

UFO POTPOURRI

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JOHN F. SCHUESSLER, P.O. BOX 58485, HOUSTON, TX 77258-8485
FAX (713) 488-3121

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THE 1897 AIRSHIPS PART IV

The following articles are from the ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH:

THE AIRSHIP PROBLEM

To the editor of the POST-DISPATCH:

ST. LOUIS, MO., April 20: Here are a few reasons the much-talked of airship so far as man being aboard is a hoax:

The planet Venus, which changes from white to red as it falls below the horizon, and toy tissue paper balloons fed by a ball of cotton saturated with alcohol, are responsible for all of the excitement and talk. Five month ago when Venus disappeared below the horizon at about 6 o'clock p.m., as much southwest apparently of St. Louis as it does now northwest, it was taken by many to be an electric balloon and so called.

There is no power known that is sufficient to lift itself, car and occupants, and propel it without the aid of gas or hot air reservoir, and one of these sufficiently large could not be concealed long and it would need refilling often. Second reason - an airship at the rate of speed this myth has been making would, if exposed as has been stated, freeze a man beyond thawing in half an hour. Third reason - a car hanging below a reservoir as the cigar-shape concern is represented in some papers, would meet with such resistance as to compel the ship to go straight up, and it could not be guided on a plane or in a straight line. What then? 1: would be either above the stars all of the time or in some corn field up in Iowa scaring some other poor farmers' horses so they would run away.

The airship problem is as far from being solved as is perpetual motion. About the time it was becoming a force for future usefulness, every cross-roader in the country had a perfect model working exact. Where are they today? On the shelf. This will be the termination of the airship unless some unknown power is discovered to propel it.

If reports are true, three or four of these airships have been seen. Where do they "hang up at" in the air? We never hear of them putting up at any place where there can be real evidence procured of their existence.

Suppose some one should solve aerial navigation, what would the farmers do if these airships became numerous, dropping around destroying grain fields after night while tightening up a loose bolt or

putting a new feather in a wing which may be broken while running against time? The ship would be thousands of miles away when morning came. Who would pay these damages? There would be no railroads to jump on for losses by an airship.

Concluding we hope we may see the time one can travel from town to town through the air, but let's have more proof that there is yet.

ED M'LEAN, Tower Hill, Ill., April 16

EDISON'S OPINION

An Airship Will be Made, but Recent Stories are Fakes

NEW YORK, April 20: Thomas A. Edison has no confidence in recent Western stories of airships. He says they are fakes. He thinks an airship will soon be made, but it will not be on the balloon idea. He says:

"Whenever an airship is made it will not be in the form of a balloon. It will be a mechanical contrivance, which will be raised by means of a powerful motor, which must be made of very light weight. At present no one has discovered such a motor, but we never know what will happen. We may wake up tomorrow morning and hear of some invention which sets us all eagerly to work within a few hours, as was the case with the Roentgen rays. Their success may come. I am not, however, figuring on inventing an airship. I prefer to devote my time to objects which have some commercial value. As the best, airships would only be toys."

AIR SHIP AT BELLEVILLE

Several Sober and Veracious Persons Say They Saw It.

ST. LOUIS, MO., April 20: What is supposed to be an airship was seen in Belleville Monday night. It appeared in the northeast about 9:30 and was visible about an hour. It was seen by several citizens of unquestioned sobriety and veracity.

Postmaster Irwin Wangelin was walking home with Mrs. Curt Heinfeld, when he noticed a bright red light in the heavens and called her attention to it. It was traveling at great speed, alternately rising and falling.

Otto Rauschkolb, Fred Marsh, Lorena Kassius and Officer William Letter also saw it.

From Swansea, the village north of town on the ridge, the light was plainly visible. Its motion was not that of a balloon.

As one might expect, lawmakers see the airship situation as a chance for increasing taxes.

TAX ON AIRSHIPS

Texas Proposes a New Way to
Raise the Wind

AUSTIN, TEX., April 23: A resolution was introduced in the House of Texas Legislature this morning setting forth that, inasmuch as it has been generally current that an airship was flying around Texas carrying passengers and freight, and inasmuch as said airship is operating without paying any taxes or complying with the rates established by the Texas commission, that said commission be instructed to establish special rates for the airship and see that its management comply with said rates.

THAT AIRSHIP

It Is Out Of Order and Is Now Resting
for Repairs in the Tennessee Mountains

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn., April 24: The airship reported almost daily for the past three weeks as having been seen in different sections of the country is said to have been seen at this place. It is said that the machine met with an accident to its working gear last night, and the navigator was compelled to descend for repairs.

Instead of being cigar or balloon shaped it is said to be in the exact shape of a shad, minus head and tail. The metal is aluminum, bonded around with thin strips of steel. On each side of this are two large wings, which are fixed to knuckle and socket joints. The wings can be moved up or down, back or forward, and in any direction. This make the ship rise or wall without the loss of any gas.

Two motors, one electric and the other naphtha, give the motive power. It is said that from the stern there is a propeller at least nine feet in diameter, which has a maximum revolution of 900 turns a minute. The shad shaped portion is filled with hydrogen gas, having a pressure of twenty-seven pounds, and a lifting capacity of 1,800 pounds.

The passenger car underneath the ship is nine feet long, and is made of bamboo and aluminum strips, which combine strength and lightness. The navigator is said to carry provisions in the shape of canned goods and compressed biscuits. Aluminum vessels comprise the culinary utensils.

Several presumably truthful citizens of this city have given the foregoing account of the vessel. They say that they came upon the vessel resting on a spur of a mountain near this city. Two men were at work on it and explained that they had been compelled to return to earth because the machinery was out of order. One of the men said his name was "Prof. Charles Davidson." He is

alleged to have said that the vessel left Sacramento a month ago and has since been sailing all over the country.

ANOTHER VISION OF THE AIRSHIP

Jenny Lind, Ark. Residents Tell
What They Saw.

Several Conversed With the Occupants of the
Craft, Who Gave Their Names.

JENNY LIND, Ark., May 5: We of Jenny Lind are no longer skeptical. The airship has come and gone. About 7:30 last night our citizens were aroused by the cry from a dozen places in town, "Airship! Airship!" The whole town turned out to see the long-looked-for wonder. It appeared from the northeast, moving in a southwesterly direction. It came directly over town, and as it approached the office of Western Coal and Mining Co. it veered to the right and took a northwesterly direction, passing directly over the Christian Church, where Rev. Nunn is holding a series of meetings.

His subject was Elijah's translation. Just as he was telling of the magnificent illumination that surrounded Elijah the congregation heard the cry of airship. In the rush to get out of the church Mrs. Berry, Mrs. Staut and two other ladies were seriously injured.

The ship come down near a spring at the foot of the mountain, near Old Town, and Mr. Elijah Holenbeck, Assistant Superintendent of the Mines, Prof. Phelps and James Davis got on their bikes and followed it. At the spring they conversed with the occupants. The manager and owner of the queer vessel gave his name as George Autzerlitz. The gentleman with him he introduced as Joseph Eddleman. Now here is the only fishy part of the story. They had a swan with them which they said they had caught in flight.

Mr. Eddleman told Mr. Hollenbeck that they could move at a speed one-third faster than the fastest flight of birds and that they subsisted a great deal on birds taken in flight. They seem to have perfect control of the monster, for such it seems to us.

Last night's excitement will long be remembered by the people of Jenny Lind. Groups of men and women remained on the streets discussing the matter and awaiting the return of Mr. James Davis, who accompanied them to Huntington. They offered anyone a free ride with them and Mr. Davis was the only one who would take the seeming risk, and then only after they assured him they would land any place he desired. He made the passage to Huntington, fifteen miles away, in ten minutes, and called his wife to say he had landed all right.