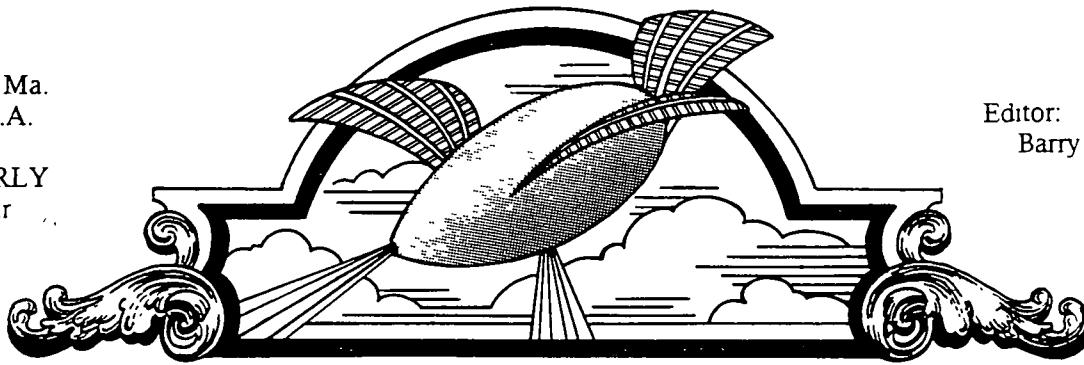


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U.F.O. HISTORICAL REVIEW

A NEW AGE DAWNING FOR RESEARCHING UFOS

In the last UHR, I discussed at length the problems that existed in trying to manage UFO history. Since then there has been a positive development which can allow historical work to be performed at an accelerated pace.

This development is the emergence of technology where OCR software permits scanning whole rolls of newspaper microfilm for use on the Internet. The impact of this for anyone who does microfilm searching is profound. For the first time one may log onto a web site, bring up particular dates desired, and read whole newspapers as they originally appeared. No more trips to libraries and archives, no more long waits for microfilm to be retrieved, and one may read for as long as they want, beyond the hours any facility is open.

Several sites have opened and are actively operating:

Ancestry.com
Paperofrecord.com
HeritageTrailBress.com
Infotrac.galegroup.com
Ourfutureourpast.ca
Paperspast.natlib.govt.nz
Bcdlib.tc.ca (British Columbia Digital Library provides numerous links to a variety of sites)

The services range from free use to a subscription fee for days, months or year access.

By far the most popular use of these services is for genealogy. A major problem I had encountered through the years was waiting to use microfilm equipment in a crowded room dominated by researchers exploring their family trees, which of course they have every right to do. But it meant hours of delay and often when I

would finally get my chance, the machines would start to break down en masse. With the availability of microfilm online, the waiting is gone. No more crowds of genealogists (who really should be thanked for pressing this technology ahead)! Gone too are the pockets full of coins to activate the printing machines. Your own ink cartridges do the work. Also gone are the broken machines that print badly, jam, lose their light source from a burnout, or don't function at all when turned on.

Since the reading is done remotely, you can access papers all over the continent. Expensive travel is drastically curtailed. All those hours to and from can be used for discovery.

It is a huge benefit to archival institutes themselves. Their crowds are reduced. Hardcopy and microfilm is handled far less, insuring preservation of delicate materials. They derive important income from fees charged to use their services. They reach people who normally wouldn't be able to physically travel.

A few minor problems exist. Since the scans are drawn from microfilm, they are only as good as the microfilm is. This means that quality is sometimes not perfect. In old papers where the type font is thin, a mottling of the type is evident on enlargements. While the text is readable, it can be difficult to make a photocopy of it. Reading images tends to be slower than using microfilm. On cable modems, the images come up in a few seconds. It can be longer using slower modes. Depending on the service used, pages need to be enlarged to read well. The average computer monitor isn't big enough to accommodate a full newspaper sheet without enlargement of the text using tools provided by the service. It is a relatively minor annoyance compared to what one is getting.

Due to ownership and copyright issues, a great majority of newspapers being posted on these sites date before the 1940s, with a vast majority from the 19th century. From the point of view of a UFO researcher this is good news. Much of the research performed on the topic has been in modern times, i.e. from the beginnings of the so-called flying saucer era, 1947 onward. Sporadic searches of earlier years have been performed by many but I think most of them would admit that with regard to the 150 years or so prior to the flying saucer era, we have scratched the surface of the existing press that can be studied.

An added feature of the scanning software, which will be of supreme importance to UFO researchers, is that the newsprint is searchable. That is, if one puts various terms into the search engine on the site, a list of relevant pages will appear and you may focus your search on those pages immediately rather than do a page by page reading. Such searches are not perfect. On the original images a blob of ink here, a tear there, a weakly printed letter here, a typo or misspelling there can entirely alter the search results.

A significant difficulty in using a search engine is that in dealing with the pre-1947 period, the UFO topic didn't exist. One must use terms that Victorians used to describe peculiar aerial phenomena. There are a large variety of them: airships, singular phenomena, phantasms, auroras, fireballs, meteors, ghosts, globular lightning, balloons, apparitions, mirages, bright stars, and onward. Results on any one of these terms might yield one out of ten that are useful to a UFO researcher.

Because of the expectations raised by researching the modern era of UFO reports and getting large amounts of information, some might expect a similar

production of anomalous reports from early newspapers by using these new research techniques. I doubt this will be the case. Enough work has been done to define several intense periods of aerial oddities in the 19th century (1896, 1897). A preliminary check of over 100 papers in North America from these new web sites, using a variety of the previously described terms, shows only isolated bursts of reporting of aerial phenomena, mostly meteor reporting, between the 1840s and 1900 aside from what is already known. Admittedly, this is only a small fraction of the press from those times. Local bursts of reporting may still surface when more regions are posted.

There are currently efforts to post non-English press as well. Check the British Columbia site for a rundown on these. A whole new set of search terms will be necessary for those. A check of a 1952 Mexican newspaper yielded results in that search engine for "Discos Voladores" (flying disks) and "Platillos Voladores" (flying saucers), for July and August 1952, but missed "extrañas luces" (strange lights). A page by page search is still necessary sometimes!

The promise of this new technology is obvious. It will only get better as software improves and more press is posted. Already, larger daily papers are making arrangements to transfer their archives to the Internet. The "Toronto Star" is available to business customers (though not to the public yet) back to its beginning. "The Daily Oklahoman" will digitize its entire archive over the next 18 months.

Fort Wayne In
Daily News
Dec 20 1909

Helena Mt
Independent
Sept 4 1928

Fresno Ca
Weekly Republican
March 26 1897

Mysterious Aviator.

BOSTON, Dec. 20.—Recent statements of Wallace Tillinghast, an aviator of Worcester, Mass., that he had flown to New York and back were given new life here today by the story told by Arthur W. Hoe, of the United States immigration station, who declared he saw a mysterious airship pass over Boston early today. Aroused by a whistle in the harbor, Hoe says he looked out and saw the dark form of an aeroplane, bearing lights, come up against the wind and pass him, going at a good speed. Hoe's story is taken as possibly confirming that of Tillinghast, the Worcester inventor, who still declares he is navigating the heavens over New England and that he will prove his claims when he gets ready.

Blue Ball of Fire Falls Near Billings

Billings, Sept. 3.—The meteor seen in Billings by numerous people fell in the Coombs Flat district, about 25 miles west of Billings in the opinion of "Cap" Farrell Griffin and J. D. Smith who were driving in a car in that section at the same hour the unusual light was seen here.

According to Griffin, there was a blue ball of fire, followed by a blue flame which seemed to fall straight down from the sky. It looked as if the place where it struck was near a house not more than a quarter of a mile from them and between them and Billings. A white flare, blazed up for a moment as it struck the ground.

ANOTHER AIRSHIP.

A Mysterious Light Moves Over San Jose.

SAN JOSE, March 19.—Now that the all absorbing question of the world's heavyweight championship has been determined, the airship mystery is again attracting attention. A pale white light moving with great rapidity over this city tonight has revived the theme, and many who saw the phenomenon are confident that the problem of air navigation has been solved.

SAMPLES OF DOWNLOADED PRESS

SKY PHENOMENA IN 1911!

As a result of the technology described in this issue, a new range of aerial oddities can be discovered from years previously thought to be quiet.

The August 18, 1911 "Reno (NV) Gazette" carried a brief item titled "Meteor From The Sea Does Strange Stunts." It is said that upon the arrival of the ocean liner "America Maru" in San Francisco from the Orient on August 17th a report was made of a meteor which "climbed out of the sea like a skyrocket, traveled through a great arc and disappeared." The captain, A.C. Stevens, said it had a great fiery head and a long trail and was seen on August 11th.

The item would normally be of minor interest except that meteors do not climb out of the sea. An effort was made to locate more from the San Francisco area from where the report had originated. Confirmation came quickly.

On the same day as the Reno item, the "San Francisco Examiner" carried a story, "Meteors And Moon Rainbows Awe Ship – A Night in Hawaiian Seas Made Brilliant for Passengers on America Maru." This report was a bit more expansive, stating that while passengers were on deck the previous Friday evening, a large meteor shot up out of the ocean, made a complete circle of the sky, and sank again into the water. At the time, the ship was two days out of Hawaii.

It was seen to be about the size of a ten-inch cannon ball and displayed a trail many miles in length. The first third of the trail was as round as a rod and glowing red. The remainder "gradually expanded in graceful proportions."

A half an hour later, the night watchman called for witnesses to view a large lunar rainbow. Shortly after this observation, another meteor rose out of the sea to a height of 20 degrees and sank again. This object was smaller than the first but the trail seemed to break away and precede the head into the sea.

What can be made of this story? I had thought of the possibility of volcanic eruptions, with the ship being two days from the volcanic Hawaiian Islands. The eruptions would hurl flaming rock high into the air, trailing hot debris and giving the appearance of a meteor shooting from the water. However there seemed to be no reports of noise or vibration from such an eruption, or no glow from the horizon from a distant volcano. We also have the "meteor" making a circuit of the sky, hardly a falling rock.

One small detail before closing this account. The Gazette concluded by adding that a copy of the ship's log with a description of the phenomenon "was forwarded to Washington." In all likelihood this was sent to the U.S. Hydrographic Office, which was known to have collected such reports for study.

Another report in the "Reno Gazette" (July 25th) told of the people of Durango, Colorado seeing a large ball about the size of the full moon moving through the sky. It sounds like an especially bright meteor, which can sometimes rival the full moon in brightness. But the report continued, "For several hours the phenomenon lasted. At first it seemed to be traveling toward the earth and gradually grew larger until it

developed to a size half again as large as a full moon. Finally, it began to grow smaller and in time disappeared entirely."

The only known phenomenon of such long duration might be a display of aurora. It is a fluid phenomenon though and a single, compact display lasting several hours would be a far-fetched explanation for this report.

Mystery airships, or aeroplanes, continued on for many years after the airship flurries of 1896 and 1897. One report, in the "Winnipeg Free Press" (August 22), tells of an unknown aircraft in the vicinity of North Winnipeg between 1250 and 410 AM on the 22nd. It continually buzzed the city in the dark, leaving residents believing that it was a flyer afraid to land in darkness. It did not appear clearly to witnesses and vanished without having been identified.

THE VANISHING BATTALION

In the January 1999 UHR, readers will recall a discussion of the release of new MJ-12 documents by the father/son team of Robert and Ryan Wood. In that discussion I had concluded that based upon numerous problems evident in the paperwork, the documents were hoaxes. One of these problems was the citation of an alleged disappearance of a British regiment into a strange flying cloud during the World War 2 Gallipoli campaign in 1915. The citation, in the so-called "1st Annual Report" document from 1952, was shown to be a virtual clone of a version of the incident that did not surface until 1965. The Woods, who have become self-appointed experts on the analysis of the information, have never explained how a uniquely 1965 story appeared in a 1952 document. This document did not become known until the late 1990s, being released under very suspicious circumstances. The Gallipoli problem became what I called a "fatal flaw" in the credibility of the Woods' claims.

Thanks to a substantial effort by New Zealand researcher, Murray Bott, much new information has been located on the history of the disappearing regiment story. A battalion, not a regiment as cited in the false MJ-12 papers, did disappear but not on the date or under the circumstances alleged to have occurred. And even this battalion, the First-Fifth Norfolk, never really disappeared into thin air.

The 1992 book, "The Vanishing Battalion" by Nigel McCrery, meticulously details the history of the Norfolk regiments leading to the fateful day of the final battle. The book even devotes a chapter to the 1965 affidavit upon which the account in the Woods' "1st Annual Report" is based.

McCrery describes the affidavit as having first appeared in the New Zealand journal "Spaceview" (September/October 1965). This initial publication of the tale aroused world interest and spread through UFO journals like wildfire, all assuming that the story was true. McCrery points out factual errors in the affidavit's information, among which is the testimony of a witness to the First-Fifth Norfolk's assault. He saw no mystery cloud, but he expressed concern about the battalion being destroyed in an attack that was poorly conceived tactically. The author

considered this testimony, written in 1932, more credible than the statements made a half century after the fact, and a good deal less peculiar. The authors of the affidavit were not lying, according to McCrery, but were confused by flawed memories as evidenced by historical fact. He adds, "Once the story had been told, it undoubtedly became embellished with each retelling and over fifty years the story undoubtedly became totally confused."

McCrery's book became the basis for the 1999 BBC production "All the King's Men." The film is considered a reasonable retelling of the First-Fifth Norfolk attack and demise. No UFOs, no vanishing under supernatural circumstances. There is nothing in the historical record to support the provably false story told first in the 1965 affidavit.

Yet it is precisely this product which appears in the alleged 1952 UFO document labeled by Robert and Ryan Wood as genuine. On the Woods' web site, the Annual Report is described as containing "sensational information" that is so laden with detail that it would "take several man-years to validate every phrase and claim." I wrote of the problem with this document in January 1999. It is now December 2002, almost four years. Time's up! Evidence of the falseness of a claim in the Annual Report has been provided. The document claims to be, but cannot be, a product of the 1950s. Yet the Woods' web site still persists in saying of the document "No clear indication of fakery at all"!

For the sake of real history, when are Robert and Ryan Wood going to stop pedaling revisionist history as authentic? The "1st Annual Report" continues to be sold by them as a product of the government when it clearly is not. It would be child's play for a forger to use authentic, non-UFO documents as models for inserting false, UFO-related information and later releasing photocopies as genuine "leaked" classified documents. A potential for a fountain of such "releases" would be a relatively uncritical outlet, like the Woods have allowed themselves to become in this matter. If the Gallipoli concoction cannot arouse their suspicions that a problem exists, not much else can. Buyer beware!

HARD EVIDENCE OF GOVERNMENT UFO MISINFORMATION

In the premier issue of UHR (June 1998), I concluded a two-part article on the 1997 Roswell craze with a discussion of an article in a CIA publication, "Studies in Intelligence." Written by Gerald Haines, a historian at the National Reconnaissance Office, the article made the extraordinary claim that more than half of all UFO reports made from the late 1950s through the 1960s were nothing more than sightings of U-2 and SR-71 (Project OXCART) secret reconnaissance aircraft. For this to be so there must have been massive coordination between the Air Force's Project Blue Book and the CIA during that time. Both agencies would have had to sit down together regularly and analyze each incident. Unfortunately, the only evidence of this for Haines was a classified book published by the CIA History Staff in 1992:

“The Central Intelligence Agency and Overhead Reconnaissance: The U-2 and OXCART Programs, 1954-1974” by Gregory Pedlow and Donald Welzenbach:

Recently the book was released, thanks to researcher Robert Todd, although in a partially censored form. However the entire UFO discussion is left intact, all three paragraphs! The Haines article summarized the book's claim of how spy aircraft could have been mistaken for strange flying objects due to their extreme flight altitudes. The book continues on how sightings were identified (pages 72-73):

“Not only did the airline pilots report their sightings to air-traffic controllers, but they and ground-based observers also wrote letters to the Air Force unit at Wright Air Development Command in Dayton charged with investigating such phenomena. This, in turn, led to the Air Force's Operation BLUE BOOK based at Wright-Patterson, the operation collected all reports of UFO sightings. Air Force investigators then attempted to investigate such sightings by linking them to natural phenomena. BLUE BOOK investigators regularly called on the Agency's Project Staff in Washington to check reported UFO sightings against U-2 flight logs. This enabled the investigators to eliminate the majority of the UFO reports, although they could not reveal to the letter writers the true cause of the UFO sightings. U-2 and later OXCART flights accounted for more than one-half of all UFO reports during the late 1950s and most of the 1960s.”

So if one accepts the CIA version of UFO history, it is clear that Project Blue Book personnel regularly met with the “Agency” (CIA) to provide false answers to UFO reports, false more than half the time!! Is this version true? It is published in a classified CIA history. But three paragraphs hardly document this to the extent needed to bolster such a bold charge.

The last sentence in the above quote is footnoted. The source of the sighting analysis is based upon “Information supplied by James Cunningham to Donald E. Welzenbach.” Cunningham became the administrative officer for the U-2 program in April 1955 and later became the Deputy Director of the Office of Special Activities and Special Assistant to the Deputy Director for Science and Technology.

Haines' article claimed an Air Force/CIA misinformation conspiracy on UFOs, and failed to provide evidence beyond brief references. Haines' source, the Pedlow/Welzenbach book, claimed an Air Force/CIA misinformation conspiracy on UFOs, and the evidence so far is unseen and inaccessible. Either the claim is true, which would prove once and for all the dishonesty of the Air Force Blue Book effort, or it isn't true, which raises questions about the credibility of certain government historians who have strange ideas about what constitutes truth.

Something else to think about: the Ground Saucer Watch/CIA lawsuit of 1979, which was settled with the release of about 900 pages of CIA UFO records, did not include a single page related to the issues raised by Haines, Pedlow and Welzenbach. If the records are genuine and the story is true, these records should have been included with the released documents. Why weren't they? There should have been many thousands of pages of records showing Air Force/CIA consultations on spy aircraft as UFOs.

Or maybe they just forgot. Forgetting often gets one out of a lot of trouble!



THE AUSTRALIAN

Australia's national daily newspaper

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Track attracts UFOs

By Paul Dyer
02jan03

The UFO capital of the Northern Territory is expecting an increase in sightings when track laying on the Alice Springs-Darwin railway begins again next week.

Wycliffe Well, a small roadside stop about 1100km south of Darwin on the Stuart Hwy, is famous for its frequent UFO sightings.

ADrail track laying will proceed south of Tennant Creek on Monday, with one camp situated near Wycliffe Well.

Wycliffe Well store manager Lew Farkas said he was expecting UFO sightings to increase when work begins.

"Mid-year we get a lot more sightings purely because there are a lot more people wandering around in the night," he said.

"But in the summertime now there is hardly anybody around. With the workers here it is a matter of more people around so there are more chances of seeing things."

Mr Farkas said when ADrail workers were in the area last March sightings increased dramatically. Mr Farkas, who has lived at Wycliffe Well for 18 years, said UFO sightings by staff and tourists were common.

"I just had a Japanese TV film crew out here a few days ago," he said.

"They had a sighting so they went back happy."

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UHR NOTE: With the inevitable march of technology, we may see the day when there will be no more hardcopy newspapers to read. More people are buying computers and going online. They will be getting their news from a screen rather than newsprint. Here is what has replaced the old cut-and-paste press cutting.