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Cover illustration by Glen Brock



INFORMATION RELATED TO BROWN MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA

By Allen H. Greenfield

- 1) There are a number of literary references to alleged unusual light phenomena located on a continuing basis in and/or around Brown Mountain, North Carolina. These include The Books of Charles Fort (Holt), pages 624-625; The Brown Mountain Lights by Ralph I. Lael; Flying Saucer Invasion Target--Earth by Brad Steiger and Joan Whritenour, section by Timothy Green Beckley, pages 130-133.
- 2) The present writer, as of this time, has made two field trips to this area. The first was in December, 1968, the second in August, 1969. On the former trip we were in the company of Mr. James W. Moseley and Mr. Timothy Green Beckley. During the latter we were in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene R Steinberg.
- 3) During the course of these field trips, my companions and I were in contact with a number of individuals who may have had a considerable amount of personal experience with the alleged light-phenomena.
- 4) My own activity in the area included trips to several observational vantage points. I also visited a local newspaper office in nearby Morganton, North Carolina, and was there given access to reference material, specifically one (or possibly two) reference texts that may give some indication both of the scope of the phenomena-interest, and possible directions for further research.
- 5) During the course of my August, 1969 visit, I obtained an alleged photograph of the light phenomena. I also obtained several taped interviews. The former was not a photograph personally taken by myself, but was rather given locally while I was in the area. I also obtained a data sheet in connection with the photograph.
- 6) During both the December, 1968 and the August, 1969 visits, my parties met with local contactee Ralph I. Lael. During the course of the August, 1969 visit I obtained a taped interview with Lael.
- 7) Some indications may point to the alleged lights as natural phenomena, caused by some sort of natural gases indigenous the the Brown Mountain area, perhaps aggravated by a "growing legend" phenomenon, and the presence of man-made lights. However, to my knowledge this hypothesis is not conclusively confirmed, nor have I to date received expert consultation as to the feasibility of this hypothesis.
- 8) As I stated in a letter to Mr. Dennis Stamey dated December 10, 1969, "...It may be ultimately found that Lael's experience was connected only tenuously with the lights..." In both directions, the reality of one may have ~~very little at~~ very little at ~~all~~ all to do with the reality of the other.
- 9) Further research might be quite profitable and is recommended. Expert consultation on the natural gases hypothesis is suggested, and an expedition with the aim of close-up viewing of the lights might also be

profitable, though I urge that this be done only with the aid of reputable expert consultants. There may be serious obstacles involving poisonous snakes, rough territory, property trespassing, large wild animals. Such obstacles, a negative feeling about the reality of the phenomena (as being nonconventional) and/or personal reasons may have caused me to wrongly downgrade such an expedition earlier.



Photograph at left is of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene R Steinberg and their dog "Ellie".

Photograph was taken during our August, 1969 visit to the Brown Mountain, North Carolina area.

MORE INFORMATION ON NEW ZEALAND

In Alternate Horizons Newsletter, Volume Four, Number One, page 4, some material was published relating to alleged strange phenomena in New Zealand. This article contains some additional related material.

The following article is reprinted from UFO Bulletin, a publication of the Auckland University UFO Research Group, Auckland, New Zealand (apparently a student group), issue dated August, 1969. A part of one line of this article is obliterated in our copy; it may have been a deliberate omission in the original. In any event, this missing section is marked here below with an asterisk (*):

The Ngatea Circle:

This was investigated by Group members from Auckland. After first hearing of the existence of the circle on the radio news on Sunday morning, Sep 7, four members travelled down in the afternoon. The circle is about one mile south-west of Ngatea on a run-off owned by Mr B.G.O'Neil. Mr O'Neil had apparently seen the whitened tops of nearby trees a few weeks beforehand but had not noticed the whitened circle in the tea-tree until about a week before. The circle had therefore been in its burnt condition possibly a month or more before the story broke in the news media. In addition by the

time the Group got there the area had been badly trampled by sightseers and the marks in the ground had been thoroughly disturbed.

The tea-tree in a 56ft diameter circle was dead but still standing. It was dry and white in colour. The burn was uniform down the stem and was obviously not a heat burn. Nor did it appear to be the work of weedkiller or any normal defoliant. Mr O'Neil noted that if the dead section had been sprayed the stems would all be twisted. The burns were reminiscent of radiation burns.

Outside the circle and between it and the row of nearby trees was an area in which only the top of the tea-tree had been bleached.

Not quite in the middle of the burnt circle were three depressions which looked equidistant. Measurement showed that the three sides of the imaginary triangle were in fact 10ft, 10ft and 9ft. The vague depressions were about two feet across and about 8in deep. From two of the depressions two furrows forming a V-shape radiated out a few feet. From the third indentation only one furrow radiated out. None of the surrounding tea-tree had been crushed. If one makes the assumption that something came down there it must have had legs.

A crude radiography test for radioactivity was carried out in one depression and in the middle of the triangle but this proved negative. Soil and scrub samples were taken. A piece of tea-tree was submitted to a gamma spectrum test: *. This proved negative. We were just about to wind up the investigation when news broke in the newspapers that field helpers Messrs H. Cooke and P. Scantlebury, of Tauranga, and a horticulturist, Mr J.A.B. Stuart-Menzies, had detected abnormal radiation in samples they had taken back to Tauranga. At the time of writing we were in the process of contacting the Tauranga people for further details. We also decided to test the soil samples. For the result see the back page.

A sighting in which a farmer claims to have seen a glow in the general area of the circle about six weeks beforehand is at present under investigation.

The same issue of Ufo Bulletin had the following at the bottom of page 6: " Stop Press: The results of the soil analysis were also negative. "

We also received a communication over the signature of Brian C. Musker, Sec., AUUFORG, in response to our letter to Tony Brunt, president, UFO research group, c/o UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND. From Mr. Musker's letter we extract the following two paragraphs:

" In the Newsletter you will find some information on the mysterious circles which you are inquiring about. The story about the Ngatea mystery represents the most publicised of all the circles, and our findings did not entirely agree with the findings of other people who were eager to believe that this was caused by some extra-terrestrial vehicle.

" This case, though the most widely publicised was not really the most significant, one report in particular, from

a place near Te Kuiti could be considered the most outstanding. In all, there were about seven reports of 'mysterious' circles, most of which could be considered as relating to a natural phenomenon. "

The following note, dated 2 Feb 1970, appears over the signature of Claude Elmes, who also sent us some clippings dealing with the Ngatea phenomenon, etc., after I had written him a letter of inquiry.

" According to our government, this country is unique in having the only insects in the world which attack plant growth in a circular motion. The clippings tell you of two areas where the circles were discovered, Ngatea, and Rotorua, but these were not the only places. Many such circles were found all within a few weeks of the Ngatea circles, but all were in the northern half of this North Island. In some, as in the Ngatea area, people actually saw UFO's or mystery aerial objects in the vicinity, but then, what government is going to be brave enough to admit, 'Yes, we know extraterrestrial forces have landed in this country?'

" There was another angle, at the time we were having our 4 yearly general election, so naturally, no party would say outright that visitors could have landed, for fear of losing votes.

" Half way thru October, a circle was discovered at TeKuiti by a farmer. This was obviously not more than 24 hours old, but no government department would investigate. Such a department exists here, the Department of Scientific Industries Research (DSIR) they investigated Ngatea, but no others. Their final conclusion was either weed killer or fungus. So suddenly, we are beset with either a fungus or weedkiller, which all in a short period of two weeks attacks farmland at various points in upper NZ. To use a good English word...balderdash.

" The Tekuiti circle was a good example. Blackened water plants...a 15 foot circle...the circle 2 feet below ground level...growth appeared burned, pressed down, spread out in a spiral pattern. Cows and other animals which formerly used the site as a water hole, refused to go near. All insects and ducks, also frogs, simply disappeared. The farmer suffered from very bad headaches for several days. The actual site was a small island in a small lake, the only water available for stock. This circle did not exist on Tuesday 7th, but was there on the 8th. This marvellous opportunity of investigation was passed up by the DSIR, the government, the Wellington University research. WHY ? Obviously they did not want to find out too much.

" Some circles found in other areas were just circle in the grass, but the Ngatea and Tekuiti circles were perfect examples of possible landings.

" The clippings will give you a good story....excuse bad typing this is a hot onion with me as I'm convinced we have been panned off...and equally convinced these circles were landing sites. With regard to the symmetrical marks in the Ngatea circles, obviously made from landing gear, we are told wild pigs were responsible. So in addition to circle chewing insects, we have educated pigs who root in symmetrical designs. Will be pleased to hear your opinion. "

Mr. Elmes lists an address in Napier, New Zealand.

The following article is taken from a newspaper clipping sent me by Mr. Claude L. Elmes. It is reprinted here by special permission of The Daily Telegraph Co. Ltd. The clipping is from The Daily Telegraph, Napier, New Zealand, September 13, 1969, page 10:

Puzzle posed by mystery circle on Hauraki farm

(Special to Telegraph)

PAEROA, This day.

A flying saucer may have landed in the North Island of New Zealand recently. A 44-year-old farmer has found evidence on his property which supports such a theory and so far no alternative explanation has been given.

Last week, Mr Bert O'Neil, of Ngatea, 70 miles south-east of Auckland, found what he thinks may be the saucer's landing spot, hidden in dense scrub on his run-off farm.

More than a mile from the nearest road and two miles from the nearest farmhouse, the farmer found a circular patch of scrub that had withered and died. In the centre of the 42ft circle of dead growth were three deep impressions where some heavy object had rested on a tripod.

The impressions were in a perfect triangle and were exactly nine feet apart.

The surrounding area was covered with perfectly healthy growing scrub and there were no tracks or wheel marks leading to or from the circle.

NO EXPLANATION

"There has been no stock in here since last year and I haven't been in here myself for at least six months," said Mr O'Neil.

"There could be a logical explanation for the whole thing, but I'm not too sure now that flying saucers don't exist.

"No-one has done any weed spraying for miles and there is no sign of scrub blight anywhere in the area."

Although the scrub was not scorched it had withered and died completely. Even thick branches were completely dry of sap.

The undergrowth of moss and rushes was unaffected.

"It looks as though something has hovered over the patch and has put down hydraulic rams and dug them into the ground," said Mr O'Neil.

"On each of the corners of the triangle there is a deep gouge in the ground. Then when the thing has taken off again it has torn up the earth where the legs were and has gone out over a line of higher scrub, killing a section of that too."

Mr O'Neil, who has had the 50-acre scrub-covered farm for seven years, says he has never seen anything like the weird markings on his property.

SYDNEY PARALLEL

"If the dead section had been sprayed the plant stems would all be twisted, but they are not," he said.

"I've done a lot of pig-hunting in this sort of country and can read signs pretty well, but I saw no markings here at all."

Mr O'Neil said he had read of a similar find in Sydney last year, where some children had discovered a flattened circle of reeds in a swamp.

"From what I can remember of that, this spot on my farm is almost identical.

"I didn't used to believe in flying saucers, but now I'm not so sure."

FOLLOWED CAR

Earlier this year, and less than 20 miles from Mr O'Neil's farm, a young man driving at night on a lonely country road was almost paralysed with fear when a bright hovering object began following his car.

He described the object as giving an intense white light and being oval shaped.

It followed his car closely for several miles before disappearing at high speed over a range of nearby hills. The man was later treated for intense shock by a doctor.

Several months later two hunters returning home at night in the same area were badly frightened when a huge shining object approached their truck.

Their vehicle stalled and they were unable to start it again. The truck's lighting system failed also.

The object hovered nearby for several minutes before vanishing. As soon as it disappeared the truck lights came on and they were able to start the motor.

(End of article from The Daily Telegraph - AHG)

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