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## AURORA

By EYDER PERALTA, Copyright 2007 Houston Chronicle Feb 28, 2007



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Legend has it that the alien grave in Aurora lies underneath the bent arm of an old tree, far left, in the Aurora Cemetery. Requests to exhume the body in the past have been denied by the cemetery board. COURTNEY PERRY/FOR THE CHRONICLE

AURORA — A barking dog runs up and down the length of the chain-link fence. His frenzied warning: Come any closer, I'll tear you to pieces.

I knock on the door. No answer. I knock again and hear a voice. I knock one more time and notice two eyes peeking from behind some blinds. Flashing my badge, I explain I'm doing a story about the alien.

It takes awhile, but she pries open the door a third of the way.

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"I'm not sure I can be of any help," she says, in a girlish voice.

"Do you know where he was buried?"

"When people come here, I know they come to see him 'cause they go straight for that tree. The one over there that curves like an arm."

I turn around to face the cemetery and hear the door shut. The tree is a massive knotted oak with sinewy limbs that look like the long, arthritic fingers of a grandma.

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The cemetery is the site of Texas' most famous UFO crash. On April 16, 1897, six years before the Wright brothers made history at Kitty Hawk, a cigar-shaped object crashed into a windmill here. Some say an alien inside the craft survived the crash. Others say it died and the townspeople here gave it a proper Christian burial.

But right there in the shade of the tree, there's just a bunch of dead grass, surrounded by headstones so old the wind and rain have worn the inscriptions.

"[John Holt](#)," one reads, "Born Oct. 13, 1821, Died Oct. 10, 1885." Other headstones mark births and deaths only five or six years apart.

The only sign of an alien is a historical marker that sits at the the cemetery's entrance: "This site is also well-known because of the legend that a spaceship crashed nearby in 1897."

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Aurora is a one-stoplight town of 853 residents in Wise County, just north of Fort Worth. There's Tater Junction, a restaurant that looks like three double-wides cobbled together, and just down the road, Piddle & Play Gifts, Etc.

"Let me guess, you're lost?" asks Karen Tedrow, Piddle & Play's owner.

I shake my head and ask about the alien.

"I don't know anything about it," she says, but continues anyway.

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"You know where it actually happened, right?"