
4-11	Milwaukee, Wisc.	Sun/Daybrk	Maneuvered	x	(B)
4-11	Milwaukee, Wisc.	Sun/2100	Hovered, occupants seen	Mayer	(B)
4-11	Pavillion, Mich.	Sun/Late PM	Flyover, explosion, objects recovered	Somers, Chadburn, Wallace	(B)
4-12	Burlington, Ia.	Mon/AM	Paced train	Bullard	(B)
4-12	Bloomington, Ill.	Mon/1200	Flyover	(B)	
4-12	Appleton, Wisc.	Mon/Nite	Maneuvered	Lunn	(A)
4-12	Nilwood, Ill.	Mon/1500	Landed	Street, Tuples, Metcalf	(A)
4-12	Green Ridge, Ill.	Mon/Aft	Landed, occupants seen	X	(A)
4-12	Sherman, Ill.	Mon/2000	Flyby	x	(A)
4-12	Williamsville, Ill.	Mon/2045	Flyby	x	(A)
4-15	Springfield, Ill.	Thu/1200	Landed, conversed occupants	Winkle, Hull	(B)
4-15	Perry Springs, Ill.	Thu/2100	Maneuvered, paced train	Malley, Cupp, Lusk, Lawson, Peacock	(A)
4-16	Astoria, Ill.	Thu/x	Flyover, note found	Swearengen	(B)
4-26	Yates Center, Kans.	Mon/Day	Occupants see, cow missing-remains found	Hamilton, Thomas	(B)

(A): Quincy Morning Whig

(B): Quincy Daily Herald

SIGHTING REPORT CHRONOLOGY

1964 - 1968

(Compiled by J.J. Clark from research by Jerry Johnson, WA5RON)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DAY/LOCAL TIME</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION (ACTION)</u>	<u>WITNESSES</u>	<u>(SOURCE)</u>
1964:					
4-24	Socorro, N.M.	Fri/Aft.	Landed, occupants seen	Zamorra	(A)
4-25-27	Espanola, N.M.	x	Ground marks, UFO sighted	Vigil	(A)
4-26	La Madera, N.M.	Sun/x	Landed, ground marks	x	(x)
4-30	Baker, Ca.	Thu/Day	Landed, ground marks	Biggs, Ayres	(A)
6-29	Lavonia, Ga.	Mon/x	Buzzed car, physiological effects	x	(X)
6-8	Boston, Mass.	x	Possible landing	x	(x)
9-5	Glassboro, N.J.	Sat/x	Landed, ground marks	x	(x)
12-29	Patuxent Navy Air Base, Md.	Tue/x	Flyover, radar	x	(x)
1965:					
7-	Lima, Peru	x	Landed, ground marks	x	(B)
7(?)	Warminster, Engl.	x	Hovered	x	(A)
7-3	Antartica, Argentine Navy Base	Sat/x	Maneuvered. Photo.	x	(B)
7-9	Azores Islands, Pacific	Fri/x	Hovered. E-M effect	x	(A)
7-12	Oporto, Portugal	Mon/x	Flyby	Fernandes	(B)
7-13	Wynnewood, Okla.	Tue/AM	Flyover. Radar	Sikes	(B)
7-17	Colonia & Buenos Aires, Argentina	Sat/x	Maneuvered		

- 7-31 - Hobbs, Carlsbad, Artesia, New Mex. - Sat/2020-2100 - Flyover - x - (B)
July to Sept. - Near Mexico City, Mex. - x - Deluge of reports, many with occupants seen - x - (B)
- 8-1 - Central Okla. - Sun/2100 - Formation flight, radar - x - (A)
8-2 - Dallas, Tex. - Mon/AM - Flyover, radar - x - (A,B)
8-2 - Garland, Tex. - Mon/0100 - Hovered - Bostic - (B)
8-2 - McAllen, Tex. - Mon/2145 - Formation flight, landed, recovered. Doughnut shape, silver dollar size - x - x
- 8-11 - Paris, Tex.(?) - Wed/x - Hovered, man shot at it - x - (A)
8-31 - Warminster, Engl. - Tue/0155 - Explosion, cloud, UFO ascended from center -x-(B)
9-3 - Exeter, New Hamp. - Fri/0200 - Hovered - x - x -
9-16 - Pretoria, So. Afr. - Thu/2400 - Landed, ground marks - x - (B)
10-? - New York, N.Y. - x/AM - Blackout, Hovered, "spoke" - Whitman - (A)
12-? - No. Mexico - x - Many reports. Photo - x - (B)
- 1966:
- 3-1 - Tulsa, Okla. - Tue/x - Photo - Tinker - x
3-20 - Ann Arbor (nr. Dexter), Mich. - Sun/2000 - Low flyby, plus formation flight - x - (A)
3-21 - Hillsdale, Mich. - Mon/x - Landed, ground marks - x - (A)
3-21 - Dallas, Tex. - Mon/2030-2100 - High flight - Choate - (A)
3-22 - Trinidad, Colo. - Tue/x - Several flyby - x - x
3-23 - Temple, Okla. - Wed/0500 - Landed, marking on side, occupant seen - Laxson, Anderson - (A,B)
3-27 - Columbus, Ga. - Sun/0530 - Flyover, radar - x - (A)
3-27 - Nr. New Orleans, La. - x - Explosion, pieces landed (over Army restricted area), Radar - x - (A)
3-28 - Ann Arbor, Mich. and area - Mon/x - Many, low flight - x - (B)
3-29 - Houston, Tex. - Tue/x - Collided with car, dents - x - (KLIF, radio)
3-30 - Dallas, Tex. - Wed/x - Low flight, swirled water in swimming pool, overturned garbage cans - Kerpsey - (KLIF, radio)
3-31 - Dallas, Tex. - Thu/2400-0400 - Many, maneuvered - x - (A,B)
4-2 - Dallas, Tex. - Sat/0520 - Hovered - King - (A)
4-4 - Dallas, Tex. - Mon/0139 - Possible landing - Charba - (A)
4-17 - Ravenna, Ohio - Sun/AM - Car chased UFO. Photo - x - (A)
4-25 - Florida - Mon/x - Plane chased UFO - Gov. Burns - x
7-25 - Atlanta, Ga. - Mon/x - Several flyover - Bennet - x
10-12 - Johnson City, Tenn. - Wed/Eve - Sky hover. Telescope. Angel hair - x - x
10-27 - Riverhead, N.Y. - Thu/2400 - Hovered - x - (A)
11-? - Kingsport, Tenn. - x - Flyby - Dolen - (A)
11-18 - Dallas, Tex. - Fri/2400-0300 - Flyby - x - x
- 1967:
- 1-9 - Mt. Clemens, Mich. - Mon/1430 - Hovered. Photo - Jaroslaw - (A,B)
2-? - Nr. Wharton, Tex. - x - Low, maneuvered - x - (B)
3-? - No. Houston, Tex. - x - Hovered low - Kaiser - (A)
3-? - Nr. Piggott, Ark. - Flyby - x - (A)
4-24 - Monroe, No. Car. - Mon/Eve - Paced car. Hovered - Whitney - (A)
6-28 - New Castle, Pa. - Wed/x - Hovered. Photos - Kozora - x
9-7 - Alamosa, Colo. - Thu/x - Flyover. Snippy found. Ground marks - King - (A)
- 1968:
- 2-4 - Dallas, Tex. - Sun/2000 - Slow flyby - x - (A,B)
3-3 - Indiana & Tenn. - Sun/2145 - Flyover - x - (B)
3-21 - Alamosa, Colo. - Thu/x - Low, maneuvered - Nicholas - x
4-7 - Seattle, Wash. - Sun/Nite - Formation flight, maneuvered - x - (E)
4-5 - Madrid, Spain - Thu/Aftn - Hovered (balloon?) - x - (B)
1-3 - Houston, Tex. - Sun/1615 - Low flyby. Angel hair - x - x
(A): Dallas Times Herald (B): Dallas Times News



He was somewhat put out by the statements which were made in some of the morning papers and declared that many which were attributed to him were false.

"I have never seen the air-ship in my life," he said, "and I know very little about it. A very wealthy acquaintance of mine called on me about a week ago and asked me to draw up papers for a practical patent on an air-ship. I believe him to be thoroughly sane, and listened with interest as he discussed the apparatus. However, from his description I could not draw up the papers without first having a personal knowledge from a model. He left me and promised to return today with a model to show me. So far he has not appeared."

The attorney refused to give any names whatever, or enter into the details of the supposed invention. He said the matter was as much a mystery to him as to many others.

Up to a late hour the inventor failed to materialize with his model.

SEEKING THE PATENT

Inquiry Is Made Among The Various Attorneys At Washington

Washington, Nov. 23 (AP) - At the Patent Office today nothing could be learned of an application for a patent on the flying machine alleged to be making successful flights in the neighborhood of Sacramento.

The rules of the office forbid any disclosure of names of applicants or the character of inventions for which they seek protection.

Inquiry among the patent attorneys known to control the Pacific Coast business, failed to disclose any knowledge of the alleged success in aeronautics.

Professor Langley, of the Smithsonian Institution, who has experimented scientifically for some time to demonstrate the best methods of solving the question of aerial navigation, excused himself from discussing the matter. His manner indicated plainly that he gave little credence to the Sacramento reports. (Oakland Tribune, Oakland, Calif., 23 Nov 1896)

-to be continued



ENIGMATOLOGICAL SURVEY

-Paul Braczyk

Roy Norton's article MONUMENTS TO UFO SPACE PIONEERS? in the June/72 SAGA is a good article about the enigmatic Egyptian pyramids although, it seems to me, that he doesn't tell us anything we already didn't know, and what he does tell us, does not live up to what we expect from the title of the article. Mr. Norton states that he went to Egypt on assignment from SAGA. Well, SAGA could have saved quite a bundle by visiting their local library; they would have gleaned all the same facts, and perhaps a few more. Now I am not trying to say that the facts are not interesting - for they certainly are - and so is this article. The thing is, that from the title of the article we are led to believe that we are about to be told new revelations concerning the pyramids and their connection to UFOs. Unfortunately, the only references to UFOs we find are quotes from Morris Jessup's THE CASE FOR UFOs (sic) which was first published in 1955, and a re-hash of the contactee claims of Reinhold Schmidt.

A calm port in the storm-tossed seas of re-hash is Ivan Sanderson's latest enigmatological effort INVESTIGATING THE UNEXPLAINED: A compendium of Disquieting Mysteries Of the Natural World. I suppose that if Mr. Sanderson can't come up with original material, as director of The Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained, no one can. There are all kinds of goodies in this book, including all kinds of "extras" that you always want to see included in books of this type but never are, e.g. good references appendices, charts, diagrams, photos, etc. Written in the true fortune vein, the book contains what can only be described as fortune; monster reports, sky falls, spontaneous human combustion, and so on and so forth... I can truthfully say that this is one of the best books that I have read lately. It is available through Publishers Service Company, 485 Main Street, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024 for \$7.95 + .55 postage or in your local bookstore (Prentice Hall is the publisher).

Following my policy of bringing to you information concerning new and interesting

Attorney Collins' Story Is Believed By His Friends



23 Nov 1896 - Oakland, Calif. (Mon/1900)-(4)

That a huge airship has been hovering over Oakland for the last few nights has in the minds of many been conclusively proven. A number of persons whose integrity is unquestionable have seen the strange navigator of the air and this number includes many whose skepticism has been pronounced.

Last evening at about 7:30 o'clock, the passengers on an Alameda car were startled by the sight of a brilliant stream of light high in the heavens off in the direction of Hayward. The passengers distinctly saw the outlines of an airship and watched its maneuvers high in the skies.

The ship resembles a huge bird in its outlines and seemed to rise and fall in its course. A light streamed from the head of the ship, throwing a white stream of light for several hundred yards.

As the outlines of the airship were plainly discerned. The passengers in the street car became greatly excited. The phenomenon had first been noted by a man who had been idly watching the heavens. As soon as he perceived the light he attracted the attention of the other passengers and all intensely interested, watched the peculiar machine as it made its way through the skies. It was high in the heavens and appeared to be of huge size. When first seen it seemed to be floating over San Leandro. It moved rapidly, going at least twenty miles an hour. It shot across the skies to the northwest, then turned quickly and disappeared in the direction of Hayward.

Not only was the airship seen by the passengers, but many other residents of this city distinctly saw the brilliant light and the huge bird-like body floating in mid-air. None of the spectators were acquainted with each other and yet their stories are startlingly similar, agreeing as to time, direction of the airship and description. These facts leave little doubt in the minds of many people that a successful airship has been invented and is navigating the heavens.

Miss Wilson, a daughter of Captain Wilson of the police force, and her friend, Miss Hunter, are among those who viewed the strange sight. The two friends accompanied another young lady to the street car about 7 P.M. yesterday, when their attention was attracted by the peculiar light in the skies. The huge bird-like body from which the light emanated was clearly visible and both young ladies are positive that it was an airship. It followed the same course as described by the passengers on the Alameda car.

Other Oaklanders bear similar testimony. Officer Carson was startled by the strange sight and his story is not to be shaken by scoffers. His experience was like others.

Attorney A. A. Moore told a Tribune reporter this morning that Attorney George D. Collins of Alameda informed him (Moore) two days ago that a successful airship had been invented and that the inventor was a client of Collins. The story of its aerial navigations was a fact, he declared, and the public would learn more concerning it in a few days.

A clerk in Attorney Collins' office corroborated this statement and also said that it was a fact that the airship has been navigating the heavens above Oakland, Hayward and vicinity. He furthermore added that the airship left that evening for Los Angeles. This will account for its maneuvers last evening when it was seen hovering in the northwest.

As all the persons relating the accounts of the airship are reputable persons, a general belief in the story is gaining ground.

The inventor's attorney, George D. Collins, withholds his client's name at present. The machine is run by compressed air and generates its own electricity for the powerful arc light. Further particulars in regard to the invention Mr. Collins declines to give at present.

THROWS A DAMPER

What Attorney Collins Says Regarding The Inventor

Attorney Collins, who figures in the airship mystery, was interviewed by a Tribune reporter this afternoon with regard to his connection with the affair.

1896 AIRSHIP SIGHTINGS

PART II

Submitted by Mr. Donald H. White of Oakland, California

YOU CAN'T MISS IT

Just Look At The Sky And You Will See The Airship
SO SAY THE CREDULOUS
It Was In Red Bluff And Also Oakland Last Night
EXPERIENCES ARE RELATED
All Sorts of Rumors Are Floating About The Town



25 Nov 1896 - Red Bluff- Chico- Leesville, Calif. (Wed/1900) - (4)

Red Bluff, Nov. 26 - Many residents assert they saw the alleged airship in this neighborhood last evening.

It was first noticed about 7 o'clock, and was thought to be a particularly bright star, but which was moving rapidly in a southwesterly direction towards the mountains.

It finally disappeared over the mountains.

The summit of the mountains could be seen above the mysterious light as it moved west.

Soon after its disappearance a telegram from Chico stated the supposed airship had passed that town soon after 1 o'clock.

After it vanished it again passed over Red Bluff, and then a telegram from Leesville said the supposed airship had come from the direction of Red Bluff, and after making a few turns had returned in the direction from which it came.

Several citizens say that while at the first only a light was visible, that later the body of an egg shaped object was visible moving quickly through the air.

The theory that it was a star was rejected because of its distinctly rocking motion; which was like the motion made by a kite.

SEEN IN OAKLAND

Many Believe In The Mystery, Recite their Personal Experiences

Oakland, Calif. (Wed/1815)-(4)

The fact that what was apparently the same mysterious object, is claimed to have been seen earlier in the evening by a large number of Oaklanders, causes some doubt to arise in the minds of many.

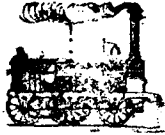
The meteoric display which an astronomer predicted for the 13th of this month, has been brought into the case and now it is being claimed that the visions are nothing less than meteors and comets which are participating in Heaven's pyrotechnic display one by one.

Charles White of East Oakland says he is positive he saw the airship last night. He crossed on the 6:15 o'clock ferry from San Francisco and says that while on the cable car to the boat a number of passengers noticed what appeared to be the mysterious visitor in the heavens near South San Francisco. It rapidly approached and raced the boat across the bay, beating it so badly that it was hovering over Alameda by the time the boat docked. From the train the passengers saw the light continuing in the same direction and later when on an Eighth street electric car could plainly discern it though then the object was far distant.

A. B. Parker, conductor of the car, corroborates the story, for he, with a number of others watched the strange thing until it disappeared from view.

A small-sized scare was started today, when the present location of the airship was said to be in Alameda. A visit to the location described revealed nothing but the remains of an experimental torpedo boat which had been built some years ago.

The uncertainty of the thing has been causing much speculation, and now the streets are lined with an inquisitive throng, all gazing heavenward. (Oakland Tribune, Oakland, Calif., 25 Nov 1896)



1896 AIRSHIP SIGHTINGS
PART III

This is the final installment of the group of historical clippings submitted by Mr. Donald H. White of Oakland, California.

EITHER MARS OR VENUS - Professor Burckhalter Tells of the "Airship's" Light
HE LAUGHS AT THE TALES - The Astronomers, He Said, Have Not Noted Anything Unusual
WHAT THE WATCHERS SAW - He says the Present Theories Are All Pure Fakes

30 Nov 1896 - Oakland California

There is one confirmed skeptic in regard to the airship. He is Professor Burckhalter of the Shabot Observatory. His time has been taken up lately by persons who are anxious to view the aerial machine through the telescope. Many persons have advanced the theory that the airship is a clever advertising dodge of some gas company that is trying to boom a new kind of illuminating gas. Professor Burckhalter laughs at this theory as well as others.

"If there were any airship I would turn the telescope on it, you may be sure," said Prof. Burckhalter today. "What people have been taking for the brilliant electric light of an airship is nothing more or less than one of the two planets, Mars or Venus. People want to believe in the airship, and it is astonishing the way they deceive themselves. Venus is as brilliant as an arc light and does move very slowly through the heavens. Anyone who pays a little attention to the heavens might be deceived into believing it an electric light gleaming through the clouds. Last Saturday night when there was such excitement over the airship, what people were looking at was the planet Mars, which appeared very brilliant that evening.

The theories in regard to the airship are pure imagination. If there were any strange objects in the heavens, we would certainly know if it, and all these theories are, I believe, pure fakes." (Oakland Tribune, Oakland, Calif., 30 Nov 1896)

SAYS HE SAW IT - Case Gillson Gives a Graphic Description of the Airship
HE WATCHED IT MOVING - It Was About 1500 Feet Above the Level Ground
SIDE PROPELLERS WORKED - It Was Cigar Shaped With a Tail Like a Fish's

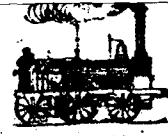
26 Nov 1896 - Oakland, Calif. (Thu/2000)-(4)

The airship has again been careering through Oakland atmosphere, and has even permitted a favored few to catch a glimpse of its metal sides and patent wings. Those who have seen it refuse to believe that they were misled by their imaginations or have mistaken Mars or Venus for electric light streaming from the fancied head of a mythical airship.

Now a young electrician of this city declares on his work of honor, that he has seen the airship at close range, and describes its exact appearance. The young man is Case Gillson, a son of Professor Gillson, ex-Superintendent of Schools and principal of the Normal Training School. His testimony is supported by other young men who saw the strange aerial navigator at the same time.

Gillson and his friends saw the airship twice during last Thursday evening, at 8 and 8:30 P.M. The skies were perfectly clear, and a strong northwest wind was blowing. The airship was moving rapidly from the southeast towards the north in the teeth of the wind. No light was visible, merely the weird peculiar body silhouetted against the clear skies. Case Gillson, his small brother and the Petah brothers distinctly saw the strange sight, and Gillson describes its appearance very graphically.

"The airship was moving very rapidly from the southeast towards Lorin, and not a light was visible," said Gillson. "It was about 1,000 or 1,500 feet in the air and looked like a great black cigar with a fish-like tail. If it had side propellers, they were revolving so rapidly that I could not see them. The body was at least 100 feet long and attached to it was a triangular tail, one apex being attached to the main body. The surface of the airship looked as if it were made of aluminum, which exposure to wind and weather had turned dark. I saw all this distinctly, and I am willing to take



any oath to the truth of what I say.

The airship went at a tremendous speed. As it neared Lorin it turned quickly and disappeared in the direction of San Francisco. At half past 8 we saw it again, when it took about the same direction and disappeared.

"I have studied the subject of airships to a certain extent, and I see no reason why one should not be successful. I know that I was not mistaken about the airship and took a kite for the real thing. It was an airship, of that I am convinced.

Gillson has some ideas of his own on the construction of airships, and since seeing the strange objects in the skies has become more enthusiastic than ever.

Percy Drew was another individual favored with a glimpse of the airship. He says it visited Oakland Saturday night. It then carried a red light and moved with its usual quickness. Both young men agree that the ship was of enormous size, measuring at least 100 feet in length. Gillson thinks nitrogen gas is used to lift the machine, and that Fargo electric batteries supply the propelling power.

Gillson is at present the only person who has openly declared that the machine was visible on a clear night. Its previous appearances have been on cloudy, obscure nights, when persons may have been misled by taking stars for electric lights and clouds for the shadowy form of an airship. Gillson is also an amateur astronomer, and declares that he could not mistake a star or a cloud for an airship. He believes that if the French made a partial success of an airship in 1888 it is not surprising that American enterprise has perfected plans for a machine which is now successfully navigating the atmosphere. Why the machine does not appear in the daylight no one seems to know, and until it does unbelievers will continue to scoff.

**HOW ABOUT THIS? - A San Josean Declares That He Travelled on the Ship
26 Nov 1896 - San Francisco, Calif. (Thu/Day)-(I-3\$)**

The champion airship story of the season is told by John A. Horen, an electrician in the employ of the Electric Improvement Co. of this place (San Jose).

Horen says he has a patent on an electric platinum speaking apparatus, and by appointment he went to San Francisco Thursday to see the inventor of the airship who wished to see the apparatus.

Said Horen: "We went on horseback to a point on Sandy Beach where the airship was, got aboard and rose very high.

"The height was registered by a meter on the ship.

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"Thursday afternoon we traveled westward before day, and the next morning saw lights. The inventor said they were the lights of Honolulu.

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"The airship arose by means of two propellers, the movement was noiseless and swift.

"The inventor is 45 years old, but I cannot now tell any news, but the motive power is not steam or electricity.

"It is a wonderful machine and can be stopped and made to stand still in the air anywhere. It comes down as lightly as a feather."

Horen lives at the New York Exchange Hotel and went to San Francisco Thursday.

Some seem to give credence to his story, and all admire his ability as an accomplished story teller, and say he has a magnificent imagination.

He sticks to his story.

He bears the name of a hard-working sober man.

The August/72 issue of SAGA contains an article by Richard Winer titled BERMUDA TRIANGLE--UFO TWILIGHT ZONE. Mr. Winer begins the article by chastising "other authors" for "borrowing their facts" from previous works and research (Vincent Gaddis)

contactee material, I would like to mention a book called THE SHOCKING TRUTH by Albert Coe. The "storyline" is familiar enough - Earthling stumbles across being from another planet who takes him into confidence and reveals the usual contactee-type stuff - the difference, and there IS a difference, is that Albert Coe is exceptionally articulate and his story has no religious overtones. These two facts alone cause the reader to sit up and take notice. Could it be that Albert Coe is telling it as it happened? I don't know, but he tells it like it did. Another unusual thing is the quality of the illustrations; usually the author scratches something out and labels it "flying saucer" or "Venusian" or something, but here we have some of the most artistic sketches that I have seen in any book, let alone a contactee-oriented one. These were done by Thomas Lulevitch. Quite a curious book, this one! It is available through Franklin O. Pease, P.O. Box 413, Philadelphia, PA 19105 for \$5.95 + .75¢ shipping and handling - Pennsylvania residents must add .36¢ sales tax.

For the past few months I have been mentioning UFO books published by Exposition Press. For anyone interested in their material I would also like to mention that a large catalogue of books is available by dropping a note to Exposition Press Inc., 50 Jericho Turnpike, Jericho, New York 11753. And you know you don't hardly get nuttin' for free these days.

John Keel's ANOMALY has changed its image somewhat in issue number 7; it is now subtitled "A Journal of Forteana" and has the look of a professional magazine. This one is also free! Send a 9 X 12 manila envelope, self-addressed and stamped with .16¢ postage, to Specialized Research, P.O. Box 351, Murray Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10006 for your copy. I suppose that the "gimmick" here, if you can call it that, is that Keel uses this magazine for gathering material for his books.

You may recall reading about some "Viking runestones" found at Popham Beach, Maine awhile back in the papers. If you are a pre-Columbian discovery of America buff, you might like to get a copy of THE SPIRIT POND RUNESTONES published by the New England Antiquities Research Association. This contains all the up-to-date info on the runestones, including photographs and maps. To non-members of the association it sells for \$2.00 and is available from NEARA, 4 Smith St., Milford, N.H. 03055. If you are interested in unusual archeology you might consider joining NEARA. Write to Andrew Rothovius at the above address for details.

The June/72 issue of FATE contains two good articles of interest to enigmatologists: A FLAP OF GLOWING CROSSES by David Techter and ON THE TRAIL OF PUMAS AND ULAS (unidentified leaping animals -- a touch of Keelian humor there) by Jerome Clark and Loren Coleman.

THE OUTSIDERS: True Documented Accounts of Their Activities is a new nicely-printed bulletin being put out by Robert Goerman. This first issue contains some MIB material and an interesting piece on how to turn your TV set into a UFO detector. The subscription rates are \$4.00 per year for four, 4-page issues: THE OUTSIDERS, 615 Earl Avenue, New Kensington, PA 15068.

THE FLITTERING FINGER OF FORTEANA This month's poison projectile goes to Wilfred Grist of Devises, England. Why you say? Simply because Grist's horde of 968 pigs ate Brian King's airplane! They also ate four gates, two-and-a-half tons of hay, a hay wagon, 30 asbestos sheets, half-a-ton of cattle food, electric wires and damaged three acres of pasture land, but that's another story.....

CLIPPING THE NEWS

UFO REPORTS

3 Jan 1971 - Tafe Viejo, Tucuman, Argentina (Sat/Day)-(I-@#) - UFO LANDS--LEAVES TRACES

A farmer and his nephew working in the fields sighted a mysterious object which settled to the ground, burning pastures, part of a cornfield, and dried up lomon plants. The object was shaped like two dishes joined at the rims, and emitted a whistle "like the wind;" its lower part was reddish and its upper part, whence emerged 2 antennae in the form of a V, appeared to be aluminum like an airplane's fuselage. It was 2 meters in diameter and 1 meter in height, was very flat, and lacked windows. They said that they had been afraid and thus had not attempted to approach it. Witness Andres Angonio Lopez, 32, who is in charge of the Alberto Zorzosa estate, said the "thing" settled

1.890-97

1896 AIRSHIP SIGHTINGS
PART II

Submitted by Mr. Donald H. White of Oakland, California

"DATA-NET"

YOU CAN'T MISS IT
Just Look At The Sky And You Will See The Airship
SO SAY THE CREDULOUS
It Was In Red Bluff And Also Oakland Last Night
EXPERIENCES ARE RELATED
All Sorts of Rumors Are Floating About The Town



25 Nov. 1896 - Red Bluff- Chico- Leesville, Calif. (Wed/1900) - (4)

Red Bluff, Nov. 26 - Many residents assert they saw the alleged airship in this neighborhood last evening.

It was first noticed about 7 o'clock, and was thought to be a particularly bright star, but which was moving rapidly in a southwesterly direction towards the mountains. It finally disappeared over the mountains.

The summit of the mountains could be seen above the mysterious light as it moved west.

Soon after its disappearance a telegram from Chico stated the supposed airship had passed that town soon after 1 o'clock.

After it vanished it again passed over Red Bluff, and then a telegram from Leesville said the supposed airship had come from the direction of Red Bluff, and after making a few turns had returned in the direction from which it came.

Several citizens say that while at the first only a light was visible, that later the body of an egg shaped object was visible moving quickly through the air.

The theory that it was a star was rejected because of its distinctly rocking motion; which was like the motion made by a kite.

DN, Jc-72

SEEN IN OAKLAND

Many Believe In The Mystery, Recite their Personal Experiences

Oakland, Calif. (Wed/1815)-(4)

The fact that what was apparently the same mysterious object, is claimed to have been seen earlier in the evening by a large number of Oaklanders, causes some doubt to arise in the minds of many.

The meteoric display which an astronomer predicted for the 13th of this month, has been brought into the case and now it is being claimed that the visions are nothing less than meteors and comets which are participating in Heaven's pyrotechnic display one by one.

Charles White of East Oakland says he is positive he saw the airship last night. He crossed on the 6:15 o'clock ferry from San Francisco and says that while on the cable car to the boat a number of passengers noticed what appeared to be the mysterious visitor in the heavens near South San Francisco. It rapidly approached and raced the boat across the bay, beating it so badly that it was hovering over Alameda by the time the boat docked. From the train the passengers saw the light continuing in the same direction and later when on an Eighth street electric car could plainly discern it though then the object was far distant.

A. B. Parker, conductor of the car, corroborates the story, for he, with a number of others watched the strange thing until it disappeared from view.

A small-sized scare was started today, when the present location of the airship was said to be in Alameda. A visit to the location described revealed nothing but the remains of an experimental torpedo boat which had been built some years ago.

The uncertainty of the thing has been causing much speculation, and now the street are lined with an inquisitive throng, all gazing heavenward. (Oakland Tribune, Oakland Calif., 25 Nov. 1896)

1.896-97

on new and recent UFO sightings to the panel. When appropriate, the panel will send experienced researchers to probe the sightings on the spot.

A reward of \$1,000 will be paid by the ENQUIRER, at the discretion of the panel, for information on outstanding cases. Where several informants are involved, the panel will decide on the distribution of the \$1,000. The panel's decision will be final.

Mail your evidence to: UFO PROBE, ENQUIRER, 600 South East Coast Avenue, Lantana, Fla. 33462.

This offer shall not be construed as an inducement to betray any military secrets of the United States. (National Enquirer, Jan 1973) (Cr: J. Clark)

PICTURES OF UFO-LIKE CRAFT IN THE FRENCH LITERATURE OF THE XIX CENTURY

Our Spanish friends Mr. Antonio Ribera and Mr. Vicente-Juan Ballester Olmos, have sent us two drawings that show aircraft of the same type we today call UFOs...which appeared in two French novels published in 1896 (Figure 1) and 1905 (Figure 2)!

The reproductions below have been copied from the Spanish magazine ARGOS, No. 2335, July 12, 1961.

Figure 1 is an illustration from a novel entitled "The Black Invasion" written by Captain Driant, a French deputy who died as a hero at Verdun (first world war).

Figure 2 is an engraving from "The Infernal War", a novel by the Frenchman Mericant, released in 1905. The magazine ARGOS says that "it is the flying machine of the Capazza (1889)."

The historian might find of potential interest this information that Ribera and Ballester Olmos have uncovered for us."

"DATA NET", JANUARY 1.973



Figure 1

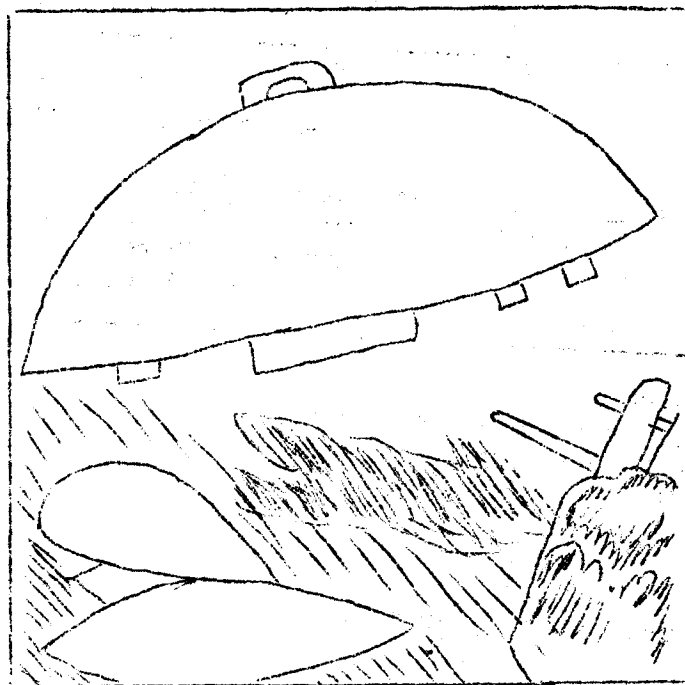


Figure 2

Attorney Collins' Story Is Believed By His Friends



3 Nov 1896 - Oakland, Calif. (Mon/1900)-(4), "OAKLAND TRIBUNE"

That a huge airship has been hovering over Oakland for the last few nights has in the minds of many been conclusively proven. A number of persons whose integrity is unquestionable have seen the strange navigator of the air and this number includes many whose skepticism has been pronounced.

Last evening at about 7:30 o'clock, the passengers on an Alameda car were startled by the sight of a brilliant stream of light high in the heavens off in the direction of Hayward. The passengers distinctly saw the outlines of an airship and watched its maneuvers high in the skies.

The ship resembles a huge bird in its outlines and seemed to rise and fall in its course. A light streamed from the head of the ship, throwing a white stream of light for several hundred yards.

As the outlines of the airship were plainly discerned. The passengers in the street car became greatly excited. The phenomenon had first been noted by a man who had been idly watching the heavens. As soon as he perceived the light he attracted the attention of the other passengers and all intensely interested, watched the peculiar machine as it made its way through the skies. It was high in the heavens and appeared to be of huge size. When first seen it seemed to be floating over San Leandro. It moved rapidly, going at least twenty miles an hour. It shot across the skies to the northwest, then turned quickly and disappeared in the direction of Hayward.

Not only was the airship seen by the passengers, but many other residents of this city distinctly saw the brilliant light and the huge bird-like body floating in mid-air. None of the spectators were acquainted with each other and yet their stories are startlingly similar, agreeing as to time, direction of the airship and description. These facts leave little doubt in the minds of many people that a successful airship has been invented and is navigating the heavens.

Miss Wilson, a daughter of Captain Wilson of the police force, and her friend, Miss Hunter, are among those who viewed the strange sight. The two friends accompanied another young lady to the street car about 7 P.M. yesterday, when their attention was attracted by the peculiar light in the skies. The huge bird-like body from which the light emanated was clearly visible and both young ladies are positive that it was an airship. It followed the same course as described by the passengers on the Alameda car.

Other Oaklanders bear similar testimony. Officer Carson was startled by the strange sight and his story is not to be shaken by scoffers. His experience was like others.

Attorney A. A. Moore told a Tribune reporter this morning that Attorney George D. Collins of Alameda informed him (Moore) two days ago that a successful airship had been invented and that the inventor was a client of Collins. The story of its aerial navigations was a fact, he declared, and the public would learn more concerning it in a few days.

A clerk in Attorney Collins' office corroborated this statement and also said that it was a fact that the airship has been navigating the heavens above Oakland, Hayward and vicinity. He furthermore added that the airship left that evening for Los Angeles. This will account for its maneuvers last evening when it was seen hovering in the north west.

As all the persons relating the accounts of the airship are reputable persons, a general belief in the story is gaining ground.

The inventor's attorney, George D. Collins, withholds his client's name at present. The machine is run by compressed air and generates its own electricity for the powerful arc light. Further particulars in regard to the invention Mr. Collins declines to give at present.

DN, JN-72

THROWS A DAMPER

What Attorney Collins Says Regarding The Inventor

Attorney Collins, who figures in the airship mystery, was interviewed by a Tribune reporter this afternoon with regard to his connection with the affair.

He was somewhat put out by the statements which were made in some of the morning papers and declared that many which were attributed to him were false.

"I have never seen the air-ship in my life," he said, "and I know very little about it. A very wealthy acquaintance of mine called on me about a week ago and asked me to draw up papers for a practical patent on an air-ship. I believe him to be thoroughly sane, and listened with interest as he discussed the apparatus. However, from his description I could not draw up the papers without first having a personal knowledge from a model. He left me and promised to return today with a model to show me. So far he has not appeared."

The attorney refused to give any names whatever, or enter into the details of the supposed invention. He said the matter was as much a mystery to him as to many others. Up to a late hour the inventor failed to materialize with his model.

SEEKING THE PATENT

Inquiry Is Made Among The Various Attorneys At Washington

Washington, Nov. 23 (AP) - At the Patent Office today nothing could be learned of an application for a patent on the flying machine alleged to be making successful flights in the neighborhood of Sacramento.

The rules of the office forbid any disclosure of names of applicants or the character of inventions for which they seek protection.

Inquiry among the patent attorneys known to control the Pacific Coast business, failed to disclose any knowledge of the alleged success in aeronautics.

Professor Langley, of the Smithsonian Institution, who has experimented scientifically for some time to demonstrate the best methods of solving the question of aerial navigation, excused himself from discussing the matter. His manner indicated plainly that he gave little credence to the Sacramento reports. (Oakland Tribune, Oakland, Calif., 23 Nov 1896)

-to be continued



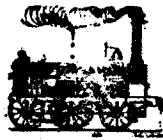
ENIGMATOLOGICAL SURVEY

-Paul Braczyk

Roy Norton's article MONUMENTS TO UFO SPACE PIONEERS? in the June/72 SAGA is a good article about the enigmatic Egyptian pyramids although, it seems to me, that he doesn't tell us anything we already didn't know, and what he does tell us, does not live up to what we expect from the title of the article. Mr. Norton states that he went to Egypt on assignment from SAGA. Well, SAGA could have saved quite a bundle by visiting their local library; they would have gleaned all the same facts, and perhaps a few more. Now I am not trying to say that the facts are not interesting - for they certainly are - and so is this article. The thing is, that from the title of the article we are led to believe that we are about to be told new revelations concerning the pyramids and their connection to UFOs. Unfortunately, the only references to UFOs we find are quotes from Morris Jessup's THE CASE FOR UFOs (sic) which was first published in 1955, and a re-hash of the contactee claims of Reinhold Schmidt.

A calm port in the storm-tossed seas of re-hash is Ivan Sanderson's latest enigmatological effort INVESTIGATING THE UNEXPLAINED: A compendium of Disquieting Mysteries Of the Natural World. I suppose that if Mr. Sanderson can't come up with original material, as director of The Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained, no one can. There are all kinds of goodies in this book, including all kinds of "extras" that you always want to see included in books of this type but never are, e.g. good references, appendices, charts, diagrams, photos, etc. Written in the true fortean vein, the book contains what can only be described as forteana; monster reports, sky falls, spontaneous human combustion, and so on and so forth... I can truthfully say that this is one of the best books that I have read lately. It is available through Publishers Service Company, 485 Main Street, Fort Lee, N.J. 07024 for \$7.95 + .55 postage or in your local bookstore (Prentice Hall is the publisher).

Following my policy of bringing to you information concerning new and interesting



1896 AIRSHIP SIGHTS

PART III

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Oakland, California

DN, Ac-72

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Case III

Vessel: *Brooklyn City* (Bristol Line)
 Date: 12 February 1896 (3:05 a.m.)
 Weather: Howling gale, cold

Location: One-fourth distance from New York City to Swansea, England.

Observation: Laden with tin, the vessel left Swansea on January 28th and during its 20-day voyage met all kinds of adverse weather. Chief Officer Ellis and Second Officer Deehle watched as a blinding flash of light blazed upon the truck of the foremast. Then, with a sharp crack of lightning and the sound of splintering wood, the truck split in two and fell on the deck, and a big splinter of the foretopmast came clattering after. A globe of fire, high, hot ball, two feet in diameter ran down the foremast quickly and gleamed with an intense white light, as though metal heated to its highest point. It illuminated the mast and rigging with a strange ghostly light and then struck the deck, bursting into a thousand brilliant fragments like a big rocket. Splinters were strewn on deck, with the ruins of the highly ornamental truck.

Comments: This is clearly an incident of ball lightning that occurred during adverse weather conditions.

Case IV

Vessel: *Willkommen* (German oil tank steamer)^{4,5}
 Date: 17 November 1896 (after midnight)
 Weather: Heavy seas

Location: Latitude 48°10' N, longitude 44° W

Observations: Arriving at New York City from Danzig, Poland, with 6,000 bags of beet sugar, Captain Schaeffer reported that a huge meteor shot across the sky from the southeast to the northwest plunging, hissing into the sea some distance ahead of the steamer. Almost immediately afterwards, a huge sea, like a tidal wave, broke over the vessel's bow and swept aft, doing but slight damage.

Comments: This close encounter with a meteor at sea by the *Willkommen*, may have been a straggler belonging to the Leonid meteor shower that was due on the morning of the 13th of that month, arriving several days later after the main stream had passed the earth—a consideration that has some merit to explain its appearance.

Case V

Vessel: *Cawdor* (British)⁶
 Date: 20 August 1897
 Weather: Electrical storm
 Location: Coast of Chile

Observations: Arriving in San Francisco, California from Swansea, England, on Nov. 20th after crossing Cape Horn on August 12th. All hands were on deck when a huge meteor flashed across the heavens and plunged into the sea close to the vessel to the concern of the crew over this near collision. Water was churned up and swept over the deck with a strong sulphurous odor hanging around the vessel.

Comments: A meteor having an odor that may have been generated during its passage through the atmosphere is itself a rare event. But that it had come so close to causing a disaster at sea keeps butting the statistical odds for such possible coincidences.

Case VI

Vessel: *Supply* (United States)⁷
 Date: 28 February 1904 (6:10 a.m.)
 Weather: Clouds, less than a mile high

Location: Latitude 35°58' N, longitude 128°36' W.

Observations: Lieutenant Frank H. Schofield, command of the vessel enroute from Guam to San Francisco, California, and two others reported three meteors appearing near the horizon below the clouds traveling in a group from the northwest by north directly towards the ship. His detailed account is as follows:

"At first their angular motion was rapid and color a rather bright red. As they approached the ship they appeared to soar, passing above the clouds at an elevation of about forty-five degrees.

"After rising above the clouds their angular motion became less and less until it ceased, when they appeared to be moving directly away from the earth at an elevation of about seventy-five degrees and in a direction west-northwest. It was noted that the color became less pronounced as the meteors gained in angular elevation."

Schofield added to his comments about the most remarkable size and how in formation these meteors flew. The largest meteor had an apparent area of about six suns and was egg shaped, with the sharper end forward. This end was jagged. The second appeared to be twice the size of the sun; the third about sun size and both these were round.

Comments: Meteors do occasionally fly parallel with the earth and sometimes skim the earth's atmosphere to fly back into outer space again. But meteors, if Schofield's description is correct, do not fly upwards! Whether this was some unusual atmospheric anomaly is debatable, but it should be taken into consideration.

Case VII

Vessel: *St. Andrew* (Phoenix Line)^{8,9}
 Date: 30 October 1906 (Half an hour before sunset)
 Weather: Cloudy

Location: 60 miles eastward of Cape Race.

Observations: First Officer V. Spencer, on board the vessel enroute from Antwerp, Belgium, to Hoboken, New Jersey, told in detail of his observation of four meteors:

"I was standing on the bridge at half-past five, when I saw three meteors ahead about three miles away, flash as they fell, although it was before sundown. The sky was clouded and I had hardly noticed the fall of the meteors when the chief engineer cried out from below on deck, 'Look at that.'

"There, off to the south on our port beam, was a big meteor falling plainly less than a mile away. It appeared to be saucer shaped and showed like a white hot coal streamed a shower of reddish fire fully a mile long. While we were looking the meteor zigzagged, I supposed on account of its shape, and plunged into the sea. Up rose clouds of steam and the sea boiled for a space fully five or six hundred feet in diameter for several minutes.

"While the flight lasted only a few seconds, it seemed an hour, we saw it so plainly, and had it struck our ship it would have melted its way down through the steel hull and sent us without a moment's warning to the bottom."

Comments: A zigzagging meteor that was saucer shaped, is indeed, an unusual celestial anomaly. That it was able to boil thesea where it had struck for a considerable area and amount of time is also interesting. Though in this instance, the vessel was a safe distance away and was not, fortunately, placed in any immediate danger. As there were also three other meteors seen to fall before its appearance, it can be safely concluded

1.896-97

30 Comunicados

- La Croix de l'Aisne, 26.9.54, p.6
- France-Dimanche 25 ó 26.10.54
- L'Observateur d'Avesnes, 29.9.54
- Radar, 13.10.54
- Radar, 17.10.54
- La Liberté, 19.10.54
- La Cité (Mons, Belgique), 19.10.54
- Nord-Eclair, 15.9.54, pp.1,9
- La Voix du Nord, 14.8.68, p.17
- La Face a Matin, 30.10.54, pp.1,10
- Sin referencias: "French landing reports"
- Del dossier de Ted Bloecher, Nov. 1 1954
- La Semaine du Nord, 4.2.55
- Ouranos nº 24 (3º Trim. 59) p.11-13
- Ouranos nº 25, pp.20-24
- Nord-France, 17-9-54, pp. 10-11
- Le Parisien Libéré, 14.9.54
- La Montagne, 14.9.54
- La Croix, 14.9.54
- Libération, 14.9.54
- Feuille d'Avis de Neuchatel, 14.9.54, p.1
- La Croix du Nord, 15.9.54, p.2
- L'Observateur d'Avesnes, 15.9.54, p.1
- The Clearwater Sun (Clearwater, Florida), 21.10.54, p.3
- Nord-Matin, 29.10.54, p.1
- France-Soir, 15.9.54, pp.1,6
- Le Parisien Libéré, 15.9.54
- L'Union de Reims, 15.9.54, p.8
- Nord-Eclair, 16.9.54, pp.1,8
- Télégramme de Brest, 16.9.54
- Nouveau-Nord Maritime, 16.9.56, p.2
- Feuille d'Avis de Neuchatel, 16.9.54, p.1-9

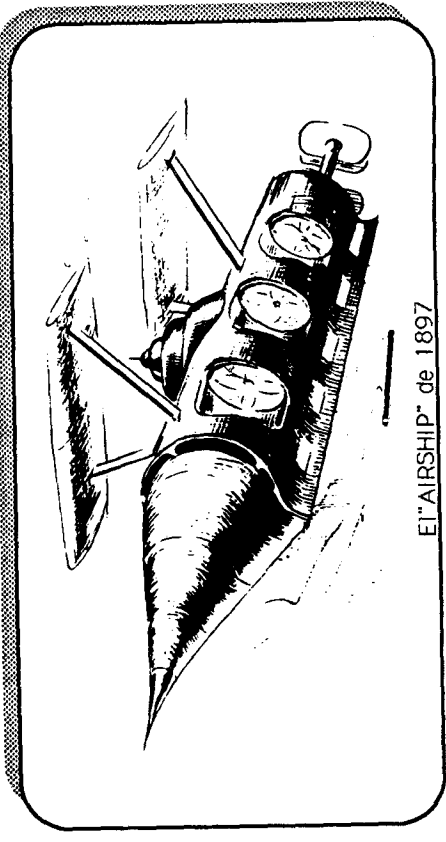
COMUNICADO

Jean Sider me ha encargado la publicación en suscripción de su obra titulada: "L'AIRSHIP DE 1897 - Contribution a l'étude socio-historique de la vague de dirigeables-fantomes aux Etats-Units".

Se trata de una edición artesanal que cuenta con 373 páginas. Para reunir esta documentación inmediata, Jean Sider ha tenido que contactar con numerosos organismos especializados (bibliotecas públicas, museos, universidades, etc) e incluso pagar a estudiantes americanos para que llevaran a cabo revisiones de diversos periódicos de la época.

El precio de la obra es de 110 francos franceses + 20 F.F. de envío.

Modalidades de pago:
 Para lectores residentes en Francia, por cheque bancario expedido a Thierry Pinvidic, 7 Hameau de la Florida, 91800 Brunoy, Francia.
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"L'AIRSHIP" de 1897

BOOK REVIEW 1.896-97

Ripley's Believe It or Not: Stars, Space, UFOs, Pocket Books, 1978, \$1.75.

The Ripley team's latest paperback is a mixture of straight data on astronomy and space flight and accounts of UFO encounters along with a scattering of sky falls and other oddities. Many of the cases discussed are old hat, of course, but the writers seem to have done their homework, although they give no references. Several of the incidents discussed were new to me, for example the case of Harry Sturdevant, a night watchman who received workmen's compensation for injuries received from a UFO in 1956, and an 1878 case that resulted in the first use of the term "flying saucer" - 69 years before Kenneth Arnold's sighting!

On the debit side I did notice a few

factual errors. For instance the 1897 Alexander Hamilton "cow-napping" is referred to as true, despite the fact that it has proved to be a hoax, (see the February 1977 issue of Fate) and the famous case of the green children has been inexplicably switched from 13th century England to Spain in 1897. Moreover, the authors seem unduly biased toward the extraterrestrial hypothesis, citing such dubious evidence as a dead "spaceman" supposedly picked up by the Air Force in 1948. Dissenting views, whether from skeptics or more speculative UFOlogists, are not discussed.

Despite its flaws, however, I think that this book would serve as a nice, inexpensive introduction to the subject for the budding Fortean, and may even provide a few hours' pleasant reading for the more advanced student.
 David Hricenak, Pennsylvania.

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AIRSHIPS? NO!

By William H. Banks

Writing in the *MUFON UFO Journal* (No. 172, June 1982) Dr. Louis Walker states:

...I chose to believe the vast majority of what I read (about the 1896/1897 airships in the contemporary newspapers). It is much more reasonable to believe that nearly all the newspapers in the country are reporting what the populace believes rather than stories conceived in the minds of newspaper employees.

My first reaction was incredulity. A cursory examination shows this skepticism to be fully justified. For instance, the *New York Times* of October 6, 1897 reports (under the title "Will Try His Airship") that "...Gus Whitehead, an ingenious, young mechanic" would fly "his forty-second airship" on Sunday next.

Alas, nothing further was recorded of this determined — if not quite ingenious — young man. It should be noted that, despite the title — or,

rather, how it sounds today — Whitehead's airship was a small glider and no pretense was made otherwise. The basic importance of this forgotten (if ever real) feat to UFOlogy is the deadly serious tone of the article and the amorphous nature of the term "airship" in the 19th Century press. With such caveats in mind, let us consider the specifics of Dr. Winkler's airships.

Most prominent among these is an airship story appearing in the *N.Y. Times* of December 2, 1897. Dr. Winkler apparently is willing to consider Sir Hiram Maxim as the inventor of an "airship," which made a "round-trip flight between San Francisco and Cleveland in three days in the summer of 1897." Assuming a perfect crow's flight, this would require an average speed of over 100 mph: a performance that no subsequent lighter than air machine ever achieved as a *maximum speed!* Alas, neither Sir

Hiram nor the Times ever again referred to this epochal achievement.

In fact, the Maxim design is reminiscent of one proposed by a "C.A. Smith," as recounted in the *San Francisco Call* of November 25, 1896.¹ The "technical" (Dr. Winkler's term) details are all but identical. Oddly, however, there is no mention of the leadership of the world famed Maxim. A strange reticence, *n'est pas?* This "Maximally" important article from the *Times*, contradicting as it does all subsequent aviation histories, is worthy of close scrutiny. For example,

It has at last been discovered who the incorporators of the Atlantic and Pacific Aerial Navigation Company are. The company, which is offered by C.A. Smith, President (sic), and M.A. Terry, Secretary (sic), both of San Francisco, was organized to manufacture the air-ship of Hiram S. Maxim, inventor of the Maxim gun.

(continued on next page)

UFO FLASHBACK - 1897

Printed in the Sept. 14, 1897 issue of *The Hamilton Spectator*, an article reported that C.W. Spencer, superintendent of the eastern division of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and his assistant, Thomas Hay, were "admiring the clear, starlit heavens" from the observation car, near Gravel River, Ont., when they saw "A something in the sky."

They gave details of a large white light, and above it a red and a white light. When the airborne object turned, the red light became blue and a "row of our lights was seen terminated by a circle or ellipse of a dozen lights, in the midst of which was the dark body of the air ship."

All the elements of other-world mystery were there, but the observers were not taken in by science fiction, then in its infancy in those days. The paper reported that the lights had the "steady clearness of acetylene or electric light". Spencer and Hay "could form no other opinion than that it was an air ship." The writer concluded: "It is quite possible that some inventor has set to work quietly and unostentatiously and thus put his theories into practice in the world; and if he hasn't come to grief in the wilds of Lake Superior, we shall soon know that air navigation has been accomplished on Canadian territory." (*Wingham Advance-Times, Ont., July 27, 1967*)

Airships? Continued

"At last" the "incorporators" have been "discovered!" As the identities of the APANC founders were printed in the *Crocker Langley San Francisco (City) Director* of April 1897, this is fair warning that the *Times*, anonymous "persons connected with the company" were untrustworthy. Or worse.

The *Crocker Langley* series offers a small insight into the workings of APANC. The firm did not exist as of the spring of 1896, but arose after the publicity of the original California airship sightings. In 1896, Charles A. Smith was listed in the directory as a "physician." The 1897 edition, published in April of that year, finds him president of APANC. May of 1898 finds Smith still listed as head of the struggling enterprise, but the corporation is now located in the residence of its new secretary, John E. Morson. By 1899, the end has come and Dr. Smith has returned to the healing arts.

Thus, the *Times* story ran as the company's dissolution neared. Most probably, Maxim and the secret flight were introduced by the "persons" in a last attempt to bilk a few dollars more. Those with lingering doubts should study the purported engineering with

...naptha for the (lone!) engine(to)... be stored in cases, which are supposed to be enough to drive the ship around the earth without replenishing the tanks.

If Mr. Berliner² is skeptical of this material, his suspicions are only too well founded!

Writing previously in the March issue of the *Journal* (No. 169), Dr. Winkler correctly identifies the craft of "Prof. Barnard" as being powered by a bicycle drive device — powered by the pilot's legs! Small wonder its performance had been "achieved or excelled by at least fifty other contrivances!" In passing it should be noted that the speed of the Barnard ship, as given in the article, is comparable with that of the first dirigible ever to successfully return to its place of launch. This latter, *La France*, was quickly scrapped because it was unable to fly except on the calmest of days. However admirable

Barnard's pluck, a successful flight would only have been luck: such an "airship" holds no answers for UFOlogy.

The *Pegasus* letter (or letters?) is mentioned by Dr. Winkler as having wide currency in the contemporary press. This is an especially interesting craft with a speed of 150 m.p.h. — and steam power. As John A. Keel acidly notes, here is an answer as to why UFOs are so often reported taking on water?³ An apparently unrelated message of distress from "The Airship Travelers" — Arthur B. Coats of Laurel, Miss., C.C. Harris of Gulfport, Miss., and C.W. Rich of Richburg, Miss., received no acknowledgment from their "people."⁴ Other airship tales abound, but — regardless of the number of "details" — there is no objective confirmation.

With my own (cautious) attitude made plain, here are a (very) few words of encouragement for the romantics. My own great-grandfather was supposedly wowed to from a passing airship. A dirigible would often move up and down in a choppy motion in even moderate weather; this does inevitably bring to mind the familiar "falling leaf motion." In 1884, an airship crash was reported with particulars startlingly like those which later afflicted hydrogen lift lighter-than-air craft (LTA's).⁵

For historical research, the *New York Times* is normally the newspaper of first choice, as the "old girl" is indexed back to 1853. Unfortunately, "she" has always had an aversion for man-bites-dog stories, so UFO reports are few and far between (try "airship," "balloon," etc. in the *Index* volumes). Those wishing to research 19th Century airships should consult Gregory's *Union List of Newspapers 1821-1936* and *Newspapers on Microfilm*; these will indicate which newspapers near the incident have survived. Normally, the local library will be able to order a microfilm copy free or at very nominal cost. Unhappily, not all newspapers circulate — even on microfilm — while others have never been copied. And remember that the *Union List* was printed over 40 years ago!

In summary, unsubstantiated news accounts of successful airships

prove nothing. Chapter 10 of Daniel Cohen's book demonstrates that science fiction hoaxes were hardly unknown in the 19th Century U.S. press. And liars, of course. If not for Jerome Clark, the Hamilton "cownapping" would still be regarded as a connection between the murkier side of UFOs, then and now. Those unwilling to trust skeptic Cohen on the condition of the period press are referred to the journalism department of the local college or university.

As for a secret invention, Cohen convincingly quotes Thomas Edison, "It is absurd to imagine that a man would construct a successful airship and keep the matter secret."⁶ Any such device would have had to elude aviation historians for more than 80 years. The National Security Agency would gaze in admiration at such a shroud of secrecy. Airships? To quote Scrooge, "Bah, humbug!"

A Note on Dr. Winkler's Notes

There is an apparent discrepancy in the dates attributed to the *New York Times*: the *NYT Index* for 1894-1898 lists stories about Barnard as appearing on May 7 and May 11. Nonetheless, I was unable to find the latter on the microfilm copy. Could the citations for "*Tribune*" and *NYT* have been confused? For those wishing to check further, see page 722 of the *Index* volume under "airships."

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(continued on next page)

UFOs OVER ARKANSAS: PART I

By William D. Leet
(Arkansas State Director)
(© 1982 by William D. Leet)

Bennie Chalker and his 16-year-old son, Brent, were sitting in the living room of their home on Chapel Hill, 3 miles north of Nashville, Arkansas, enjoying the peace and quiet of the evening. The day was Tuesday, February 3, 1981. The duties of the day had been accomplished and its cares set aside, and dusk had settled down from the sky to rest for the night on the woods and hills. Wife and mother, Bonnie Chalker, was in Texarkana but would soon come home to join Bennie and Brent. All was well.

Then it struck them! The thundering-earthquaking charge of a freight train but magnified many times louder was right over their house! Bennie and son dashed out the door to see a huge "boomerang" of orange-red lights slowly flying northward at a low altitude of 100 to 200 feet. After observing the other-world visitor for about 2 minutes, they drove their pick-up to the crest of the hill by the church there, studying the apparition for another 7 or 8 minutes. No figure or outline of the stranger

could be discerned, but the boomerang impression was made by the six rectangular lights. There were three to the right and three on the left, but close together and forming the boomerange shape. No body was visible, or engines, propellers, tail, wings, or Federal Aviation Administration-required navigation lights. There were no anti-collision strobe lights which all large aircraft and most light airplanes display. You've seen them—they seem to revolve and zap you right in the eye with a white flash.

The time of the Chalkers' sighting was about 6:45 p.m., and about that time a Nashville High School teacher at home saw a similar craft flying northward. Another Nashville High teacher, Joe Martin, who instructs Vocational Agriculture, was hunting a few miles to the north and about 7:00 p.m. observed the northward course of bodiless rectangular lights, five in number. Scores, perhaps hundreds, of people saw the out-of-this-world apparition this recent night, at Ben Lomond, Nashville, Dierks, Um-

pire, and Langley. It undoubtedly was an unidentified flying object (UFO). Where they come from and what they are nobody knows, but we do know what they are not. We know that they are not manmade, and that they are not natural or normal to our planet, and that they are under intelligent control.

UFOs must be something new, some people say, coming around since 1947 when Kenneth Arnold saw "flying saucers" skipping along the valley past Mount Rainier in Washington State, but UFOs have been with us a long, long time, and according to documentation quite awhile in Arkansas.

In the years 1896 and 1897 a "Great Air Ship" was seen in the skies from America's Pacific Coast to the East. At that time, dirigibles had not become operational and there were no airplanes or helicopters. Commencing at Sacramento, California, the flying craft was seen by thousands of people across the nation all the way

(continued on next page)

Bigfoot, Continued

footprints and they disappear."

At times, according to Rose, Frank will be watching TV when suddenly he will walk outside in a trancelike state as if he is being summoned. Strange things are happening inside and around their house as well. During one occasion a large bright light appeared over their house and illuminated it, then it suddenly disappeared. Just the opposite occurred about a week later when one afternoon as Rose was cleaning, the house suddenly became pitch black. She went outside to find the sky clear of clouds and the sun shining brightly. When she looked back into the house it still remained dark.

A few weeks later Rose got up at

about 3 a.m. to get a drink of water. Suddenly the livingroom lit up like daylight even through no lights were switched on. The family members have heard sounds like someone going up the stairway, even though no one was there, and a strange shadowy figure has crossed their kitchen on several occasions. The Unidentified lights have now been seen in daylight as well as night, and in daylight are so bright they illuminate nearby trees.

As of March 1982, "Mystery" is still around. It is now making visits to both the Simpson and Smith residents. Our research team is closely monitoring the events, and we hope to set up remote devices to try and gather scientific data as the incidents occur. Mrs. Simpson and Mrs.

Smith and other residents in the area who have experienced some of the occurrences are genuinely frightened. Frank feels compelled to find an answer to "Mystery." As he stated to me recently, "I've got this feeling that he's going to get me, I'm going to get him, or we're going to get together."

(Stan Gordon is the Director of the Pennsylvania Association For the Study of the Unexplained, an all-volunteer, non-profit research unit made up of specialists from fields of science, engineering, and medicine, who are making an openminded study of unexplained events. The organization's mailing address is 6 Oakhill Avenue, Greensburg, PA 15601.)

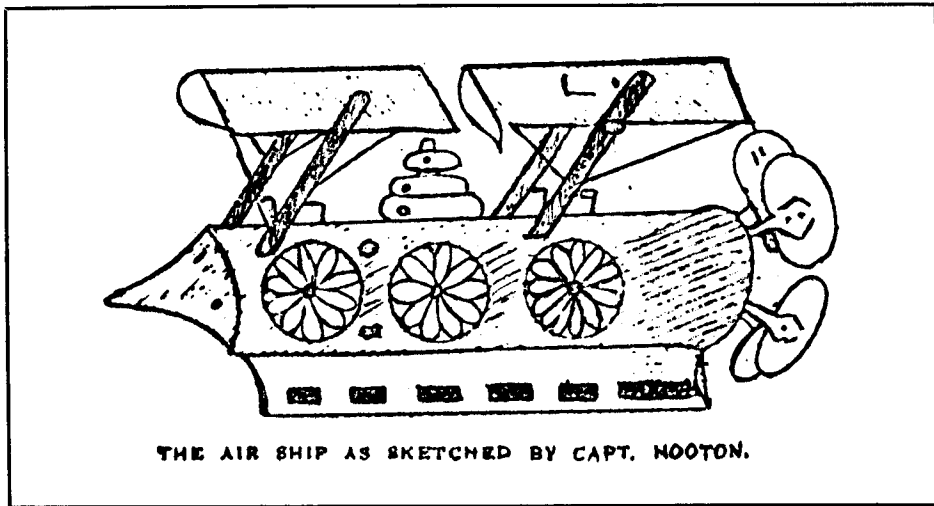
Arkansas, Continued

to the Atlantic Coast. According to the newspaper accounts of the period, the airship was observed by crowds of people over San Francisco, St. Louis, and big cities eastward. On its course the great airship did not ignore Arkansans. It was closely observed and described by some of our forefathers, one of whom was Captain James Hooton, the highly respected conductor on the Iron Mountain Railroad. For the *Arkansas Gazette* of April 22, 1897, Conductor Hooton provided not only a sketch of the celebrated airship but a detailed description of it and its crew as well. A condensed version of Hooton's narrative follows.

I had gone down to Texarkana to bring back a special, and knowing that I would have some eight to ten hours to spare at Texarkana, I went to Homan to do a little hunting. It was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon when I reached that place. The sport was good, and before I knew it, it was after 6 o'clock when I started to make my way back toward the railroad station. As I was tramping through the brush my attention was attracted by a familiar sound, a sound for all the world like the working of an air pump on a locomotive. I went at once in the direction of the sound, and there in an open space of some five or six acres, I saw the object making the noise.

I decided at once that this was the famous airship seen by so many people about the country. There was a medium-sized looking man aboard and I noticed that he was wearing smoked glasses. He was tinkering around what seemed to be the back end of the ship, and as I approached I was too dumbfounded to speak. He looked at me in surprise, and said: "Good day sir: good day." I asked: "Is this the air ship?" and he replied, "Yes, sir." Whereupon three or four other men came out of what was apparently the keel of the ship. A close examination showed that the keel was divided into two parts terminating in front like the sharp edge of a knife, in fact, the entire front end of the ship terminated in a knife-like edge, while the sides of the ship bulged gradually toward the middle, and then receded.

There were three large wheels on each side made of some bending metal and arranged so that they became concave as they moved forward. "I beg your pardon sir," I said, "the noise sounds a good deal like a Westinghouse air brake." "Perhaps it does, my friend: we are using condensed air and aeroplanes, but you will know more later on."



"All ready, sir!" someone called out, when the party all disappeared below. I observed that just in front of each wheel a two-inch tube began to spurt air on the wheels, and they commenced revolving. The ship gradually arose with a hissing sound. The aeroplanes suddenly sprang forward, turning their sharp ends skyward, then the rudders at the end of the ship began to veer to one side, and the wheels revolved so fast that one could scarcely see the blades. In less time than it takes to tell you, the ship had gone out of sight.

This drawing I have made you is the best I can do under the circumstances. I consider I was fortunate in seeing the ship. You may add that she pumped while standing still, like the air pump of an engine. One particular feature I remember is that what I would call the cowcatcher was sharp as the blade of a knife and almost as pointed as a needle. There was no bell or bell rope about the ship that I could discover, like I should think every well regulated air locomotive should have.

There are some dubious items in the good Captain's account of his meeting with the airship and its pilot and crew, such as his observation about the want of a bell and bell rope. All the same, the "Great Air Ship" was seen by tens of thousands of Americans across the continent, and Captain Hooton's description did not vary noticeably from those of other witnesses.

The wave or "flap" of sightings of the Great Air Ship of 1909-1910 hit Arkansas in this *Arkansas Gazette* item Dec. 15, 1909:

AIRSHIP FLIES NEAR LITTLE ROCK, PERHAPS—A.W. Norris of Mablevale, road overseer of District No. 8, is of the opinion that an airship passed over his residence at about 10 o'clock Monday

night. Mr. Norris states that he was standing in his doorway when a strange light appeared, apparently about 300 feet above him, traveling south at a rapid rate of speed and disappeared a moment or two later in the darkness. He said that the light had the appearance of a searchlight similar to those used on automobiles and it rose and fell like a bird in flight. The night was cloudy, which precludes the possibility of the light having been a star or any astronomic phenomena.

The erroneous and sometimes deceptive "explanations" of UFOs did not have their inception in 1949 with the Air Force Project Blue Book, which fronted as an investigative agency but actually was a propaganda office debunking UFO reality. "Balloon" was a standard "explanation" of unearthly UFO activities, as were "birds," "temperature inversions," "sun dogs," "ball lightning," and "swamp gas." The *Times Record* of Fort Smith, however, beat Project Blue Book to the punch by four decades with the "balloon" jump-at-conclusion in its edition of Dec. 22, 1909.

SAW A FLYING MACHINE—Many people were interested watchers Wednesday about 12 o'clock of a quite large balloon which sailed over this city at a very great height. The pupils of Belle Point school were sure that it was some of the noted aerial travelers in a flying machine. It was in reality a tenantless balloon, oblong in shape and its height from earth was estimated to be as much as three-fourths of a mile.

The normal human reaction 73 years ago to unidentified flying objects, and that of some people today, is to

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Arkansas, Continued

dismiss them as familiar, commonplace things and go on about one's business. There is slight chance in 1982 of resolving the foregoing sighting of 1909, but ufologists today question the newspaper reporter's conclusion that the "balloon—almost 4,000 feet above ground level—was "tenantless;" he stated no way of knowing this. His remark that the object was "oblong" (racetrack-shaped) indicates that it was not a free balloon, which would have been spherical or of teardrop form.

It should be noted that Project Blue Book was not the first to misinform the public that UFOs were observed only by those who had tarried too long at the bar. The *Times Record* of Jan. 20, 1910, carried a tongue in cheek report of an Arkansas sighting:

Paragould people declare an air ship passed over their town a few nights ago. The strange craft was about 1000 feet from the earth and carried a powerful headlight. Ships of this kind are common over this way. They are usually seen by people who keep late hours.

Three day later, the same paper could not resist one more bit of editorial jest:

Why the people of Paragould saw an air ship the other night is easily explained. The officers over there are lax in the enforcement of the liquor laws. The objects seen were only "schooners" floating in an atmosphere of scintillating effervescent bubbles.

The *Arkansas Gazette* on Jan. 17, 1910 had reported the Paragould "airship" as carrying three or four passengers, and that in addition to the "powerful headlight" it was white and "brilliantly lighted." There was conjecture by the reporter that the "strange airship" seen at Paragould was the same one that passed over Chattanooga, Tenn., three successive days. The Jan. 21 edition of the *Gazette* made another contribution to the 1909-1910 UFO flap over Arkansas:

MYSTERIOUS AIR SHIP PASSES OVER MEMPHIS—Darts Across the River and Is Lost in Arkansas Air—Prominent People See Mysterious Stranger—Special to the

Gazette—Memphis, Tenn., Jan. 20—An airship passed over Memphis at 8 o'clock this morning flying east to west by south. It was seen by Joseph Graham, Jr. of the county register's office, Thomas Boyle, a prominent attorney; Mrs. Virginia Frazer Boyle, the noted Southern poet and writer, and others living in the eastern part of the city.

The machine was very high in the air and seemed traveling at a high rate of speed. Just after crossing the Mississippi river in Arkansas' air it veered slightly to the south and was soon lost.

The airship was, it is estimated going faster than any railroad train ever traveled.

It is believed by may that it was the Tillinghast machine, which was seen around Boston and cities in Maine several weeks ago.

The "Tillinghast machine" was the title given to one or more UFOs observed nights over Massachusetts (not Maine) because a Mr. Wallace E. Tillinghast of Worcester, Mass., claimed to have invented the "marvelous aeroplane." When the Worcester Board of Trade demanded that Tillinghast display his "airship" or shut up, nothing more was heard from the gentleman.

Research of Arkansas newspapers discloses no UFO activity in the state—or at least none reported as such—from the flap of 1909-1910 until Kenneth Arnold's historic encounter popped the lid off Pandora's box of "flying saucers" in 1947. This writer however, obtained for (MUFON) the report of a startling intrusion which took place Oct. 15, 1935 at Mena in Polk County. Miss Esther Cherry, music teacher, was sitting on her porch when a strange object caught her eye. She relates that "a round, golden UFO" approached from her right and hovered about a minute only 100 feet away from her, putting her in "a state of cold paralysis." Miss Cherry's MUFON UFO report continues:

My recollections are that I saw this object in the distance, and thought it was a falling star or meteor. Tried to get up out of my chair and go inside but could not move. My body became cold, and I could not get up out of my chair for some time after the object was out of sight.

Before Kenneth Arnold's "flying

saucer" confrontation in the valley near Mt. Rainier, Washington, June 24, 1947, there had been numerous reports during World War II of "foo-fighters," which American Intelligence thought were advanced German weapons, and the Germans believed were secret American weapons. The foo-fighters turned out to be UFOs, but my B-17 Flying Fortress crew and I had no way of knowing this when a luminous, amber object appeared just off our left wingtip during a combat mission in that war. (Editor's note: Mr. Leet's account of this sighting appears in No. 133, Jan-Feb. 1979).

The hurricane of UFO sightings left the skies of war for the U.S.A. soon after the end of WWII, its arrival heralded by pilot Kenneth Arnold's professional calculation of nine "flying saucers" skipping past Mount Rainier at 1,200 mph. The storm was felt in Arkansas only three days later, June 27, 1947, a Mountain Home resident spotting a "glistening, flashing round object" which came from the northeast and disappeared in the southern sky. Other early reports came from the vicinity of Fayetteville, describing glowing disks traveling at high speeds at various altitudes.

On July 5th the *Texarkana Gazette* published the following front page story:

FLYING SAUCERS AGAIN ARE IN THE AIR—TWO TEXARKANA RESTAURANT OPERATORS SPY MYSTERIOUS DISCS AFTER BASEBALL GAME

The mysterious flying saucers were in the air again Thursday night—the third consecutive night in which Texarkanians have reported the silver colored disc flashing through the skies.

Lastest reports came from two local restaurant operators, Charley Pappas, operator of the White House, and J.C. Jackson, operator of the Two States Coffee Shop.

The two men declared one of the saucers flew over Elm street immediately after a ball game at Burnett Park late Thursday night. As they were returning from the game, Jackson declared, the object flew directly over them in an easterly direction.

"It was about four hundred feet high and

(continued on next page)

Arkansas, Continued

was going at a fair rate of speed," Jackson asserted. "It had one light on it, and the light was continuous. It didn't blink. Otherwise, it looked exactly like the other ones that have been reported."

Jackson and Pappas brought to nine the number of persons who have reported seeing the strange discs winging around this area including over downtown Texarkana.

The next few days, according to an Associated Press dispatch carried in Arkansas newspaper, numerous UFO sightings were made at DeQueen, El Dorado, Gurdon, and Little Rock. The *Arkansas Gazette* of July 6 stated that Henry Seay reported three "flying discs" on two occasions traveling at high speeds and various altitudes, glowing in the twilight, at Fayetteville.

No records of the alien objects were found from that time until the flap of the 1950's.

A startling news story in the July 11, 1950 issue of the *Arkansas Gazette* was based on a semi-official release by the Navy. Two pilots saw visually and with their airplanes' radars an unknown gizmo "shaped something like a World War I helmet seen from the side." The planes, on a training flight near Osceola, tracked the invader 8 miles before it vanished. One of the pilots, Lt. J.W. Martin, described the odd craft as "about 25 to 45 feet across and about seven feet high." The pursuit was said to be "hopeless."

It was in July of 1952 that dozens of UFOs stunted over Washington, D.C. The alien barnstormers performed for thousands of ground-watchers and scores of pilots, and were tracked by ground radar and radar on the Air Force fighter planes, but made a mockery of the efforts to overtake them. The Hot Springs *Sentinel-Record* announced a possibly related event in its edition of July 30: "Six See Saucers at Hot Springs." A Mr. G. Clark, one of two witnesses to permit release of his name, was quoted as declaring "a white ball of fire with a red tail flew over the city."

Seventeen-year-old Miss Ruby McBay "knew it had to be something from space" when the rotating blue,

red, and yellow lights caught her eye that evening in early April 1957. She and two girl friends had just driven into the McBays' driveway at Mineral Springs when they saw a silver, domed-saucer hovering over a pond only 300 feet away and 75 feet above the water. According to the interview and MUFON report form the present Mrs. Ruby McBay Nelson gave me, she could not be certain whether the rotation was by the bright-colored lights or by the "saucer" itself.

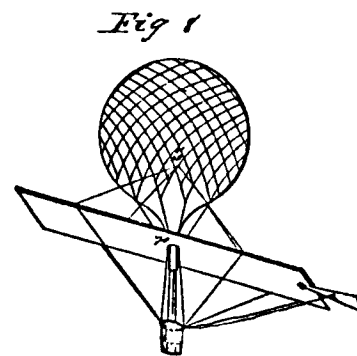
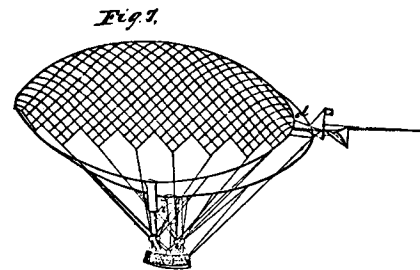
The same year, on the night of Oct. 14, Mr. and Mrs. A.F. Simmons of Camden were driving on U.S. Highway 79 between Pine Bluff and Stuttgart. At about 10 o'clock they saw an extremely bright light "about the size of a washtub" moving through the sky. As the mysterious light approached, the car engine died, the lights failed, and the auto was drawn to the side of the road as though a giant magnet tugged it there. After about 4 minutes, the powerful, apparently electromagnetic, effects ceased and the Simmonses resumed their journey.

The late 1950's and early 1960's were not busy times for UFOs, although there were scattered sightings. The *Arkansas Democrat* in January, 1959 told the following:

Hundreds of Dumas residents reportedly viewed an unidentified flying object...from 5 p.m. until 6 p.m. The UFO moved rapidly in a southeasterly direction and, when viewed through binoculars, was said to have "markings" of some type on its surface. Red, yellow and green in color, the object had an oblong shape.

This same news story, published by the *Arkansas Gazette*, stated that Dumas residents expressed a belief that the object "gave off light" rather than reflecting it, looked like an electric light bulb, and took on a reddish glow at dusk. That May the *Democrat* informed the public of another "light bulb type object, only bigger," at Massard. It was seen in other localities and verified by a sheriff's office.

A "question mark-shaped" UFO was widely observed by folks in Arkansas County, Oct. 2, 1963, appearing in a cloudless sky southeast of DeWitt, but hearken to the discoveries of some brave "Flying



"S. Andrews, Aerial Navigation." Patented July 5, 1864. No. 43,449.

Saucer Hunters." In the *Arkansas Democrat* edition of Aug. 3, 1965 we read:

A news director of a Fort Smith radio station, Tony Delaney, reported that he, along with two companions, set up a UFO watch on Wildcat Mountain and spotted three separate sightings. The group reportedly watched four objects for about five minutes, two objects for about ten minutes, and a single object for an undisclosed length of time. Delaney, using binoculars, described the objects as "brilliant blue and green but changing to a brilliant white under acceleration." The objects traveled right, left and up and down.

On through the summer and fall of 1965, disclosures of bizarre craft and their superhuman maneuvers in Arkansas skies were ever so many. Objects with multi-colored lights were seen as well as metallic-looking machines with details such as lighted "windows." Reports tapered off after August but occasional sightings continued throughout the year. (To be continued).

Airships, Continued

It is difficult to see how the westward trip against the prevailing winds could be accomplished in less than 2 days when powered flight of balloons was in its infancy. While the schedule for the trip to Honolulu stretches the imagination, the schedule for another airship reported by the *Pittsburgh Press* is an outright lie. Here the timing of a flight is given as Jacksonville, Florida 9:43; Havana, Cuba 9:47 and Duluth, Iowa 9:50.

The *Dallas Morning News* of April 19th contained a unique account involving a crash landing of an airship with retrieval of the pilot's body in the Aurora, Texas area. Part-time reporter E. E. Haydon even provided information that the pilot originated from Mars and had on his person papers with unknown hieroglyphics. No material evidence regarding the airship, pilot, or his papers was ever recovered and the report of the incident is regarded as a hoax. While a few other hoaxes were identified in the newspapers, their perpetrations were relatively simple-minded and rather weakly documented.

Among the more curious accounts of airships is the one provided by George Dunlap via the *Dallas Morning News* of May 16th. Dunlap indicated he inspected a 75-foot long steerable, powered airship near Lake Charles, Louisiana. The airship supposedly carried four passengers in its travels through Texas and Mexico and had an inventor named Wilson and engineer, Waters. Although Dunlap indicates he was invited for an ascent, he declined. Incredibly, Wilson was reported as building a total of three airships, the other two supposedly in Arizona and Mexico. Could one of these airships have been the one so widely reported by the *Dallas Morning News* on April 16th and 17th when it was reported that the pilot was seen working on his craft outside the Dallas area?

Ballooning History

In both Europe and America balloonists had been making ascensions with passengers for more than a

century. As early as 1783 Jean F. P. Rozier and Marquis d'Arlandes made a free-flight trip at LaMulette, France and 10 years later the first balloon flight in the U.S. was launched from Philadelphia. Jean P. Blanchard flew 15 miles across the Delaware River and reached more than 1 mile in altitude. But then what happened between 1793 and 1896 in America does not seem to have been documented in much detail. In Europe, however, there is considerable documentation during the period. By 1880 the first powered airship was flown in Leipzig, Germany by Wolfert and Baumgarten, but it ended in disaster. Even up to 1897 Europeans were having difficulties with their attempts to achieve successful, controlled, powered flight. In 1884 C. Renard and A. C. Krebs flew their 170-foot-long "La France." The balloon returned to its starting point after achieving a speed of 12 mph. By 1897 a European dirigible had been powered by a Daimler engine, but unfortunately their trip ended too in disaster as their engine emitted sparks which ignited the hydrogen gas in the balloon. In the same year another partially successful flight ended in disaster when a Swede, Solomon A. Andree, left Danes Island in an ambitious attempt to cross the North Pole. Because of incidents like these the *New York Herald* wrote on April 15th:

In Europe there are at least a dozen well-known scientists working on the problem (of a powered, steerable airship) and many half successful effects of flights have been made.

It is difficult to compare European and American achievements before 1897 since American reports are not as complete. Nevertheless, American flights also seemed to have their difficulties. Numerous instances of landings were cited by Hanlon, Jacques Vallee, and this writer, and of all of these, five were reported to be for repairs. However, only the *St. Louis Republic* for April 14th reported a major crash landing, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Here G. W. Somers and W. Chadburn witnessed a blow-up of the airship which showered propeller blades, electric wire and steel

splinters.

A measure of the ballooning activity from late 1896 to the spring of 1897 is the number of sightings and landings reported. Hanlon specifies 150 sightings in 19 states, and this writer adds 1 sighting in each of 4 additional states and Cuba and Mexico from newspaper sources. Vallee and Hanlon documented 22 landings in 12 states, and this writer adds 13 additional landings in 8 states. In America there were at least a dozen inventors working on the problem, however, most were not as well known as were the European inventors. It is hardly a surprise that the state of dirigible technology in the U.S. was as advanced as it was with the long and involved history of ballooning in Europe and America.

Early Interpretations

To the detriment of UFOlogy and the history of ballooning, one of the first analyses of the mysterious airships of 1896-1897 was made by the debunker Donald Menzel. In his customary glib style the airships were:

... created from imagination — imagination inflated by the newspaper stories. As in the 1947 saucer scare, hoaxers and jokers ready to capitalize on the event, quickly entered the picture."

Naturally this same approach to the phenomena of 1896-1897 was taken by another debunker, Philip K. Klass. His version is that:

When the public has been conditioned by the news media to believe that there are strange flying objects in the skies many persons will report having seen such objects — even when the objects do not really exist.

Apparently Menzel and Klass would have us believe that half of the major newspapers in the country are not capable of differentiating between a real phenomenon and a psychological one.

In keeping with their general approach to UFOs, Menzel and Klass are not only glib, they are absurd. In spite of the activity with powered, controlled, elongated airships in the areas of San Francisco, Omaha,

(continued on next page)

Airships, Continued

Chicago, Dallas and Nashville, Klass writes:

At the time of the rash of mysterious airships sightings there were no large powered craft in the U.S. . . . Such things as airplanes or airships simply did not exist.

Menzel of course has his own explanation of how thousands of people over the U.S. had erred even though they saw details with and without optical aid:

The dark, cigar-shaped gas bag in many cases was only a lenticular cloud or mirage, which would have escaped notice except for the special significance momentarily attached to an object of this shape.

The view of the 1896-1897 phenomena taken by Vallee is different from that of Menzel and Klass, and not as glib. Vallee suggests that the airship was a figment of the imagination, and in 2 of the 21 landing cases he discusses in connection with the airship, he shows that there are similar circumstances in Medieval annals of folklore from the British Isles. Vallee also attempts to show that 4 of the remaining 19 landing events are fairy-tale-like. Most of the interpretations of the flap found in the general UFO literature, however, take the view that the airships are not an explained phenomenon. Hanlon closes his *Flying Saucer Review* article of 1970 with the statement:

It is clear that the origin of the airship is still very much an open issue. It is also clear that the mystery surrounding its appearance at that particular time in history has deepened.

What is so surprising of the analyses mentioned above by Menzel, Klass, Vallee, and Hanlon is that none considered a conventional man-made object explanation. Debunkers and UFOlogists are represented, but no one chose to treat the mountain of compelling data as just part of the history of ballooning.

At the time of the airship sightings there did not appear to be any outspoken debunkers with the reputation of Menzel and Klass. But indeed, there were a few astronomers who simply suggested without much technical defense that thousands upon thousands of people could not distin-

guish between a point of light such as Venus, Mars, Alpha Orion, or Betelgeuse, and structured aircraft. Although numerous people saw details of the construction of the ships, including passengers, and although many reliable witnesses made observations with optical aid, the astronomers failed to explain how the observers could have so erred.

Perhaps more convincing than the technical arguments of the man-made nature of the flap are the contemporary opinions of reliable sources. Some of the first supportive commentary comes from Pritchitt in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* of April 10th and 14th.

There is too much corroborative evidence and it comes from too many quarters to treat the matter any other way (than an airship).

The newspaper also reported that the populace itself was convinced of the true nature of the phenomenon:

It is general belief that an airship is floating over the states of Missouri, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas . . . The majority ridicule the idea that anything beyond the natural has been seen.

Even the French newspaper *Figaro* commented on the believability of the American reports:

The news seems to be more than a canard, seeing the details and preciseness in which are related in the (*New York Herald*) the exploits of this airship.

Although the *Philadelphia Inquirer* carried little on the airship, in the April 17th issue they comment:

Airship stories of an apparently entirely reliable character are coming in in rapid succession and all seem to hang together.

Conclusions

More than 3,000 newspaper issues from among three dozen titles covering the period during late 1896, and between mid-March and mid-May of 1897 were searched for this article. It is very likely that considerably more data remains to be uncovered on the subject of the mysterious airships from newspapers alone. Further, Lucius Farish has informed me that he has had for some time in his possession several hundred pages of airship

material. But, although there is much work remaining to be done in constructing the story of airships in the U.S. during the 19th century, the work done to this point is sufficient for this writer to deduce the true nature of the mysterious airships of 1896-1897. It seems much more reasonable to interpret the airship sightings simply as airships which were various models in the development of the dirigible. Consequently these airships should no longer remain in the realm of UFOs.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This writer expresses his gratitude to the extensive, courteous gratis service provided by the interlibrary loan and microform groups at the central library of the Pennsylvania State University. Appreciation is also expressed to the *Flying Saucer Review* for the extensive photocopy service in connection with this study.

have been satellites know what I saw!

Mr. Kor, you re! we are not the onl the vast universe astronomers both seemingly limitless at least 100,000,000 that can indeed be every way!

Therefore there i that we can be the the universe!

So what if the evidence that flyin have my own visu what about that s found in Florida?

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Yes, the saucers a continually because longer afraid to repor seen.

The most revealin are the least verifiabl that men and women offices in our land ha I do not claim to b

The 1890s "Flap"

By Jerry Mathers

The first flying saucer "flap" did not occur in this country in 1947 as is commonly thought. It occurred in the 1890s!

That's right, the Gay Nineties. While the advent of heavier than air flight was near (1903), and hot-air balloons no rarity in civilized areas, whatever was maneuvering through our skies throughout 1896 and 1897 was no primitive, uncontrollable balloon.

Thousands of people from all walks of life from coast to coast reported a strange "airship" flying low overhead. Reports were particularly common in the Midwest, and included sightings of airship occupants and even the kidnapping of a cow!

The log of these airships -- for there had to be at least two -- can be traced from coast to coast and border to border.

At Oakland, Cal., some streetcar passengers reported a winged cigar-shaped ship that sent out a bright stream of light. This same description would be heard again and again across the nation.

In late January, 1897, a second ship was seen over Montreal for a week, and also spotted near Albany, N.Y. The Chicago Chronicle on Feb. 2, said: "A strange star or light in the heavens has been puzzling the people of Montreal for a week." The light appeared a little after 5 p.m., disappeared a bit after 7. It was thought to be a military balloon used in maneuvers.

(To Be Continued in the next issue.)

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does any other know of! y for you. You gh opinion of belittle UFO

Newsletter

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found and read zine. I noticed or Has His Say" e. I wonder if er tried passing heart. Some of orse than that! ou "burn all the s you're rather ust) about your mple, you gave the Thomas it was proved not "cover up ing a skyhook m Wilmington heast of where ie crash of the 'alcutta (after 3 was discovered

ase where the ball lightning fireball(?). The r got too close ld have had rother "likely" up!). At any

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rate the pilots bailed out from fear, bad instrument readings, etc. Buffalo flight 542 (1959) crashed and scorched the windows, etc. An airplane stall was the cause.

I'm getting our librarian to cancel their subscription, and I know I can.

Now try to take me apart. If you send me any "documented" U.F.O. cases I'd take a crack at solving them as I am a skeptic.

Happy Fishing,
J.B. Bennett
10913 Candlelight Lane
Potomac, Md. 20854

● Thanks. You've been very helpful.—Rap.

Dear Ray:

I wish to thank you for all the intellectual stimulation and sense of "awe and wonder" you brought into my young manhood.

After living a little boy's life in my father's shadow for a full half century in "Smalltown USA", I am now blissfully wed to a fellow bookworm.

As for your mags, I can't help saying they were a million times more informative and interesting back in the good old pulp days. All this overpriced, slick, digest-sized literature

is a poor substitute for the Argosy, Bluebook and Thrilling WONDER Stories of my youth.

What puzzles me is why your former s-f authors have developed a "blind spot" where UFO's are concerned. During the depression you

made a living with the hack writing about spaceships and deathrays. Now that the "Buck Rogers" world is upon us, so many of you take the contrary head in the sand attitude.

Keel, Charroux, Asimov and any number of others, including that stuff shirted Sagan, all take such perverse pride in being unbelievers.

My 82 year old father vividly remembers the little guy he saw crouched in the corner at the controls of a little "orange crate" shaped vehicle cruising silently and serenely over the northern Indiana landscape as a boy. This was evidently part of the Great Air Ship Flap of 1897.

How do you just shrug off a mountain of evidence from all climes and centuries? Ever stop to think how much spaceship lore was lost in all of those senseless, barbaric book burnings?

That Siberian "Meteor"? National Enquirer interviewed 129 survivors of that fateful morning. They claimed it CHANGED DIRECTION AS THOUGHT TRYING FOR AN UNINHABITED REGION THAT DAWN. We just had one of those (what I term Interstate Meteors) out here. The experts keep shoving it further east. It was seen all the way from Alaska to Portland, but at last report was supposed to be down near Ritzville, Wash. With a little imagination, I think we can place it back in Montana. Those two kooks with their "Black Hole" in Science Digest were as WRONG AS YOU CAN

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PRE-WWI UFOs OVER WESTERN CANADA

Reports are where—and when—you find them, as this historical survey of Canadian cases reveals.

by W. Ritchie Benedict

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to do some extensive research on the paranormal in general and UFOs in particular in the back files of Western Canadian newspapers. For example, I have looked through every single issue of the *Calgary Herald* from 1883 to 1955 and the *Victoria Daily Colonist* from 1858 to 1900. There was a good deal of unexplained traffic in our skies, far more than I had been led to believe.

My first target for research was the 1897 "airship" wave. The United States had a number of sightings in the midwest in April of 1897, but in Canada, it appears that a different schedule was followed—most of the activity was in July-August. A lighted object was witnessed by thousands in Vancouver, British Columbia, in July and something similar occurred in Winnipeg a month later. Interestingly, the pattern had been repeated a year earlier in 1896 with two Indians viewing a balloon-like object in July over B.C. The objects were commonly believed to be experiments by Swedish explorer Andree (who later perished in an ill-fated attempt to cross the North Pole by balloon). Most of the Canadian objects sighted in this period were sketchily defined, although a few observers reported a gondola-like appendage beneath the main body. The 1897 Vancouver "fireship" did appear to have internal lighting.

I found that the 1897 wave in Canada was truly cross-country. In October 1897, a Port Arthur train crew sighted a mystery object that had a number of colored running lights, and in early November, 1897, the *Newfoundland Evening Telegram* reported a huge "balloon" had been spotted over Halifax. I was hopeful that I might be able to find evidence concerning airships over Alberta and Saskatchewan for this period, but to date, I have come up blank. However both the *Edmonton Bulletin* and the *Lethbridge News* ran short pieces in April/May 1897 on the American sightings. The *Edmonton* piece referred to a "mysterious airship hovering around Minneapolis and St. Paul which was illuminated at night with red lights." The account goes on to state: "Half the population of many towns in Iowa saw the vacillating lights swiftly speeding to the west."

The next major event in the early history of Western Canada was on April 12th, 1905. An article in *Yukon World* for May 5 of that year noted that a "peculiar light of intense brilliancy and short duration, illuminated the entire heavens" to the officers of the steamer *Cassiar* who happened to be on duty at 1:45 a.m. when the ship was running down the Johnson Strait. The illu-

mination lasted a full 45 seconds and it was possible to read newspapers by the light that was produced.

Alberta's first UFO seems to have made its appearance on the night of November 18th, 1910 at 3 a.m. In an article in the *Calgary Herald* headlined "Airship, Meteor, or Just Plain Jag," there is a description of something brilliant which left a trace of incandescence many times brighter than the full moon. Some observers felt that a gasoline tank on some sort of aircraft had ignited and exploded.

I came across a brief mention of something unusual in a January 14th, 1911 article on early aviation in Calgary. It was stated that a "mysterious aviator" was seen flying over southern Alberta and western Saskatchewan the previous fall. The writer was puzzled by two factors: why was the machine seen over so many widely separated localities, and why was the speed so "wonderful"? On August 22nd, 1911, the *Winnipeg Free Press* reported an early morning "visitor" who appeared at 1:50 a.m. and vanished at 4:10 a.m. It generally resembled an airplane and was reported to "hover" in the locality for several hours. When it finally vanished, the watchers were unable to make out where it went.

Calgary had an unexpected visitor just ten days after the first Calgary Exhibition and Stampede. The old *Calgary News Telegram* on September 17th, 1912 headlined "Mysterious Object Is Puzzling Residents of West End of the City—It is Seen Travelling Over the City at a Tremendous Clip—Blue Light Attached." The article went on to state that a blue light was attached to a long dark body like that of a flying machine. Further on, the reporter says that this object had appeared before over Okotoks but people were unsure whether it was a machine, a strange bird or something else. There is a tantalizing reference to sightings the previous year over Taber, Alberta and Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. The article attributes some of the sightings to an inventor named Baden who was supposed to have invented a flying machine with an attached locomotive headlight, but admitted that nothing had been heard from Baden for some time.

The 1913 *Calgary Herald* carried articles on the British airship wave of January-February that year, but there does not seem to have been anything locally. In early 1915, there were mystery airplanes over the Okanagan region of British Columbia. A man in Calgary in February of 1915 reported "airplane motors" overhead at 4 a.m. and was worried over the possibility of attack by the Germans.

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série de BOUCLES très petites ou plutôt de rotations rapides alternant avec un simple mouvement de trajectoire relativement lent. Le ciel était couvert et le phénomène se détachait sur fond gris foncé ». Venons-en maintenant aux observations les plus remarquables, celles de l'année 1897 dont la plus énigmatique eut lieu aux États-Unis. La presse lui consacra une large place et Charles Fort devait l'insérer plus tard comme une vedette parmi ses « hors la loi » de la Science. Il semble que l'« aéronef » a été vu pour la première fois vers la fin de mars. Il circula au-dessus du territoire américain pendant les trois premières semaines du mois d'avril, car on a des témoignages pour les 9, 11, 16, 17 et 19 de ce mois, et en des lieux fort éloignés les uns des autres : Salt Lake City (Utah), Chicago (Michigan), Saint-Louis (Missouri) à 295 milles de Chicago, Denver (Colorado) à 916 Milles de Saint-Louis, etc...

La forme était celle d'un fuseau paraissant avoir 70 mètres de longueur et 10 mètres de diamètre. Il aurait été muni d'ailerons sur les côtés. D'autre part, il émettait des lumières rouges, blanches et vertes sur les côtés, qui furent interprétées comme des signaux. On observa également des faisceaux lumineux.

Le **New York Herald** du 10 avril 1897, imprimait : « That airship now at Chicago. City excited by the appearance of rapidly moving lights in the sky. Astronomers incredulous. They believe that lights proceed from a star in the constellation of Orion ». Le même journal dans son numéro du 29 mars, relatant ce phénomène observé par les habitants d'Omaha (Nebraska) disait : C'est une tache lumineuse trop grosse pour être un aérostat.

Le **New York Sun** précisait que la luminosité de l'objet était celle de 20 étoiles réunies. Le **Chicago Tribune** cite les témoignages des habitants d'Eldora (Iowa) selon lesquels cet « aéronef » ressemblait à un « immense oiseau d'argent poli ». A Milwaukee il a été vu (par des milliers de personnes) stationnant dans le ciel pendant 15 minutes. Selon d'autres, la lumière était « suspendue à un corps sombre et volumineux de forme ovoïde ».

L'observation du 19 avril faite à Sisterville (Virginie) confirmait les points précédents, attestant également que l'objet était resté en mouvement au-dessus de la ville pendant une dizaine de minutes avant de s'éloigner vers l'est.

En 1952, la presse rappela ces observations de la fin du XIX^e siècle, mais ce fut tout. Nous allons en ajouter d'autres, inconnues, en corrélation avec les précédentes et c'en est là l'intérêt.

La première est un phénomène vu dans le ciel de France, et nous en empruntons les détails au **Bulletin de la Société Astronomique de France**, 1897, pp. 334-336 et 412. Ce « bradyte » (ou météore lent) pour reprendre le terme employé, fut d'abord vu à Frontignan, à 9 h 16 du soir : grosseur d'une orange. Couleurs : rouge, bleu, vert, jaune. Se dirige du NO au Sud. Durée 30 secondes. Il est observé à Orange à 9 h 30 : apparaît dans l'étoile bêta du lion, alors à 17° 35' au-dessus de l'horizon. Diamètre environ 4' (un peu plus du 1/10 de la Lune). Vitesse uniforme lente, vers alpha de la Vierge (L'Epi), puis au-dessus du Carré de la Balance, puis un peu au Sud d'alpha du Scorpion (Antarès). Sa vitesse apparente diminue et il disparaît à 6°36' au-dessus de l'horizon. Division en 3 parties au terme de sa course. Vitesse de parcours : 3° par seconde. Forme allongée, couleur jaune brillant.

A Montpellier on le vit vers 21 h 20 ; sa longueur apparente à l'œil était de 1 m 50, et il voyageait horizontalement à une allure très lente. Il était très lumineux, principalement la tête, d'un jaune d'or. La queue, composée de traits plus foncés, se terminait presque en pointe. Il se déplaçait vers l'Ouest et paraissait évoluer dans l'atmosphère proche, tellement il se trouvait bas (à Montpellier).

Enfin, et c'est le plus étrange, vers 23 h, on l'observa en Grande-Bretagne, prenant la direction Sud.

Il ne faut probablement voir que des phénomènes astronomiques dans les observations du 28 octobre 1897, de « bolides à trajectoire sinuëuse » (**Bulletin de la S.A.F.**, 1898, p. 231), d'ailleurs relatées sans détails précis, mais il nous paraît certain que le « bradyte » du mois de juillet vu dans la région méditerranéenne et en Grande-Bretagne était le mystérieux aéronef observé dans le ciel des États-Unis en avril.

Il serait donc nécessaire, à notre avis, de se livrer à un dépouillement systématique des journaux (et des revues astronomiques, bien entendu) pour la période 1896-1897, en étendant cette enquête à tous les pays. Nous sommes persuadés que la récolte de renseignements de toutes sortes serait fructueuse (2).

Terminons par un article titré : « Un phénomène extraordinaire », paru dans le **Bulletin de la S.A.F.** de 1898 (p. 238) :

« Les **Astronomische Nachrichten**, 1898, relatent l'observation faite à Grusswald (Poméranie) le 4 février, du « passage d'un objet noir sur le disque solaire. Plusieurs personnes ont été témoins du phénomène. L'entrée sur le disque eut lieu à 1 h 10 (temps moyen de Berlin) et la sortie à 2 h 10. Avant d'atteindre le limbe solaire, l'objet avait été aperçu depuis un quart d'heure déjà et on continua de le voir pendant plus d'une heure après son passage sur le disque. La direction du mouvement était dans le sens N.-O. Le diamètre apparent de l'objet était de 6' environ ».

On est surpris de constater que les observations étranges enregistrées dans la rubrique des « divers » des revues scientifiques ne sont pas accompagnées de commentaires et l'on devine la gêne des rédacteurs devant quelque chose n'entrant pas dans les normes (3).

Les coïncidences, dans une période de temps, des apparitions anormales successives dans le ciel d'un objet dont la forme, la dimension apparente, l'aspect général, la vitesse de déplacement, etc., sont dans chaque cas très ressemblants constituent une très grande probabilité en faveur de l'hypothèse d'une exploration de près de notre Terre par des êtres venus d'ailleurs.

(1) La première partie de cet article a été publiée dans le n° 33 de la Revue OURANOS (p. 109). Nous publions ici l'article intégral pour les lecteurs qui n'auraient pu se procurer ce numéro.

(2) N.D.L.R. — Nous invitons vivement nos amis et correspondants étrangers à faire des recherches dans ce sens et à nous communiquer leurs découvertes pour publication dans cette Revue.

(3) Dans l'observation du 4 février 1898, on laisse entendre que l'objet passa à proximité du soleil, mais avec un diamètre apparent de 6' ; il nous semble évident que l'objet dans ce cas aurait été invisible, noyé dans la luminosité de l'astre.

C'est donc d'un objet passant à très grande distance de la Terre et se déplaçant à faible vitesse (durée de l'observation : 2 h 15) qu'il s'agit ; ou faut-il supposer que nos astronomes n'ont pas connaissance de planétoïdes satellites de la Terre ?

Media Hoaxes

by Fred Fedler

Ames: Iowa State University Press,
1989, 266 pp., hardback, \$27.95.

Reviewed by Douglas Chapman

If one can cope with Fred Fedler's monotonous writing style, his book *Media Hoaxes* should prove a rewarding grab-bag of fascinating hoaxes from throughout the history of journalism.

Some of the greatest names in literature have turned out amazing outrages. Both Jonathan Swift and Benjamin Franklin put out works which predicted the demises of specific almanac publishers. After the publishers' reported "deaths," Swift and Franklin explained the protests of their "deceased" victims as being those of inept impostors.

Edgar Allan Poe's "factual" story "The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall" detailed a man's travel to the moon by balloon. In 1835, it fooled many; now it is one of his most famous fictions. Even Poe's "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" was originally published in *The American Review* in 1845 as if it might be fact. (One could not get Poe to admit one way or the other.)

Fedler does a good job at recreating the rough-and-ready world of 19th century American journalism. With limited news sources, facts did not always stand in the way of a good story. Mark Twain learned various skills in this environment—including practical jokes. Twain once put together an issue of the Virginia City newspaper *Enterprise*, consisting largely of libel of important people, printed only one copy, and sent it to his vacationing boss. That got the man to return to work—in a hurry.

Many know of the Orson Welles "Martian scare" of 1938. Fewer are aware of South American attempts to emulate him. When a station in Santiago, Chile, put out their radio adaptation of *War of the Worlds* in 1944, many were injured. When, in 1949, Station HCQRX in Quito, Ecuador, broadcast their version as a "real" news story about a Martian invasion, panic again resulted. Rioters soon set HCQRX's building afire, and rescuers discovered 20 corpses in the ruins.

Strange readers may be interested in the account of the "Winsted wild man," which Fedler says was the creation of Lou Stone, a New England journalist famous for his whimsical stories. In the next issue of *Strange Magazine*, Michael T. Shoemaker will take a detailed look at this case in his column *Back From Limbo*.

Fedler writes that our present standards of journalistic accountability are a development of this century and that

journalists of previous centuries did not subscribe to them. The media still craves novelty, but is—generally—more careful about its work.

The book is full of juicy material, including the 1953 Atlanta, Georgia, flying saucer hoax and T. Walter Williams' creation of news reports—for the *New York Times* during the 1930s—of frequent sightings of sea monsters from the ship *Mauretania*.

Media Hoaxes is best dipped into in small doses, but those who do so will find much to inform and amuse them.



A Milwaukee teen-ager saw this saucer in April of 1967. According to the witness, the object swooped down from his right, then leveled off in flight while emanating a golden glow. After several seconds the UFO soared away

electricity. It is a wonderful machine and can be stopped and made to stand still in the air anywhere and comes down light as a feather.' "

"Horen lives at the New Exchange Hotel and went to San Francisco Thursday. Some seem to give credence to his story. All admire his abilities as an accomplished story-teller and say he has a marvelous imagination. He sticks to his story and bears the name of a hard-working man."

In our investigations thus far, only two instances have been found wherein the airship crews were of abnormal appearance. The following is one of those cases and is easily the most intriguing of the lot.

The Lansing, Michigan *State Republican*, carried the following story in 1897. Datedlined Williams-

"SAN JOSE, Dec. 1.—The champion airship story of the season is told by John A. Horen, an electrician in the employ of Electrical Improvement Company of this place. Horen says he has a patent on an electrical platinum speaking appliance and that by appointment he went to San Francisco Thursday to see the inventory of the airship who wished to see the appliance. Said Horen: 'We went on horseback to a point on Sandy Beach, where the airship was, got aboard and rose very high. The height was registered by a meter on the ship. The inventor does not count the distance traveled by miles but by degrees. After leaving Sandy Beach Thursday afternoon we traveled westward. Before day next morning we saw lights. The inventor said they were the lamps of Honolulu. We turned east and Saturday evening about dark landed near where we started. The airship rose by means of two propellers. The movement was noiseless and swift. The inventor is 45 years old, but I cannot now tell any news, but the motive power is not steam or



A high-pitched whine drew a Kentwood, Louisiana resident's attention to this classically-shaped UFO. As he aimed his camera to the sky, the object turned slowly and remained overhead as if watching the cur-

SOME NEW LIGHT ON THE 1896-97 "FLAP"

THE "FLAP" OF 1896 (California) and 1897 (the Midwest) is nothing new to UFO researchers. But to the best of our knowledge this is the first time the following reports—all reproduced from the Los Angeles Times—have been re-published during these current epochal times. Our thanks go to Zan Overall, of Reseda, Calif., for contributing this valuable old data.

* * *
SACRAMENTO VISITATION—AN IMMENSE WHITE LIGHT MOVING RAPIDLY TO SW.

SACRAMENTO—Nov. 22, 1896. Between six and seven o'clock tonight hundreds of people saw floating over the city what is now firmly believed to be an airship. An immense white light was displayed and it was moving rapidly in a southwesterly direction. The light was so high however that no other object could be distinguished. Tonight's visitation created considerable excitement and the airship is the sole topic of conversation. (L. A. Times, 11/23/1896.)

MYSTERIOUS PARTIES

OROVILLE. The rumor that the airship which is alleged to have passed over Sacramento was constructed near this town seems to have a grain of truth in it. The parties who could give information if they would are extremely reticent. They give evasive answers or assert they know nothing about it.

Not a single person that has seen or known of an airship being constructed near here can be found and yet there is a rumor that some man has been experimenting with different kinds of gases and testing those that are lighter than air. Experiments were made some miles east of town and no one is able to give the names of the parties who are evidently strangers seeking to avoid publicity.

* * *
THAT AIRSHIP—INVENTOR CANNOT BE FOUND AND STORY IS DISCREDITED

SAN FRANCISCO—Nov. 23. A.P. The story of the airship is not generally credited. The inventor cannot be found and those who are reputed to have seen it are not willing to give direct testimony. George D. Collins, attorney, whose name has been connected with the inventor as applicant for a patent, admits he was retained for such service, but ridicules the story of the Sacramento flying machine. He says the story is false but declares that his client is working on a machine, which is a combination of aeroplane and tailless kite.

Attorney Collins, however, says that he has not seen the flying machine and he discredits its alleged performance. The name of the inventor is still withheld and he cannot be found. (Times, 11/24.)

NO WASHINGTON INFORMATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Nov. 23. At the Patent Office today nothing could be learned of the application for a patent on the flying machine alleged to be taking successful flights in the neighborhood of Sacramento. The rules of the Office forbid any disclosures of names of applicants or the character of the inventions for which they seek protection.

Inquiry among patent attorneys known to control Pacific Coast business failed to disclose any knowledge of the alleged success in aeronautics. Professor Langley of the Smithsonian Institute, who has experimented scientifically for some time to demonstrate the best methods of solving the question of aerial navigation, excused himself from discussing the matter. His manner indicated plainly that he gave little credence to the Sacramento reports.

(Cont.)

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THE 1896-97 "FLAP"

THE ALLEGED INVENTOR

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 23. The inventor of the mysterious airship which has been puzzling local scientists and others for the past week is believed to be one "Dr. E. H. Benjamin," an alleged dentist who has occupied rooms in an Ellis St. lodging house for the past two years, but so far he has successfully evaded all attempts to discover his identity. His attorney, Collins, when seen yesterday and pressed to tell further about the alleged inventor and his machine, said this morning: "The inventor came to my office in the Corden building and told me he tested the merits of the ship in last night's storm [which netted San Francisco two inches of rain] with the greatest success. The wind currents were very contrary and the test was one that tried the merits of the machine in the hardest possible manner, but it came out of the ordeal in good order having breasted the storm as well as any bird.

"He started from the locality where the vessel is housed and flew over Alcatraz and out the Golden Gate, skirting the Cliff House and returning by the same route across the bay. He hovered over the Seal Rocks for fully ten minutes, and played his searchlight on the seals. His intention is to make another try this evening probably over the same ground running on his return trip as far as Sacramento."

A dispatch was received from Sacramento last night to the effect that hundreds of people there had seen the mysterious meteor in the heavens but as yet no one had been able to see the object sufficiently well to state definitely what it was.

SAW THE AIRSHIP—IMPRESSIONABLE RED BLUFF CITIZENS MAKE DISCOVERY

RED BLUFF—Nov. 25. Many residents assert that they saw the alleged airship in the neighborhood last evening. It was first noticed about seven o'clock and was thought to be a peculiarly bright star but which was moving rapidly in a southwesterly direction toward the mountains. The summit of the mountains could be seen above the mysterious light as it moved west.

Soon after its disappearance a telegram from Chico stated that the supposed airship had passed that town soon after seven o'clock. After it had vanished it again passed over Red Bluff and then a telegram from Vacaville said the supposed airship had come from the direction of Red Bluff and after making a few turns had returned in the direction from which it came.

Several citizens say that while at first only a light was visible, later the body of an egg-shaped object was visible moving quickly through the air. The theory that it was a star was rejected because of its distinctly rocking motion which was like the motion made by a kite. (Times, 11/25.)

A FLIGHT OF IMAGINATION—ANOTHER MAN WHO HAS SEEN THE AIRSHIP

SAN JOSE—Dec. 1. The champion airship story of the season is told by John A. Horen, an electrician in the employ of the Electrical Improvement Company of this place. Horen says he has a patent on an electrical platinum speaking appliance and that by appointment he went to San Francisco Thursday to see the inventor of the airship who wished to the the appliance. Said Horen: "We went on horseback to a point on Sandy Beach, where the airship was, got aboard and rose very high. The height was registered by a meter on the ship. The inventor does not count the distance (Cont.)

FROM NEW YORK TIMES ("Topics of the Times"), Wed., March 31, 1897. (Courtesy of Roger Williamson, Guilford, Conn.)

"—THAT MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP to which reference has been made in this column a possibly wearisome number of times obstinately refuses to 'down.' It continues to disport itself in the western skies, or, to be quite safe, perhaps one had better say in the dispatches of western correspondents with a persistency which proves one of two things—either that a practicable airship really is in active operation out there, or that the correspondents mentioned are deplorably lacking in inventive skill.

"Knowing by long and trying experience that the latter theory is in direct conflict with the facts, the inclination is almost irresistible to accept the former explanation. Scores and scores of apparently reputable people have now been quoted as vouching for the reality of this aerial vessel, and their descriptions hang together in a truly impressive way.

"It is a curious and somewhat suspicious fact, however, that nobody has yet seen the marvel by daylight. Its flights, so far as the evidence shows, are always made in the hours of darkness. Why an inventor whom the whole world is eager to applaud and to reward should conceal himself with such pertinacity after testing his machine again and again, is inexplicable. The last experience of the sky traveler was at, or over, Topeka, on Saturday last. There the usual bright headlight on a dimly seen cigar-shaped structure was watched for a long time by crowds of people, according to local accounts—and among those most impressed by it was Gov. John W. Leedy, who, like the good Populist he is, expressed the hope that the tyranny of Railroads could now at last be thrown off."

New York Times, April 15, 1897:

"That airship to which all the Western papers and some of the Eastern ones are now giving the benefit of several doubts, is visible nightly to correspondents in all parts of Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Iowa. The aerial voyager is evidently a Mahatma of high development, for he exhibits in a dozen places at once and has a different appearance and does different things in each of them. It is lamentable to observe, however, that everywhere he violates the United States navigation laws in relation to lights. Usually the captain of this new craft shows only one light. It is most often white, and occasionally red. If this were the worst of his offenses, it might be endured, but the ignorance he displays in the matter of side lights is simply criminal and will get him into serious trouble the moment a United States officer succeeds in bringing him to.

"While sailing over the town of Kenosha, Wisconsin, Sunday night, the sky traveler shocked and angered all the nautical men living there by showing a green light on both bows. At Waukegan, Illinois, at the same hour, both the sidelights were red, which is equally illegal and outrageous. If the airship's owner persists in this lawlessness, he will not only get the reputation of being a pirate, but his vessel will run into itself, sooner or later, and suffer injuries so serious that his next exhibition will have to be made in several pieces instead of several places."

THE 1896-97 "FLAP"

travelled by miles but by degrees. After leaving Sandy Beach Thursday afternoon we travelled westward. Before day next morning we saw lights. The inventor said they were the lamps of Honolulu. We turned east and Saturday evening about dark landed near where we started. The airship arose by means of two propellers. The movement was noiseless and swift. The inventor is 45 years old, but I cannot now tell any news, but the motive power is not steam or electricity. It is a wonderful machine and can be stopped and made to stand still in the air anywhere and comes down light as a feather."

Horen lives at the New Exchange Hotel and went to San Francisco Thursday. Some seem to give credence to his story. All admire his abilities as an accomplished story-teller and say he has a marvelous imagination. He sticks to his story and bears the name of a hard-working man. (Times, 12/2.)

THAT BRIGHT LIGHT—OVER OMAHA AGAIN AND LEAVES PEOPLE MYSTIFIED

OMAHA, Neb.—March 29 (1897). A mysterious airship was seen again last night by a number of Omaha's reputable citizens. It hove into sight about the time church was over and in half an hour had traversed the heavens and had once more disappeared. It was seen by people in all parts of the city. This time the airship came into view in the southeastern portion of the horizon. It was in the shape of a big, bright light, too big for a balloon and glowing steadily. It sailed over the city to the northwest and there disappeared behind houses and bluffs. It moved very slowly and seemed to be quite near the earth. Nothing but the light was visible. (Los Angeles Times, 3/30/1897.)

NEW SOUTH AMERICAN GROUP. One of the latest UFO organizations to instigate operations is the "Comision Observadora de Objetos Voladores No Identificados" (Observing Commission of Unidentified Flying Objects) of Argentina. The group says it is at the public's disposal concerning this matter by authorization of the provincial and national authorities of the Republic of Argentina." Señor Ariel Giro Rietta, a civilian pilot, heads the organization and Señor Cristian Vogt, author of El Misterio de los Platos Voladores, is secretary. All correspondence—they say—should be addressed: C.O.D.O.V.N.I., Casila de Correo 2560, Buenos Aires.

FLYING SAUCER BOOKS

<u>Flying Saucers from Outer Space</u> by Maj. Donald E. Keyhoe.....	\$3.00
<u>The Flying Saucer Conspiracy</u>	3.50
<u>The Truth About Flying Saucers</u> by Aimé Michel.....	3.95
<u>Behind the Flying Saucers</u> by Frank Scully.....	2.95
<u>The Books of Charles Fort</u>	6.00
<u>Flying Saucers and Common Sense</u> by Waveney Girvan.....	3.50
<u>Flying Saucers—Fact or Fiction?</u> by Max B. Miller (Library Ed.)	1.00
<u>The Report on U.F.O.'s</u> by Edward J. Ruppelt.....	4.50
<u>Space, Gravity and the Flying Saucer</u> by Leonard G. Cramp.....	3.00
<u>Aboard a Flying Saucer</u> by Truman Bethurum.....	3.00
<u>The Secret of the Saucers</u> by Orfeo Angelucci.....	3.00
<u>Flying Saucers Come from Another World</u> by Jimmy Guieu (Eng.)..	3.50

'SAUCERS'

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: Dec. 1953, June 1954, June, September, December 1955, March, June, Sept. and Winter 1956. 25¢ each.

SAUCERS, #16

EDITORIAL

Puisque c'en est le temps, nous commencerons par offrir nos vœux les plus sincères à nos membres, à nos abonnés et à nos collaborateurs, en disant aussi notre gratitude très vive à tous ceux qui nous ont apporté leur persévérant concours, qui nous ont encouragé de leurs lettres émouvantes, sans que nous ayons pu toujours leur donner un témoignage écrit du réconfort que leur dévouement nous avait apporté. C'est grâce à eux que nous avons été capable de poursuivre, pendant l'année qui s'achève, notre tâche, qui est si lourde et si délicate à la fois.

Nos vœux vont aussi, et de tout cœur, vers notre cher Président, dont nous sommes heureux de dire que son état s'est un peu amélioré ces derniers jours. Pas assez, hélas ! pour qu'il puisse reprendre une vie active. Nous n'avons garde d'oublier que nous lui restons toujours profondément redevable d'avoir contribué, par l'engagement de sa personne, à donner à notre groupement une réputation de sérieux qui, depuis longtemps, a largement dépassé les limites de ce pays.

Nous avons dû remettre à un prochain bulletin la réponse point par point que nous nous proposons de faire aux arguments avancés par M. Evry Schatzman, l'éminent astrophysicien, le 14 septembre, lors de la seconde émission consacrée par Michel Lancelot, sur les ondes d'Europe N° 1, au problème des soucoupes volantes. D'être retardée notre réponse n'en sera que plus précise.

Des éléments en ont déjà été donnés, par avance, dans la première émission ainsi que dans des numéros antérieurs du bulletin, et nous ne saurions trop souligner ici l'appui décisif apporté en cette matière, à nous-mêmes et à tous ceux qui, dans le monde, défendent nos propres thèses, par le Dr McDonald, en raison de sa qualité de savant — qui ne peut être écartée par ses adversaires —, de son courage éminent et de son inlassable activité.

C'est précisément parce que nous sommes conscient de la force de ses écrits, de leur exceptionnelle puissance d'impact sur la communauté scientifique, que nous nous efforcerons de mener à bien dans le plus bref délai possible, mais en y mettant tout notre soin, la traduction de ceux de ses textes que, sur son invitation expresse, nous nous proposons de publier. Nous avons été retardé dans notre effort par toutes les tâches que nous impose le G.E.P.A., mais nous espérons pouvoir dans quelques semaines remettre à l'imprimeur le manuscrit du futur ouvrage.

La place que nous avons dû réserver à un groupe d'observations canadiennes restées trop longtemps en souffrance, et à des enquêtes en France, nous a contraint, et nous nous en excusons, à reporter à un bulletin ultérieur les observations canadiennes qui nous venaient de M. Talbot et celles, faites à l'île de la Réunion, que nous avait obligeamment communiquées M. Albany. En ce qui concerne ces dernières, nous sommes d'ailleurs à la recherche de certaines précisions techniques.

Assez curieusement, deux ouvrages ont paru, à peu d'intervalle, aux U.S.A. et en Italie (1), qui prétendent expliquer tout ou partie du phénomène « soucoupes volantes » — l'ouvrage américain est plus nuancé que l'italien — par des découvertes et des réalisations faites dans les domaines de l'aérodynamique et de la propulsion par les savants hitlériens. La thèse est loin d'être nouvelle et les arguments de ses nouveaux exposants ne nous ont pas plus convaincu que ceux des anciens. Nous dirons ultérieurement pourquoi mais, la « bataille des soucoupes volantes » avant bien des aspects et se livrant à bien des niveaux, nous pourrions presque nous demander si l'édition de ces ouvrages qui contribue à brouiller les cartes, ne répond pas à quelque vœu secret d'autorités gouvernementales.

On notera aussi que Dr G.G. Doel a écrit, dans le numéro de l'automne 1968 du « BUFORA Bulletin » (2), un article tendant à attribuer à un constructeur bien terrestre, l'Américain Edward Joel Penninaton, la paternité des « dirigeables » signalés au-dessus du territoire des U.S.A. en 1896 et 1897. L'article du Dr Doel est aussi ingénieux qu'érudit, mais ne nous paraît pas non plus convaincant. Nous en reparlerons.

Autre point à noter, il semble bien, d'après la même revue, que la vague américaine des soucoupes volantes soit parvenue à un creux.

Encore merci à tous et tous nos bons vœux !

René FOUÉRÉ.

(1) « The German Saucer Story » par Michael X. Barton, Futura Press, 5949 Gregory Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90038. et « Intercettateli senza sparare ! » par Renato Vesco, Mursia et C., via Tadino 29, 20124 Milano, Italie. Le bulletin n° 15 du « Belgian Interplanetary Study Circle », Maastortbaan 187, LIÈGE, Belgique, reprend aussi la thèse développée dans les ouvrages précités.

(2) « BUFORA Journal », Vol. 2, N° 6, Editor : 3 Devenish Road, Weeke, WINCHESTER, Hants., Angleterre.

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DID PENNINGTON BUILD THE 1897 U.S.A. AIRSHIP?

Reprinted from BUFORA Journal, British U.F.O. Research Association
170 Faversham Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent

Speculation as to the origin of the 'Airship' reported over the central States of the U.S.A. in 1897 has resulted in many theories and at least one of these attributes the sightings to the activities of a peculiar antique sort of U.F.O. I understand that the reason that the craft looked very much like the current airship design already flying in Europe is that the U.F.O. denizens wished to present their ship to the natives in a manner that would be acceptable and understandable. However the airship in question did not seem to be at all anxious to present itself, operating as it did almost exclusively by night and skulking during daylight hours in and out of the way places.

Before accepting such 'way out' theories it would seem necessary to exclude any possibility of the machine being the production of some far-sighted inventor with the ability, wealth and resources to build and fly such a machine and also to keep the whole project secret.

Witnesses of the airship were often men of excellent reputation for veracity and often crowds of onlookers were able to compare experiences.

The descriptions tallied to a remarkable degree. It seems clear also that some of the sightings of night flying objects were of quite a different category and to present day ufologists may be recognized as being the result of 'normal' U.F.O. activity.

From the reports still in existence it is possible to build up a very good

idea of the type of dirigible involved and there is no doubt that in many respects it was similar to airships already built and flying in Europe particularly in France. In 1884 Renard and Krebs devised and built an electrically propelled airship called 'La France' which made a circular flight of five miles at its first appearance.

It would indeed have been strange if there had been no parallel activities in the U.S.A. at that time. Resources of material and money were there in abundance and among the fertile brains of a rapidly growing scientifically orientated community was there no person of sufficient genius engineering ability and wealth to take up the aerial challenge?

I believe there was and I believe that his name was Edward J. Pennington.

Pennington was born in Franklin, Indiana in 1858 and as a boy showed remarkable engineering aptitude and as he developed into manhood he displayed remarkable initiative, charm and persuasiveness. With these attributes it was not long before he was running his own factory and at the age of twenty-three had patented a reciprocating head for planing machines the first of a continuous stream of patents which flowed from his active brain until his death in 1911.

He was ruthless too and could exhibit considerable showmanship in order to further his own ideas. A characteristic of Pennington which in this context is significant was the

secrecy he achieved to protect his projects and his habit of quietly dropping one idea in favor of another with little regard to the financial outcome.

By 1885 Pennington had acquired sufficient capital to set up the Standard Machine Works in Defiance, Ohio and two years later he created two further firms to make pulleys and wood-working machinery. A flood of Pennington Patents were registered at this time at Fort Wayne.

There were rumors of a company capitalized at one million dollars in Oswego, Kansas and another at Cincinnati with factories to produce 'Freight Elevators'. (Could this phrase possibly have been a euphemism for load-carrying Airships?)

After a brief appearance at Edinburg, Illinois, where he collected some 50,000 dollars from the inhabitants for yet another 'pulley works' he came to rest at Mount Carmel, Illinois in 1890.

Now things begin to develop...this new Company was actually a four cylinder radial engine... "for the propulsion of an aerial vessel". He also let it be known, that he was "readying a vessel to fly from Mount Carmel to New York".

In 1891 he exhibited a captive airship some thirty feet long and six feet in diameter. It flew in a circle propelled by an airscrew turned electrically. The current was conveyed by wires in the tethering cable.

In 1893 he turned his attention to motor driven vehicles and again a

spate of patents flooded from the Pennington brain. Soon he was making motor-cycles in Cleveland, Ohio and here he invented the first balloon tyre.

Such giddy progress was bound to meet with reverses and due to his dogmatic attitude and ruthless decisions he began to make enemies: yet his uncanny instinct for avoiding trouble kept him from falling foul of the law.

During 1894 he joined Thomas Kane who made kerosene engines widely used in dairies for milk separation. This event is most important in this thesis which will be evident later. Here, in Racine on the shores of lake Michigan they financed a really large concern for the development of petrol engines.

They patented among other things an 'electric igniter' for petrol driven engines which was really the first sparking plug, in 1895. In this year Pennington visited England and took some of his vehicles with him.

Exercising his well-known assurance and charm he persuaded Henry J. Lawson a successful manufacturer of bicycles to purchase patents to the tune of a half a million dollars. He was still here in 1896 and entered the Brighton Run. After an altercation with Mons. Leon Bollée his claim to have won the event was not disputed. After this he participated in the aerial demonstrations in the U.S.A. late in 1896 and during 1897.

In December 1895 he had deposed with the American Patents Office the design for full sized Airship. Many of the features of this design are so close to those described by witnesses of the aerial ship seen in 1896 and 1897 that on this evidence alone one would suspect that Pennington could have been responsible.

Basing the scale of the design on the size of the passenger seats the overall length of the ship would be about 140 ft. The keel beneath which provided accommodation for the crew and passengers, also housed large batteries and extended for 70 ft. with an equal amount of overhang of the envelope at each end. At the front end of the envelope a large airscrew about 50 ft. from tip to tip provided traction. At the rear an ample rudder and a horizontal fin allowed control

of direction.

At the sides two horizontally disposed propellers furnished lateral 'trimming'. Along the top of the ship a high dorsal fin would help to prevent sideways drift and yawing at slow speeds. Altogether a very impressive aeronautical design for that period of time.

It is probable that the finished airship based on this plan would deviate in minor details. Perhaps laterally placed aircrews were found to give a better lift and control if suitably shaped.

Wings or large ailerons above the envelope would also help to provide lift if suitably angled. In 1895 during his motorcycle phase Pennington was heard to remark: "Suppose I have a cycle, screw driven, making a mile a minute. . . just suppose that. . . then suppose that I put aeroplanes on that machine. . . and they are under good control, what then?"

What then indeed, the Wright Brothers would have been forestalled by several years.

The sighting of the Airship on the ground in 1897 by Captain Hooton at 6 p.m. on about 20th April is usually regarded as a true account of his experience which he recounted in the Little Rock, Arkansas, Gazette. He was, he said, out hunting near Homan when he heard the sound of 'pumping' like the noise of a Westinghouse locomotive brake.

Going in the direction of the sound he was amazed to behold "the famous airship" in an open space. A man wearing dark glasses was doing something at the rear of the ship. As he approached four other men appeared.

During the ensuing conversation there was no doubt in his mind that the crew were American. When the ship was ready, three large 'wheels' started to rotate on either side of the airship and with a hissing sound she took off. The 'aeroplanes' on top of the envelope sprang forward and the ship rapidly gained height and speed.

(For a more detailed account of this sighting please refer to the JULY/AUGUST 1966 issue of *The Flying Saucer Review*.)

The 'pumping noise' is of great significance. This noise is noted in at least three of the sightings. Twice it

was referred to as being similar to that made by a milk separator. This is almost conclusive, it was Thomas Kane whom Pennington joined in 1894, who made the motors for these separators.

All witnesses agree that there were lights aboard in abundance with our very bright searchlight which was seen to dim as the airship accelerated.

One witness encountering the aeronaut grounded claims to have asked why he turned the light on and off so much. He replied, no doubt truthfully that it consumed a great deal of motive power. We are led to the conclusion that Pennington's ship was propelled by a petrol-electric, or diesel-electric system. A bank of large batteries would be charged by a motor driven dynamo and would then operate electric motors geared to the airscrew(s). This system was widely used for the propulsion of road vehicles in the early years of this century.

After a trip of some miles it might be necessary to land to recharge batteries. Such a propulsion system would be well within Pennington's capabilities at this time.

The crew referred to by some witnesses included a woman, and it was customary for Pennington to take his wife on most of his exploits. (He married three times but I cannot find record of any children.) Also a bearded man.

I have a photograph of Pennington with one of his vehicles and here he is accompanied by a man with a beard. Pennington himself was tall and of good physique. He usually sported a rather long dark moustache.

The next evidence required toward proving that the ship was not only terrestrial but Pennington's, is to plot the course of the airship from recorded sightings during the 'voyages' of 1897 and to show that its speed was within the capabilities of such an early craft and that it operated in the vicinity of Pennington workshops.

Here I suggest the reader obtain a good large scale map of the central States of America. Those included in the Encyclopedia Britannica of 1911 are most useful being nearly contemporary.

Two series of sightings occurred in 1897.

Expedition One. Starting from Pennington's base at Oswego, Kansas, to Belleville, Kansas, to arrive March 25th, thence to Sioux City some 200 miles northward travelling at night. Making around 40 mph and in fair weather the six or so hours of darkness would allow easy arrival by 28th March. Here the ship landed and charged batteries?

Turning southward an easy night run of 100 miles allowed late worshippers leaving church at Omaha, Nebraska to view the aerial visitor. Continuing via Lincoln and Beatrice on the southerly run arrival at Everest, Kansas on April 1st., another 100 miles apart. In fact Kansas City was reached quite early at 8:15.

Back to base at Oswego without serious mishap on about the 3rd. April?

After this there are three possibilities. a) Pennington flew to Racine on lake Michigan by April 9th keeping to out-of-the-way landing sites. b) The ship was partly dismantled and carried by rail in Pennington's closed rail cars to Racine. c) That Thomas Kane had another similar airship at Racine. I would suggest (b) as being the most probable in the circumstances. Pennington had the resources and the experience in moving large objects by rail from place to place, vide his captive airship which was shown at exhibitions at Chicago and elsewhere.

Expedition Two. The Airship would have taken the air on the evening of April 9th 1897 and leaving Racine some 60 miles from Chicago was seen first north of the city and then to south-east at 9:30 p.m. passing over the lake.

Turning westward the ship would have reached vicinity of Eldon in Iowa some 200 miles after five hours at around forty mph. Spending the day of the 10th on the ground at some secluded spot the batteries would again be charged and ready for the take-off on the evening of April 10th. Then passing over Eldon westward to Ottumwa (10 miles) at 7:25 and 7:40 p.m. respectively, the ship is seen near Albia 25 miles further on at about 8:10 p.m. This chain of sightings allows some estimation of the airship's speed—35 miles in 45 minutes which is better than 45 mph. Wind speed

must be taken into account, but from the sighting reports the weather during this period seems to have been remarkably calm.

Steering now toward the north-west apparently en route for Racine, the ship would have passed near Mount Carroll but the date given for the airship over this city is April 9th. One must conclude that if this date is correct that the craft passed over this city on the westward leg of its journey before turning south-east toward Eldon. This is perfectly possible on the time schedule estimated.

However, and here one must speculate on Pennington's movements, it is not certain how the airship arrived at its next point at Yates Center, Kansas on April 19th. It could well have travelled at night over the next week or so southward which would be well within its 40 mph capabilities. Or, it may have returned to Racine and have been once more despatched by rail.

At Yates Center there was the unfortunate incident of a young heifer becoming entangled in the mooring rope on takeoff. Then southeast and a fairly long haul—400 miles—to near Texarkana, but at 40 mph only ten hours of darkness were necessary. Here the ship was obliged to land on April 21st. to recharge batteries. In the evening when all was ready for take-off the airship was spotted by one Captain J. Hooton whose detailed report is well known.

Airborne again and travelling in a leisurely manner Hot Springs, Arkansas was reached on May 6th. Once more the ship landed and was encountered by the Law Officers, Constable Sumpter and Deputy Sheriff McLemore. Both these gentlemen have sworn affidavits to their evidence in which they tell of a bearded mechanic and a young woman. There was also a young man who was engaged in filling a water bag. They were informed that the ship was en route for Nashville, Tennessee. This may well have been so, but I feel that it was not long before it was once again safely at Oswego, Kansas with Pennington highly satisfied with his aerial exploits. There is little evidence of its re-appearance.

From the foregoing evidence it must be conceded that the itinerary

followed by the 1897 airship was not particularly miraculous even for a craft of that period, only it took place in America where hitherto no such aerial exploits had been seen. No wonder then, that the onlookers became scared and confused, suspecting a work of the Devil. The only Devil responsible was in my opinion one eccentric, brilliant inventor named Edward Joel Pennington.

Of course there are so many questions left unanswered. For instance why did Pennington decide to drop the whole project just when fame and fortune might seem to have been within his grasp? I would suggest that he was clever enough to realize that his airship, though a very remarkable invention, had very severe limitations which could not readily be overcome.

There would be little prospect of increasing the battery capacity without making the ship larger and unwieldy. It was obviously very much a fine weather craft and he had been extraordinarily lucky to have had such a long spell of fine, calm weather for his trials.

Also, he would have realized that until the internal combustion engine could be improved considerably in size and reliability the whole airship project had better be shelved. The new and more financially rewarding field of the motor car must have seemed to Pennington to offer much better prospects of immediate financial rewards. He must also have known that there were aeronautical designers in Europe who had forged ahead in the airship field with whom he could hardly compete.

In the Motor Museum in Beaulieu, Hampshire there is a very rare vehicle. It is an 1896 Pennington motor-tricycle. It is worth looking at closely. The twin-cylinder, water cooled engine functions by fuel injection and the ignition system is remarkably ingenious, operating an early form of spark plug on each cylinder. The wheels have wire spokes and furnished with wide tires of modern cross section. It is a really remarkable piece of advanced engineering for its time and marks its designer, Pennington, as a brilliant engineer of foresight and genius.

Miami Beach, Florida 33162.

● **UFO RESEARCHERS:** I have recently become engaged in researching a most interesting and, to me, a very important aspect of Ufology. I am referring to the great "airship" flap of 1896-97. I doubt that many Ufologists realize the scope of this flap. It apparently began on the West Coast in November, 1896, and slowly spread eastward until it reached the Midwest and Eastern portions of the country in the Spring of 1897. If any reader cares to check local newspaper files for such data, I would greatly appreciate hearing of any new information, and would be glad to exchange data with other researchers. To those who reside West of the Rocky Mountains, I would suggest that you concentrate your efforts on the months of November/December, 1896, with spot checks into 1897. To those living East of the Rockies, I would recommend a thorough search of newspaper files for April/May, 1897, with spot checks at earlier periods. The "airships" were apparently seen in every state during the above-mentioned periods. Sightings were commonplace, while landings and contacts were numerous. Join with me in this amazing search: **Lucius Farish**, Route One, Plummerville, Arkansas 72127.

● **WANTED:** Second hand copies of "The Hidden World" series. Preferably in good reading condition; willing to pay up to 1/2 to 3/4 original price for a complete set in good condition. Also interested in any and all magazines and books concerning subterranean phenomena and specifically the Shaver Mystery. Any such reading matter obtained will be utilized in a special group study and analysis of this enigma. Any conclusions reached, findings, results, etc., will subsequently be published for the benefit of all those interested in said mystery. This material will be analyzed in an objective, scientific manner and one phase of the research will include a computer evaluation. Contact: **Erich Aggen, Jr.**, Director, Project "Solve", 457 Morse Ave., Liberty, Mo. 64066.

"FLYING SAUCERS"
DEC - 1966

potremmo scoprire un nuovo "universo" se non si scoprissero in tutta la sua opera quegli archetipi che lo riallacciano alla più genuina tradizione. I nostri lettori sono invitati a intervenire.

RISPONDE PIER LUIGI SANI

Casi ufologici

Il Sig. R. Boni di Padova, a cui ho già avuto occasione di rispondere (G.d.M. n. 37, pag. 73), mi indirizza altre due lettere « zeppe » di quesiti di carattere ufologico o affine. Riassumo i principali:

1) **Caso Larch** — La misteriosa scomparsa (rapimento?) dell'undicenne Oliver Larch, avvenuta secondo R. Pinotti in U.S.A. nel 1889, sembra « gemella » di quella dell'undicenne Oliver Thomas, avvenuta secondo J. Bergier (in « Gli Extraterrestri ») in Inghilterra nel 1909. Si tratta dello stesso fatto?

2) **Caso Barclay del 1897** — Richiesto della sua provenienza dal testimone Barclay, l'occupante della misteriosa « Airship » avrebbe risposto: « Da ogni dove » secondo il G.d.M. n. 39 (pag. 18), o « Da nessun posto » secondo « Gli Arcani » n. 16 (pag. 31). Qual è la versione giusta? Perché non è stata ancora trattata a fondo, in Italia, l'ondata dell'Airship in U.S.A. del 1896-97?

3) **Caso « Aurora » (Texas)** — È stato riesumato il cadavere del presunto « marziano » che sarebbe precipitato in quella località nell'aprile del 1897?

4) È attendibile la notizia circa il « miraggio permanente » di una città sconosciuta nel deserto dell'Arizona, di cui parla G. Tarade nel libro « Gli archivi del cosmo »?

5) Esistono teorie, oltre quella sostenuta da A. Perego in « L'aviazione di altri pianeti opera tra noi », circa le cosiddette « esplosioni fantasma »?

6) L'episodio dei « bambini verdi » che sarebbero apparsi misteriosamente in Spagna nel 1887, e che certi autori identificano in esseri ultradimensionali o extraterrestri, presenta alcune divergenze fra la versione riferita da P. Kolosimo in « Non è terrestre » e quella di J. Bergier ne « Gli extraterrestri ». Qual è la versione esatta?

7) Raguagli sul « caso Fentz » di cui riferisce il G.d.M. n. 36 a pag. 24, e la nazionalità della rivista « Fakta » da cui esso è stato rilevato.

8) **Precisazioni sui racconti medievali di « ancore calate dal cielo », di travi di fuoco, di navi volanti.**

9) **Differenza fra la « Magonia » del Vallée e l'universo « parallelo » di cui accenna il G.d.M. n. 19 a pag. 54.**

10) **Come si inquadra il caso dei coniugi Hill nella teoria Vallée (Magonia), dal momento che i presunti occupanti dichiarano di essere extraterrestri?**

11) **Parere sulle fotografie di Ufo scattate da Bruno Ghibaudi nel 1962 sul lungomare di Pescara.**

● La quantità e la natura dei quesiti che lei mi pone con le sue lettere dimostrano due cose: a) che lei esercita, su quanto legge nei libri e nelle riviste di ufologia e argomenti affini, un più che lodevole senso critico; b) che la letteratura ufologica in genere, allorché viene affrontata con simile senso critico, denuncia fatalmente le sue carenze documentarie e il suo basso grado di attendibilità.

Per quanto riguarda il primo punto, non

posso che complimentarmi con lei, ben sapendo che gli appassionati di fatti « strani » non chiedono, generalmente, che di abbeverarsi a sazietà alla magica fonte dell'insolito, senza preoccuparsi minimamente di accertare se l'acqua di quella fonte sia, per così dire, « potabile ». Le dirò che questo atteggiamento acritico è molto diffuso fra gli stessi « studiosi » della materia.

Per quanto concerne il secondo punto, il discorso è più complesso. La letteratura ufologica è diventata ormai immensa. Già cinque anni or sono, nel 1969, una bibliografia compilata per conto della « Biblioteca del Congresso » degli Stati Uniti includeva ben 1600 titoli.

Oggi supererebbe certamente le 2000 unità. Questa enorme produzione rispecchia, con i suoi molteplici filoni, tutti i diversi aspetti del « mito » degli Ufo: contattismo, cultismo, clipeologia, archeologia spaziale, etc... Nel suo insieme, forma un « assordante rumore di fondo », nel quale è estremamente difficile, per chi non abbia una lunga esperienza e soprattutto non sia dotato di spirito critico, riuscire a selezionare il « segnale ». Credo di non essere molto lontano dal vero affermando che i buoni testi ufologici, intendendo per tali quelli che hanno autentico valore documentario e che offrono sufficiente garanzia di attendibilità, (il « segnale », appunto), non raggiungono il numero di 50 (ma forse sono ottimista). Il resto non è che letteratura di « evasione », che si differenzia dalla fantascienza (di bassa lega) solo per la sua pretesa di riferire « cose vere ». Alla base di questo fenomeno c'è, naturalmente, la speculazione commerciale. I libri sugli Ufo si vendono. Ed è relativamente facile scriverli: basta possedere una conoscenza anche superficiale dell'argomento, attingere un certo numero di « fatti » e di « notizie » da altri libri già pubblicati, e ripresentare il tutto con un sapiente condimento di sensazionalismo. L'effetto è garantito. C'è sempre un pubblico disposto a leggere e a « credere » sulla parola... dell'autore.

Questo pubblico, che rappresenta la stragrande maggioranza degli appassionati del mistero, non chiede, in effetti, che di « evadere ». L'autenticità delle notizie che apprende è problema del tutto secondario, se pure è un problema. Purtroppo, la maggior parte dei « fatti » riferiti in queste opere non è che l'eco, rimbalsata da libro a libro, da rivista a rivista, di notizie che quasi sempre erano, già all'origine, distorte se non addirittura false. Ma chi si preoccupa più di controllarle?

Il risultato di questa « staffetta » letteraria è una colossale mistificazione, più o meno consapevole.

Ovviamente, il lettore attento che cerca di documentarsi e non semplicemente di « evadere », viene assalito da una folla di dubbi. Contraddizioni, incongruenze, versioni diverse e contrastanti dello stesso « episodio », scambio di date e di nomi, lo imbarazzano e lo irritano.

La confusione è tanto più grande quanto più « vecchio » è il fatto riferito. Oliver Larch (o Lerch, o Thomas), i « bambini verdi », le ancore calate dal cielo, le travi di fuoco, sono soltanto alcuni esem-



coup de questions restent sans réponse. Peut-être est-ce mieux ainsi. Trop chercher à comprendre pourrait être mal perçu dans les milieux très fermés, sinon éminemment secrets, et pour qui la vie n'est qu'aléatoire et fonction de la raison d'Etat.»

Plus intéressante par contre est l'appartenance de l'auteur à la Commission d'Etude Ouranos (CEO), association française présentée ici comme «un organisme non sectaire (...) voué à l'étude des phénomènes religieux». Ouranos est en fait moins connue des théologiens que des ufologues, puisqu'elle fut fondée en 1951 par l'un d'entre-eux, Marc Thirouin. La CEO connut une certaine renommée ufologique sous l'impulsion de son «responsable des enquêtes», l'écrivain de science-fiction Jimmy Guieu. Celui-ci s'était rendu célèbre par la publication de deux ouvrages sur les soucoupes volantes réédités en 1972 à l'Omni-um Littéraire. Une maison d'édition dont Julien Origas, ancien agent de la Gestapo et compagnon de route des chefs de l'OTS, fut le responsable...

Ces dernières années, la CEO a

adopté des positions radicales sur le «*phénomène extraterrestre*» et le paranormal en général, voyant derrière ceux-ci une «*action de subversion, afin de créer un état parapsychocratique collectif suffisant pour laisser libre cours à des forces occultes noires et totalitaires du surréel paraphysique (...)*» (in *Le monde occulte du surréel paraphysique*, Ouranos, 1982). Voir la CEO dissenter sur l'OTS ne peut donc manquer de rappeler la parabole de l'hôpital et de la charité.

RM

Vie et mort de l'Ordre du Temple Solaire, Raphaël Aubert et Carl-A. Keller, Jouvence 1994, 125 pages, 74 ff.

La vérité sur l'Ordre du Temple Solaire, René de Vailly, Québecor 1995, 212 pages (non disponible en France).

Lectures

Quatre cent quatre vingt-dix pages pour le premier des deux romans publiés (il y en aura 4 en tout) de W.A. Harbinson tournant autour des ovnis. Une paille ! Mélangeant habilement la Science, la Politique, l'Histoire et la fiction, l'auteur nous entraîne dans *Inception*, sur les chemins d'une conspiration incroyable à la trame pourtant simple, déjà imaginée par certains ufologues que d'aucuns qualifieront de marginaux. *Me - Ab 95*

Nous sommes en 1930. Le grondement sourd des bottes allemandes se fait entendre dans la lointaine Amérique au moment même où Robert H. Goddard s'emploie à régler les derniers préparatifs au lancement des fusées qui ouvriront la voie à la conquête spatiale. Au nombre de ses amis proches,

John Wilson, personnage mystérieux et inquiétant s'il en est, dont le génie est indispensable à Goddard pour mener à bien ses recherches. Un génie qui se laissera rapidement tenter par le chant des sirènes, et qui gagnera l'Allemagne moins par idéologie que parce qu'il pense que le Reich est susceptible de lui apporter ce qu'il cherche vraiment : la reconnaissance et les moyens de mettre en oeuvre la construction d'armes non conventionnelles. L'intrigue nous apprendra en effet que Wilson, né en 1870, est vraisemblablement à l'origine de la vague d'aéronefs fantômes de 1896-1997, du moins, ce sont les soupçons qui pèsent sur lui puisque personne ne sait ce qu'il advint de lui entre 1895 (il a alors 25 ans) et 1930 au moment où il rencontre Goddard.

Après maintes péripéties, on retrouvera Wilson à Prague, en pleine débandade allemande, sur le point de terminer, avec Schriever, la soucoupe qui doit constituer l'arme ultime. A ses trousses, l'armée russe qui marche sur Prague, Bradley, un vétéran de la National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics (précurseur de la NASA) qui n'a de cesse de traquer le traître, et les hommes d'élite d'Himmler lui-même qui ne veut à aucun prix que la soucoupe tombe aux mains de l'ennemi. On s'en doute, la rencontre finira très mal avec la destruction totale du prototype. Wilson s'enfuira malgré tout, avec les plans et la complicité d'un sous-marin allemand, vers un pays d'Amérique du Sud où l'on n'entendra plus parler de lui. L'Histoire a écrit la fin de la guerre, la capitulation de l'Allemagne, la fuite des «cerveaux» vers les États-Unis et l'Union Soviétique. Bradley, grièvement blessé, est soigné avant de regagner Roswell, ou il mène une vie paisible troublée seulement par les souvenirs

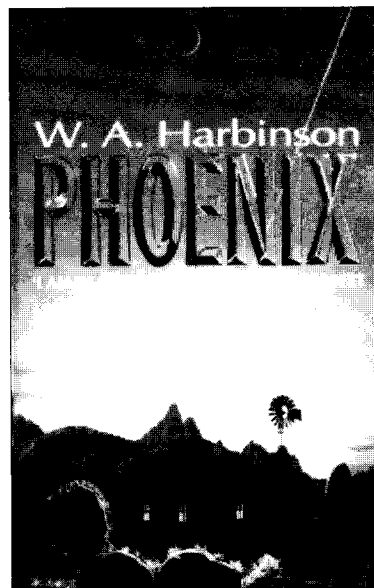
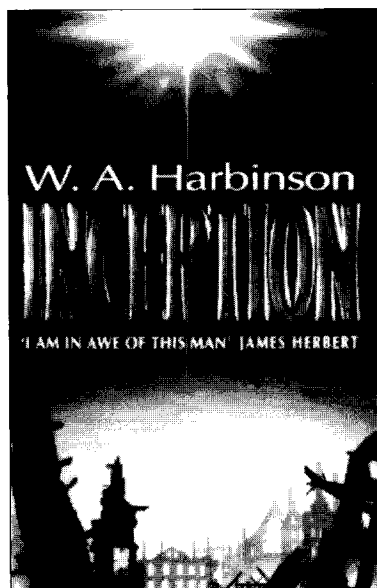
Phénomène

frustrants d'un Wilson traître, d'un Wilson insaisissable, froid et calculateur dont il n'aura jamais eu l'occasion de croiser le regard... Nous sommes en 1947, précisément le 2 juillet. Mais l'histoire ne fait que commencer. Lorsque le téléphone sonne, Bradley reconnaît la voix du premier lieutenant de la base de Roswell, une

vieille connaissance. Les radars viennent de détecter quelque chose qui s'est écrasé. Bradley doit se rendre immédiatement sur les lieux s'il veut le voir avant que toute trace ne soit effacée. L'armée s'active en effet...

Bradley n'arrivera jamais au rendez-vous. Il fera ce que l'on appelle une rencontre du troisième type, en l'occurrence, ici, un type qui s'appelle Wilson descendu d'un de ses engins dont on aura compris qu'ils sont désormais au point. La rencontre sera froide, cynique, presque initiatique et à peine voilée de menaces à l'encontre de Bradley et de sa famille. Ebranlé, ce dernier décide de jeter l'éponge. Il brûlera tous ses dossiers et mettra un terme à sa traque. Rideau ! Fin de la première partie.

Dans le deuxième ouvrage, intitulé *Phoenix*, la conspiration s'épaissit avec le nombre de pages (568 !) qui couvrent la période de l'immédiate après-guerre jusque dans les années soixante. La soucoupe de Roswell a été récupérée par les militaires, alors que Marlon, l'un



des rares témoins civils du crash, sera enlevé par Wilson. On fera alors la connaissance de Jack Fuller, de la CIA, qui sera sur les lieux du crash avec les militaires pour s'assurer, au nom de son gouvernement, d'un black-out complet. Puis il y a aussi Dwight, de l'Air Technical Intelligence Centre, qui sera de tous les combats, avec Hynek, McDonald et les groupements privés pour essayer de lever le voile sur ce qui se passe réellement dans les sphères gouvernementales. Wilson, entre-temps, s'est réfugié dans l'Antarctique, où il a construit une immense base secrète dans laquelle sont fabriquées les soucoupes lui conférant une position de force qui amènera les autorités américaines à conclure un pacte : il leur garantit une avance technologique sérieuse sur leurs adversaires (la Chine et l'URSS), moyennant quoi ils s'engagent à fermer les yeux sur les enlèvements pratiqués (en fait une main d'oeuvre contrainte à l'esclavage pour la fabrication des engins). Ils devront aussi tourner les ovnis en ridicule et réduire les témoins au silence. C'est ça ou rien ! Et les manifestations de su-

priorité de Wilson finiront de convaincre les sceptiques qu'il n'y a pas d'autre solution. Ainsi interviendra-t-il régulièrement pour donner un coup de pouce à la technologie américaine ou, au contraire, pour en freiner les acquis.

Bradley, dont la défection à Roswell en

avait étonné plus d'un, sera visité tour à tour par de nombreuses personnes dont Dwight, qui tenteront de connaître la vérité. Terrifié, il ne concédera à parler que le jour où Fuller lui révèle qu'il est déjà au courant. Ce sera la dernière fois que lui et sa femme seront vus vivants. Il en sait beaucoup trop... il sera éliminé.

Les réunions entre Wilson et les autorités américaines (y compris jusqu'au président) se poursuivront à un rythme régulier au cours d'un récit dont on aura du mal à saisir la finalité. L'auteur, qui fournit une nouvelle « grille de lecture » de l'ufologie comprenant des éléments connus et authentiques (personnalités, projets, observations célèbres) termine ce deuxième volume en réduisant Dwight au silence. Ce dernier est en effet « averti », comme le fut en son temps Bradley lors d'une rencontre rapprochée, qu'il en sait beaucoup trop et qu'il est grand temps, pour le bien de sa femme et de sa fille, de se taire. La mise en garde était claire et l'homme, qui ne s'était pas présenté, lui dit qu'au besoin, McDonald se char-

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'éleva 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 Kinney 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

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 honnête 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 cesseraient 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).

Revelations in 1897 Kansas 'Calfnapping'

The story of this incident has found its place in countless books covering the topic of UFO's. Now explanations have been offered in such publications as *Fate* and *Fortean Times*. The following facts are presented to bring the readers of the *APRO Bulletin* up to date on the many facets of this case.

The circumstances revolve around a story appearing in the April 23, 1897 issue of the *Yates Center Farmer's Advocate*. The publication printed a story about Alexander Hamilton, a prominent local rancher. Mr. Hamilton testified that four days previously he and his son Wallace Hamilton together with Gid Heslip had "observed an airship slowly descending upon my cow lot about 40 rods from the house." The three men ran to the corral and discovered a calf caught in the fence. There was a rope tied to its neck. The rope was attached above to a cigar-shaped airship. In the carriage below the airship were six strange beings. There were two men, a woman, and three children. The beings conversed in a strange language. They focused the searchlight on the men below and left the area with the calf in tow. The next day the calf's hide, legs, and head were found several miles away. Affidavits and statements supported this information.

In 1965 Jacques Vallee discussed the episode in *Anatomy of a Phenomenon*. Countless other books presented this incident in successive years. But the *Buffalo Enterprise* of January 28, 1943 is to be credited with true facts in the case. In this newspaper there appeared a letter by Ed F. Hudson. Mr. Hudson had been the 1897 editor of the *Yates Center Farmer's Advocate*. The following is the statement of Ed F. Hudson in this newspaper:

"I had just bought and installed a little gasoline engine, the first I believe to come to Yates Center, using it to run my machinery replacing the hand-power on the old Country Campbell press and kicking the job presses. I invited many of my friends into the back shop to see the engine work. Hamilton was one of them. He exclaimed, 'Now they can fly,' hence the airship story that we made up. After we had published it, the story was copied in many of the largest newspapers in this country, England, France, and Germany, some illustrating it with pen-drawn imagining by their staff artists. There were also hundreds of inquiries from every part of the globe. Soon afterwards their [sic] came the various experiments in flight, but I have always maintained that Alex Hamilton was the real inventor of human flight." Also Ed Hudson's son Ben explained in a related note that his father and Hamilton had "concocted that story following a Saturday afternoon pow-wow which was customary for Saturdays in those days."

The above article was discovered by A.W.S. correspondent of R. J. Rickard, editor of England's *Fortean Times*. This occurred in 1976 when he worked on a historical research project. Jerome Clark received a copy of the story and conducted an extensive effort to confirm and substantiate the facts in the case. Mr. Clark's efforts are to be lauded for providing further facts relative to this hoax type case.

(See Kansas ~~Page Eight~~)

Insas — 1897

(Continued from Page Seven)

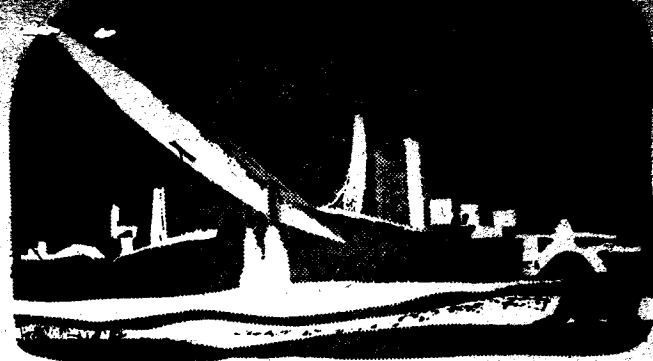
Jerome Clark obtained additional information by publishing a letter in the September 16, 1976 issue of *Yates Center News* seeking further information. Mrs. Anna Steeby of Wichita, Kansas wrote that Ethel L. W., her 93 year old mother, had heard the tale from Alexander Hamilton himself. There had evidently been a Liar's Club. The airship-calf story provided the super. The final confirming information was obtained by Jerome Clark in a telephone conversation with Elizabeth Hamilton Linde, granddaughter of Alexander Hamilton. Mrs. Linde admitted that she had heard from contemporaries of her grandfather over the years that the story had been a hoax concocted by the editor, her grandfather, and other members of a local Liar's Club. Mrs. Linde also related that Mrs. Shaw was a friend of Alexander Hamilton's daughter Nell and in all likelihood was telling the truth about the confession by Alexander Hamilton in the Hamilton home.

Thus this calf-napping incident has been brought to an end after so many years of doubt and discussion. The persistent efforts of writer Jerome Clark are to be commended for the resolution of this long discussed episode. It is another of the many hoaxes which must be separated from the genuine UFO incidents.



By Dennis Stamey

Probably the most fantastic story concerning the Great Airship Scare in the 1890's concerned the unsubstantiated report submitted to the Dallas Morning News on April 17, 1897, by a correspondent, S.E. Haydon, from Aurora, Texas. Since it is completely shrouded in mystery and overlooked by UFOlogists all these years, I think you will be most interested in a complete report from the Dallas newspaper account printed in the April 19th edition.



"About 6 o'clock this morning the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing through the country.

"It was travelling due north, and much nearer the earth than ever before. Evidently some of the machinery was out of order, for it was making only a speed of 10 or 12 mph and gradually settling toward the earth. It sailed directly over the public square, and when it reached the north part of town, collided with the tower of Judge Proctor's windmill and went to pieces with a terrific explosion, scattering debris over several acres of ground, wrecking the windmill and water tank destroying the judge's flower garden.

"The pilot of the ship is supposed to have been the only one on board, and while his remains are badly disfigured, enough of the original has been picked up to show that he was not an inhabitant of this world.

"Mr. T.J. Weems, the United States signal service officer at this place and an authority on astronomy, gives it as his opinion that he was a native of the planet Mars.

"Papers found on this person - evidently the record of his travels - are written in some unknown hieroglyphics and cannot be deciphered.

"The ship was too badly wrecked to form any conclusion as to its construction or motive power. It was built of an unknown metal resembling somewhat a mixture of aluminum and silver, and it must have weighed several tons.

"The town is full of people today who are viewing the wreck and gathering specimens of the strange metal from the debris. The pilot's funeral will take place tomorrow."

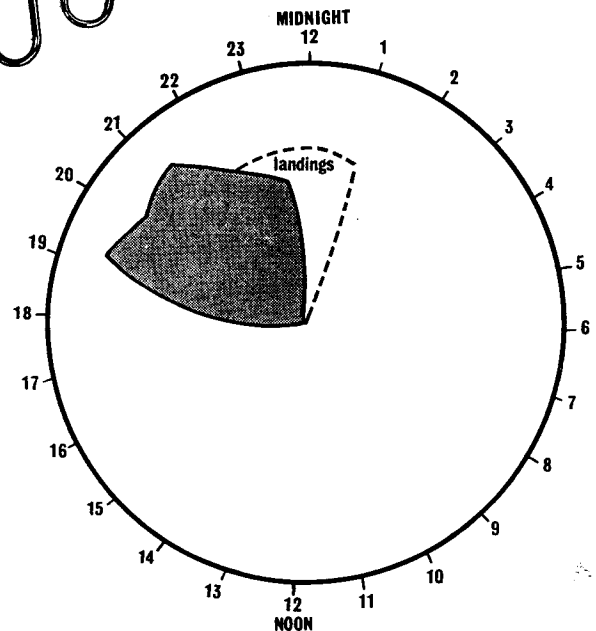
FOOTNOTE: The grave of the alleged spaceman was never found and also Mr. W.J. Weems never really existed. However, since Aurora shortly afterwards vanished from the maps, as so many communities in that area were short-lived the real truth of this incredible case will probably never be known. Perhaps somewhere a family might still possess the remains of a "flying saucer" ...and perhaps the key to the enigma.

SSS, N-54, 1-909

1.896-97

TABLE I
CALIFORNIA SIGHTINGS—NOVEMBER 1896

DATE		LOCALES REPORTING
Sunday	15	San Andreas
Monday	16	Sacramento, Oakland
Tuesday	17	Oakland
Wednesday	18	Oak Park
Thursday	19	No data
Friday	20	Waterford, Oakland
Saturday	21	No data
Sunday	22	San Francisco, Alameda, Sacramento
Monday	23	Oakland, Berkley, Antioch, Chico
Tuesday	24	Oakland, Red Bluff, Hanford, Vacaville, San Leandro, San Jose
Wednesday	25	Sacramento, Pasadena, Fresno, Los Angeles, Hayward, Petaluma, San Lorenzo, East Oakland
Thursday	26	(Thanksgiving Holiday) Oakland, Robinson's Ferry, Arno, Monterey, East San Jose, Modesto
Friday	27	Oakland, Alameda
Saturday	28	Salinas
Sunday	29	No data



APPROXIMATE TIMES OF SIGHTINGS—
APRIL, 1897

9 p.m.—25% of all sightings
8 p.m.—20%
10 p.m.—20%
12 p.m.—15%
Remaining 20% were scattered throughout the early evening, early morning, and daylight hours

have also seemed to follow a regular schedule. For example, they appeared nightly around 8.00 p.m. in Point Pleasant, W. Va., during March and April, 1967. Natural phenomena would not, of course, adhere to such a strict timetable.)

Table 2 illustrates the times of the sightings.

There were additional sightings in California during December, 1896, but the "flap" seems to have built-up and tapered off during that single week in November. The peak was reached on November 25, a Wednesday. The newspapers were filled with speculations about a "secret inventor" who had perfected a wonderful "airship" and they tried to keep the matter alive after the sightings subsided. But the sightings subsided nevertheless. The "secret inventor" flew off as mysteriously as he had come.

There were daylight and dusk sightings of a cigar-shaped object and these were well-publicized, leading everyone to *assume* that anything unusual in the sky was that eerie "airship". Most of the night-time sightings were of brilliant lights, not of a cigar-shaped "airship". The sightings occurred simultaneously in scattered areas, indicating (if not proving) that more than one "airship" was involved. Powerful spotlights were frequently reported, projecting blinding beams towards the ground. There are, of course, many contemporary reports of this same thing. Coloured lights were also observed, but the majority were a dazzling white.

There were also a few landing and contact reports. One man even claimed that he was taken for a fast ride to Hawaii aboard the "airship".

Now for a bit of research. If you have a copy of *Project Blue Book Report 14*, turn to Fig. 31 (p. 47), a map of the United States outlining sightings reported to the USAF between 1947-52. You will note that one of the heaviest concentrations of sightings in the entire

country is centred around the San Francisco area—a total of 338, blanketing approximately the same places "invaded" back in November, 1896. The sightings in these areas have been numerous and consistent throughout the 1960s. We might conclude that the UFOs are especially interested in this region and have at least been keeping it under observation since 1896!

Already we have two fragmentary "facts": the objects have been repeatedly (or consistently) active in the same area for 72 years, and they were, for a reason, following a timetable—a definite plan of activity as far back as 1896. They moved swiftly into the area and were most active in the middle of the week.

Things quietened down for several months. Then, in March, 1897, strange lights and aerial objects reappeared in the United States, this time in the midwest and northern states, particularly around Michigan. Then they seemed to spread out from the midwest. This pattern still prevails. Several recent "flaps" seem to have begun in the midwest and fanned out.

I have laid out all the available reports from April, 1897, according to dates, times and geographical factors, and here again the "flap" patterns are apparent and consistent.

FSR .VOL.SEN #2
ANO 1969
MES JN

"A Strange Story is going that Fleet of Ships have been Seen in the Air in Some part of the Bay of Fundy. Mr. Darrow is lately from there by Land. I enquired of him. He Says they were Said to be Seen at New Minas, at one Mr. Ratchford's, by a Girl, about Sunrise, & that the Girl being frightened, Called out, & two men that were in the House went out & Saw the Same Sight, being 15 ships and a Man forward of them with his hand Stretched out. The Ships made to the Eastward. They were So Near that the people Saw their Sides & ports. The Story did not obtain universal Credit, but Some people believed it. My Own Opinion is that it was only in Imagination, as the Cloud at Sunrise might Make Some Such appearance, which being Improved by Imagination, might be all they Saw. Exceedingly pleasant day & Evening."²

Mr. Perkins was a merchant and judge by profession, and evidently a skeptic by nature.

Airship

When the great Airship Wave overtook the US, it certainly did not overlook Canada. There were many Airship sightings in the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, in the East, and a few reports scattered across the country. What was not known until recently was that the Province of British Columbia had an incredible number of Airship reports that have never been fully documented. We are just now beginning to unearth these reports and place them on the record. In referring to some of these Canadian Airship reports, it should be noted that some of the "balloon" allusions refer to an explorer named Andre[s]³, who was attempting to balloon to the North Pole from Norway. This was much on the minds of Canadians at the time, and many sightings were assumed to be of the Andre balloon. Typical of the BC Airship reports is this from 12 August 1896:

Credible information has been received by [Indian Department] agent Lomas from two Indian parties separated by a long distance. At the time of observation the Andre balloon had been sighted in Lat. 55.15, Long 27. 40 pursuing a near northerly course.

[From] Victoria, August 11. There was a balloon flitting around over the northern portion of British Columbia early in July, or else more than one person was deceived by his eyes.....an Indian boy saw what he took to be a balloon [and] he reported the fact to Indian agent Lloyd at Hazelton.....[when] a week later a party of trappers headed by Chief Ghail of Kitapioux arrived at Hazelton and reported that they had seen a balloon on July 3rd, the residents of that district came to the conclusion that Andre and his party had passed over them. It could hardly have been Andre however as latest reports from Christiana, Spitzbergen on Friday last he had not started on his journey and in fact was contemplating a postponement until next year. A balloon was undoubtedly seen however and the question is now puzzling everyone here, who it is and where did it come?⁴

That very same day, the following report came out of Rossland, in the interior of the Province of BC:

It told of a strange aerial body that approached the town, paused momentarily above a mountain peak, made seven wide circles in the sky, and then sped away on a straight course. The thing was



described as a “luminous ball of fire that glowed amidst a halo of variegated colours.” The object took a quarter of an hour to complete its maneuvers and was watched by many citizens of Rossland.⁵

Moving ahead almost a year, we see the airship making an appearance in the Province of Manitoba:

The “what-is-it?” has been seen in Winnipeg.... Saturday night was the date chosen for the appearance of the airship and the lights of the mysterious machine were in full view of many citizens for full fifteen minutes. The light of the strange aerial vessel came into full view about 9 o'clock on the eastern horizon in the direction of Stony Mountain.... Only the bare outline of some dark object could be seen besides the strong beacon light, evidently shown from the “masthead” of the aerial craft. There can be no doubt of the presence of a strange visitor on Saturday night, as its transit was witnessed by many reputable citizens.

The last point reported from was North Portal, NWT, where about two weeks ago a strange object was noticed in the air, and passed over the town quite as rapidly as the “machine” noticed here on Saturday night.⁶

Later in the summer of 1897, the following appeared under the headline, “A Mysterious Visitor.”:

Have you seen the light in the heavens?...if not, you are not up to date. It has been hovering in the skies of Vancouver almost every night this week, and has been viewed by many...Last night the strange object was noticed to the north of the city across the city traveling in an easterly direction. The luminous ball of fire or airship as some call it was closely watched. It approached with great swiftness, paused in midair, then surrounded itself with flashes of colour and moved towards the northeast. At times it looked like a ball of fire at others it had a dull lustre and small particles of fire would shoot from the great glowing mass. N.C. Schon of Burnaby saw the luminous body while on the steamer Rithet on Monday night. He states that it moved parallel to the sea far below the star line and looked like a bright red star surrounded by a luminous halo. It was cigar shaped and seemed to travel slowly and occasionally there seemed to drop a shower of sparks like the sputtering of an arc light.⁷

When the end of 1897 arrived, the UFOs themselves — in this case the airships — were gone, but the phenomenon never does actually go away. Not really. It moves. Or changes. Or as they say so accurately in the television business, it may simply “go on hiatus.”

In 1908, the airship phenomenon reappeared. This report, though not exactly from Canada, is from somewhere quite close by:

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Contribution à l'étude des phénomènes insolites de 1896 à 1898 ⁽¹⁾

C.I.E.S.-OURANOS

par Jean SÉNELIER

Dans un article publié dans le n° 16 d'OURANOS, j'émettais l'avis que « s'il y a manifestation d'êtres extra-terrestres, elle n'est compréhensible que si elle a débuté depuis peu de temps, disons, par exemple, à partir des événements de 1897 ».

Il m'a toujours semblé que ces remarquables phénomènes aériens devraient être « repensés » et être l'objet d'une étude toute particulière parmi nos multiples tentatives pour percer le mystère des « objets volants » inconnus.

En réalité, il faut dire que l'année précédente et celle qui suivit sont aussi à marquer d'une pierre blanche et ces répétitions dans la nature des phénomènes sont à noter. Indiquons donc le processus de ces événements.

Le 27 mars 1896, selon une communication de M. Paul Rouland à Dragueville (Manche) adressée à la Société Astronomique de France (Bulletin de la S.A.F.,

1896, p. 228), vers 10 h 35 du soir, un météore de grandeur apparente approximativement égale à 3 fois le diamètre de la lune apparut dans la Constellation du Lion. Il décrit une ELLIPSE, passant par la Balance et le Scorpion et se dirigeant vers la constellation de la Vierge, s'éteignit entre Saturne et l'Epi; traînée lumineuse pendant 15 secondes

Le même Bulletin de la S.A.F. (1895, p. 288) signalait que le 11 août à Avignon, on observa un « bolide dédoublé » avec une séparation de 1° environ. Enfin, le Bulletin de 1895 (p. 376) décrit le phénomène suivant observé en fin de journée: « Le 21 novembre 1896 à 5 h 15 du soir, direction E.N.E. observation (à Fontenay-le-Comte) d'un météore lumineux de diamètre apparent égal à celui de Vénus et d'un blanc pur. Il décrit une courbe vers la terre de 25° environ au-dessus de l'horizon en laissant une faible traînée lumineuse. Visible pendant 2 à 3 secondes pendant lesquelles il a décrit une

12

C.I., N° 1. Ac-69

FSR BOOKSHELF — 16

1.896-97

Janet & Colin Bord

New UFO books reviewed by...

FROM November 1896 to April 1897, thousands of people in the U.S.A. reported seeing bright lights moving across the night sky. In some cases they said that they saw the shadowy structure of an airship above the light. The phenomenon was widely reported in the press and rapidly became known as the mystery airship. In the 1960s UFO researchers unearthed some of these reports and published their findings, which showed that the reported performance of the mystery airship was inconsistent with the level of technical development which airship designers had achieved at that time. Since then, the mystery airships have joined that group of peripheral mysteries which appear to have some connexion with the main body of ufology, but which continue to evade precise investigation.

early Californian wave was privately distributed by Loren Gross, but in The Great Airship Mystery (Dodd, Mead & Company, New York, hardback, \$9.95, 212 pages, index, illustrated) Daniel Cohen provides a detailed report and analysis of these events, and their strangeness can here be fully appreciated. The author starts with the earliest sightings in California in November 1896 and follows the reports as they moved eastwards during the next six months. He shows how the airships were reported in the press, with much the same mixture of irresponsibility and ridicule that later UFO reports received, and how the rivalries and ambitions of newspaper owners coloured the reporting. The public expectation was that a secretive inventor had solved the mystery of flight and would very soon reveal himself, and there were of course various individuals who claimed to be he, but after a brief blaze of publicity they faded once more into obscurity.

Many articles on the subject have been published in UFO journals, and one booklet dealing with the

FSR VOL. 28 N #2
ANO 1982
MES NOV

18

1.896-97

Venus. No one will ever know.

NOTE BY EDITOR, FSR

Like pretty well everyone else no doubt, I have seen exhaustive pieces of research thoroughly debunking every one of these various cases. But somehow I don't feel able to accept that they were all faked by humans. And I note that, in his latest book DIMENSIONS, Dr. Jacques Vallée still accepts as genuine the case at the Hamilton Ranch at Leroy, Kansas, on April 19, 1897, and I think I am correct in saying that Dr. J. Allen Hynck was also inclined to accept it. (Though, as readers may recall, the version given above is not the full one. For the alien craft was actually reported to have lassoed and carried off a calf from one of Mr. Hamilton's paddocks. And *that* rings a bell, doesn't it!) All the same, great effort has gone into proving the Hamilton story to be a fake. And we can fully appreciate that in 1896 and 1897 many 'excellent folk' thought it fully justified to spread any sort of lie in order to prevent the truth from getting out. *After all, don't they still do precisely the same in 1989!*

"Sioux City, Iowa. May 11. P.E. Jewell of this place claims he has an air ship which actually flies. Thus far he has not entrusted his person to the tender mercies of his craft, but a ship of sufficient size to carry a man is now being constructed on the pattern of a successful model already tested. The model soared to a height of 100 feet and was then pulled in."

The report goes on to give details of this wondrous machine.

The similarities between the old and modern UFO sightings are remarkable. Detractors called the witnesses 'deluded', 'lunatics', or worse. Airships were 'Venus', 'balloons', 'kites', the usual standbys.

The author of this present article does not claim to know what those people saw 90 years ago. *One thing is certain, though. They did see something.* It may have been humans flying before it was officially recorded; pre-Spanish-American War fever; aliens; or the planet

...ne will be puffing and wheezing.

Lay out a scale-size track or course and place an animal native to the hemisphere on it and start him running...away he goes and continues long after our muscle-bound friend has stopped. Something must be lacking in the make-up of our athlete. Let us try something.

Let us strap a tank of oxygen on our runner and see what happens. Away he goes, running

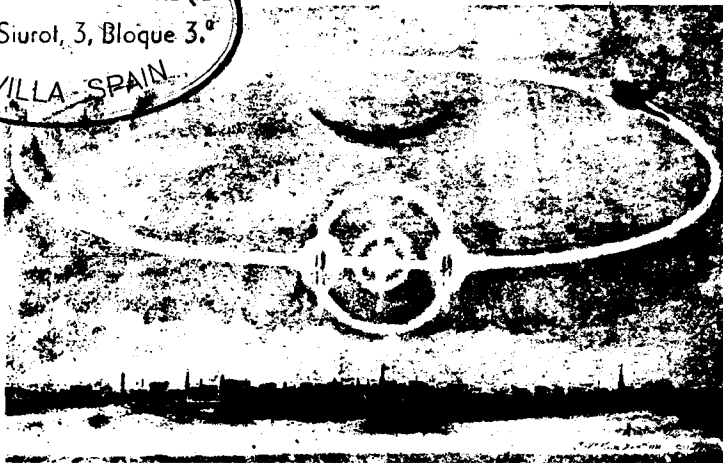
Perhaps these recent high school and college kid kicks with LSD and the other "mind-drugs" are a clue to the fact that the brain needs some out side help. - You can scare a stubborn mule into action with a loud noise (sometimes) but don't produce that loud noise by placing a stick of dynamite under him. Could the LSD be the stick of dynamite which may ruin the machine, while the same and lasting effect could be obtained by replacing that

Could these lumps of marsh gas and weather balloons that cause planes to scramble every time they are sighted be the fellows who started the experiment, or their successors, who are trying to keep us from finding out? Or are they these same fellows trying to let us know?

T'is said by some contactees that aliens walk amongst us. Could it be that these experimenters, whoever they are...are beginning to feel that the ex-

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SEP-89

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Colorado's UFO of 1881

By ALICE WRIGHT WALLACE

The Denver Post • May 29, 1966

ON A Monday evening, Feb. 14, 1881, residents of Denver gazed at the sky where, glowing in ghostly yellow-white light, was an enormous halo—a celestial ring with the moon for a setting.

The Rocky Mountain News reported: "Encircling the moon, but traveling from its upper edges, was an immense semi-opaque yellow-white circle of immense size which seemed to overshadow the whole of the city. Clearly defined upon this, was observed a double-crested half moon. From the bosom of the yellow-opaque mass, there at intervals issued bright floods of light of a pale amber color, mixed with flashes of blue and white. The phenomena lasted for over two hours . . . when they suddenly disappeared, and left the sky clear and cloudless."

It was an awesome sight. So much so that a W. H. Lawrence, 408 Larimer St., Denver, apparently found it profitable to print and sell pictures of the spectacle. These, as seen here, bore the overline "Colorado's Valentine," and

an underline, "Von Keith's Colored Diagram of the Paraselenae—as seen at Denver, Colo., on Monday evening, Feb. 14, 1881."

Apparently the sight was seen in Colorado Springs, where the Gazette had an explanation:

"The whole phenomenon is due to minute crystals of ice, such as constitute the highest clouds, but which on that cold evening extended from near the earth's surface to a considerable height in the air. These crystals are generally long six-sided prisms. . . . The moonlight (was) reflected from these faces. . . ."

Scientists call this a paraselene (*para*, alongside or akin to, and *selene*, the Greek word for moon). The plural form is paraselenae. Webster defines a paraselene as "a luminous appearance seen in connection with lunar halos."

From that night (and day) on, people have continued to see strange sights in the skies. Some fly, and are UFOs. Few, however, could have been as beautiful as the 1881 Valentine Night show over Denver. Ray Phielschiefer

Jet-Propelled Bomber-Balloon Studied in 1885

WHAT was probably the first jet-propelled military aircraft was a balloon thrust by compressed air developed by Gen. Russell Thayer, a Philadelphian, in 1885. A description published on June 13 of that year in the London *Graphic*, has been unearthed by the *Aeroplane*, a British aviation magazine.

General Thayer, working on instructions from the U. S. Army Ordnance Board, set out to develop "a monster airship, which is likely to be one of the most destructive implements of battle known to modern science. It will have an ascending force of seven tons, will cost \$10,000, and will have a length of 66

feet and a diameter of 60 feet," the long-forgotten article states.

Cigar-shaped, pointed at both ends, the balloon was supposed to move through the air at a speed of 30 miles an hour. Motive power was compressed air, "accumulated by machinery and discharged at the rear end."

The airship was designed to be steered in any direction, and "tons of dynamite can be dropped as it sails over a fortification or a fleet of ships."

No report of its completion or performance in test flights was given. There is no record at Army headquarters in Washington, today, that it was ever built.

'UFO' Of 1897

By FRANK MASQUELETTE

HOUSTON (AP) — Yellowed newspaper clippings tell of a series of sightings across Texas in 1897 of the "mysterious airship."

They add up to what might be called:

The Great Airship Flap of 1897.

Some of the accounts resemble accounts nowadays of Unidentified Flying Objects.

Consider this report from the 1897 Houston Daily Post:

"Childress, Texas, April 17 — The much talked-of airship was seen here last night about 1:16 o'clock. The Rev. J. W. Smith was the first to discover the curious aerial monster.

"He thought at first that it was a star shooting, but after watching it a moment or two, saw that it was not . . .

"It soon disappeared, traveling in a westerly direction. The Rev. Mr. Smith thinks that it must have been 2,000 feet high and traveling very fast."

Or this one:

"Longview, Texas, April 20 — Last night about 9:30, the Post correspondent and family, on returning from church, saw the so-called airship.

"A bright light, seemingly about the size of Venus, moved swiftly to the northwest, disappearing beneath the horizon.

"In a few minutes, it reappeared . . . The light emitted a series of intermittent flashes, of a steel color. No car (cabin) was seen."

Here's another:

"Atlanta, Texas, April 19 — There was considerable excitement here today, caused by a visitation last night by the mysterious airship.

"It was first seen by Jim Nelson, a farmer . . . His attention was attracted by a peculiar noise, and, looking up, he discovered the mysterious aerial traveler.

"It seemed to be descending straight to the earth with great rapidity and Mr. Nelson's hair stood out with fright . . .

"But within two or three hundred feet of the earth, it paused for an instant . . . then moved off at a rate of speed about equal to that of an ordinary passenger train."

The Atlanta dispatch says the airship was seen by other citizens when it sailed over the city at 5 to 15 miles an hour. Most described it as cigar-shape, and same said it had long wings on either side.

Stories of the Atlanta incident became succeeding absurd. Some viewers claimed to have talked with the airship's crewmen. One man said the pilot told him, "We will be in Greece day after tomorrow."

Another man said he detected three men on board passing out temperance tracts and singing,

"Nearer My God to Thee."

About a week later came this report in the Houston Daily Post of April 28, 1897:

"Merkel, Texas, April 26 — Some parties returning from church last night noticed a heavy object dragging along with a rope attached.

"They followed it until in crossing the railroad it caught on a rail. On looking up they saw what they supposed was the airship.

"It was not near enough to get an idea of the dimensions. A light could be seen protruding from several windows; one bright light in front like the headlight of a locomotive.

"After some 10 minutes, a man was seen descending the rope; he came near enough to be plainly seen; he wore a light blue sailor suit, was small in size.

"He stopped when he discovered parties at the anchor and cut the rope below him and sailed off in the northeast direction.

"The anchor is now on exhibition at the blacksmith shop of Elliott & Miller and is attracting the attention of hundreds of people."

Another bizarre account was found in the April 19, 1897, edition of the Dallas Morning News:

"Aurora, Wise County, April 17 — About 6 o'clock this morning the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing throughout the country . . .

"It sailed directly over the public square, and when it reached the north part of town, collided with the tower of Judge Proctor's windmill and went to pieces with a terrific explosion, scattering debris over several acres of ground, wrecking the windmill and water tank and destroying the judge's flower garden.

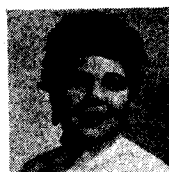
"The pilot of the ship is supposed to have been the only one aboard, and while his remains are badly disfigured, enough of the original has been picked up to show that he was not an inhabitant of this world.

"Mr. T. J. Weems, the U. S. Signal Service officer at this place and an authority on astronomy, gives it as his opinion that he (the pilot) was a native of the Planet Mars . . .

"Papers found . . . are written in some unknown hieroglyphics . . . This ship was too badly wrecked to form any conclusion as to its construction or motive power . . .

"The town is full of people today who are viewing the wreck and gathering specimens of strange metal from the debris. The pilot's funeral will take place at noon tomorrow."

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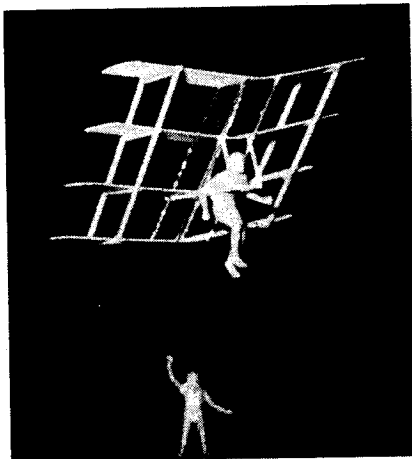
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MORE TO BE SAID

In your October 1975 issue you have a brief article by George Wagner concerning Matthew Sellers and "The First Airplane." Your readers may be interested in additional information on Mr. Sellers.

Matthew Bacon Sellers (1869-1932) recorded his experiments in diaries (still extant) from 1889 through 1909 and in a laboratory daybook from 1903 to 1914. Extant correspondence covers the years 1899 to 1926 and his sons have original photographic negatives of Sellers' designs. As of December 30, 1973, Sellers' Kentucky home—a lavish mansion called "Blakemore"—and his laboratory were being considered for restoration as a museum.

Sellers' most famous designs were called "quadruplanes," for they had four wings arranged in a staggered line front to back and top to bottom (see photo of model). These were patented in 1907. In 1908 he added a seven horsepower engine and a chassis with retracting wheels and the first flights in this craft were made on December 28, 1908. He continued to make improvements



F-76

REPORT FROM THE READERS**AERIAL DOGFIGHT**

I have information from Mr. Edward Peck, an aviation historian of Jeffersonville, Ind., which leads me to say unequivocally that George Wagner's article, "The First Airplane" (October 1975 FATE) is inadequately researched.

For the past 10 years Mr. Peck has been compiling data for a book on Matthew Sellers and is well-informed concerning the legend that Sellers flew before the Wright brothers. Mr. Peck generously allows me to quote from his letter:

"I have made innumerable visits to Carter County, Ky., during the past 10 years and I must say that the popular legends about Sellers which circulate there are only that—fanciful tales born of ignorance of what really took place and considerably embellished in the retelling over the years.

"One must remember that the people of that community are generally very unsophisticated when it comes to interpreting unfamiliar technical developments. This was certainly true of those backwoods folk around 1897-1911 when an educated 'outsider' settled among them to develop his flying machine. Some of the tales one hears there surpass the wildest excesses of fairy stories!

"Basically I think those people are honest—but they want so badly to believe that Sellers flew before the Wrights that they have unconsciously transformed wild speculation into gospel truth. Since 1941 several newspaper reporters have done imaginative stories on Sellers, building their reports on interviews with equally imaginative citizens of Carter County, most of whom were small children or not yet born when the flying events took place. I suppose the flattery of being interviewed may have caused these persons to stretch the truth more than a little and to add their own speculations in

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AG-75

REPORT FROM THE READERS

few "the first airplane" is in error. I was led astray by undocumented claims published as fact by the Northern Kentucky Historical Society in Paul Lewis Atkinson's book, *Kentucky—Land of Legend and Lore*.

I have no real excuse, however, I did a lousy job of research—although it seemed sufficient at the time. — *George Wagner, Fort Thomas, Ky.*


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the hope of acquiring personal publicity. To such minds, once any statement gets into print it is documented truth.' Thus they hope to bask in the reflected glory of a local boy' beating the Wrights!

"Fortunately, I have access to Sellers' own handwritten diaries and journals from 1888 through 1914. I can therefore say with some authority that he did not fly with power until December 28, 1908. This is verified in Sellers' own article, 'The Sellers Lightplane,' which appeared in the magazine *Aviation* dated February 8, 1927. As for the many wild claims made in his behalf I have addressed audiences at the Smithsonian and elsewhere in an effort to put the record straight. Sellers was indeed an important aviation pioneer but the sensational claims made for him can only detract from his real and substantial achievements."

As to certain other details in Wagner's story, Mr. Peck further states: "Wagner's short article in FATE is riddled through and through with errors of fact. The Kentucky village is named 'Grahn,' not 'Brawn.' Sellers was not a local man but a native of Baltimore. His airplane was not a monoplane but a quadruplane (four-winged). Sellers did not 'devise' his engine; it was purchased from Duthell-Chalmers in France. Only the wings and tail surfaces were covered, not the frame. Sellers did not take off from ruts in the ground but from a wooden runway. He did not continue his flights 'to 1902 then fade into obscurity.' He continued flights at Grahn through 1911 and elsewhere until 1914 and still later in 1926-1927."

It seems that Mr. Peck has spoken the final word.—*Gary S. Mangiacopra, Milford, Conn.*

THE AUTHOR REPLIES:

Obviously the widespread belief in Carter County that Matthew Sellers

REPORT FROM THE READERS

and tests from 1908 to 1911, obtaining additional patents. This was the lightest airplane ever flown and it required the least power.

Perhaps the greatest significance of Sellers' "staggered quadruplane" design is that it is inherently stable, requiring neither tail planes nor other complicated equipment common to other planes.

In 1912 Matthew Sellers was appointed by President Taft to the Aerodynamical Laboratory Committee for Aeronautics which in time became the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics and more recently, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). In 1915, as an authority on aeronautics, Sellers was appointed to the Naval Consulting Board which was chaired by Thomas Alva Edison. Following World War I, Sellers married and settled in Ardsley-on-Hudson, N. Y., where he continued private aeronautical research until his death in April 1932.

Therefore, it is not quite true that he "faded into obscurity" as your author has written. He is not without honor in the early history of aviation.—*Gordon Coddling, Kingman, Ariz.*

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