

UFO POTPOURRI

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Pre-Kenneth Arnold Era Sightings

Many UFO researchers contend that the modern era of UFO sightings did not originate with the 1947 sighting by private pilot Kenneth Arnold, but many years earlier. Further, they contend that these earlier sightings set into motion the processes and organizations that were so successful in covering up post-Arnold era sightings. Perhaps the modern era of ufology actually began in 1896, not 1947. If so, where are the records of the earlier sightings?

1923 UFO Encounter

(From the Fall 1998 issue of the Colorado MUFON News)

In June, 1923, a 10-year-old boy led a team of horses into a pasture near his farm home in Illinois, looked up, and saw a spaceship. Norman Massie, now 85, and a retired math teacher and coach, said, "I opened the gate to let the horses into the pasture. As I was closing the gate I looked back down the field and there was an object with lights all around it. I kept walking closer to the object until I got about 50 feet away. I stood there and watched the five men who were on board."

Massie says he kept quiet about the incident until 1990 because his father told him never to breathe a word about what he saw because, "people would talk."

He described the men as being about 4 feet tall with blond hair. "I got close enough that I could hear them talk," Massie said. "One guy sat in a chair and the others called him the Commander. Four others made trips back and forth in the ship. I didn't know what was going on until the end." He claims he heard one of the crew members tell his Commander that "the repairs had been made."

"The machine was metallic and stood on three legs. The top was a dome with holes in it," said Massie. "The best way I could describe the top was it looked like melted glass."

The incident took place in northern Wayne County, IL, and lasted only about five minutes, Massie said. "In a minute, it came to a hovering position. The tripod legs telescoped up into the belly of the thing, and it went straight up about 200 feet and whizzed off to the west like a bullet," he said.

Ten-year-old Norman Massie ran home and told his parents. They tried to convince him that he really hadn't seen anything. His dad announced he wanted no member of the family mentioning the incident to anyone because they might think Norman was "crazy in the head, or an idiot."

Massie broke his silence in 1990 when he told his son, Jerry, who was a colonel in the Air Force at the time. "He told me there was nothing wrong with me, that the Air Force files are full of pictures of UFOs," said Massie.

1920 UFO Sighting

(Burlington, IA, *The Hawk Eye*, Oct. 28, 1973)

Clark Linch, Mt. Pleasant, made the first recorded UFO spotting in southeast Iowa June 3, 1920, about 10 a.m. He didn't tell anybody about it for 35 years because "you didn't talk about flying saucers back in those days."

But he is willing to talk now because of an attitude change about UFOs: "More people are taking them seriously."

Linch, now 75, recalls he was celebrating his birthday when he spotted the object. Working his father's farm six miles northeast of town, he took the forenoon off to go fishing. "I remember the year because I'd gotten married in January of 1920," he said.

The sun indicated it was about 10 a.m., Linch reported, when an egg-shaped object about the size of a cream can landed silently about 15 feet from his river-bank perch. It "sat there" about 15 minutes, not bothering him -- nor he bothering it.

"I wasn't in any hurry to jump up and run over to it," he said, "and I'm glad I didn't. It might have killed me. Just when I thought about going over to take a closer look at it, it took off without any sound and without turning around."

He recalled "the grass where it lit was pressed down," but "there was no damage and no burn marks." Linch, a teetotaler, said the object was shiny blue and translucent. "It would have been camouflaged in the sky -- I didn't know what to believe about it at the time, and I still don't. I've concluded it wasn't anything from earth."

1910 UFO Sighting

(Exeter, England *Express & Echo*, Jan. 20, 1982)

On December 16, 1910, a mysterious tidal wave swept away the sea front at Ilfracombe and nearby Watermouth Cove, which has a sheltered harbor, boats were washed up into the fields. Twenty years later -- when I (Arthur Robyns) was 11, granny told me she had seen a great silver ball sweep down over the Bristol Channel, displacing the water on that part of the North Devon coast. This "silver ball" may have been a flying saucer.

1915 UFO Sighting

(*Peterborough Examiner*, Ontario, Nov. 1, 1969)

During the First World War a large chemical plant was in operation in the tiny village of Donald in Haliburton County. It was in August 1915 when the residents were scared by a mysterious aeroplane flying over the village apparently spying on the chemical factory.

The foreman ordered all lights to be extinguished and, arming himself with a rifle, fired no less than 12 shots at the mysterious intruder.

A news report of the day records, "It was well on in the evening when the residents first noticed the mysterious ship in the air, their attention being attracted by a strong ray of light which seemed to come from a powerful headlight. The searchlight had the strength of a strong automobile headlight and cast a ray all around the vicinity."

"After remaining stationary for a short time, the machine sailed several feet away, and the villagers heaved a sigh of relief, but their joy was cut short and their fears increased when the machine returned and hovered around the chemical plant. It was then that foreman Jones proceeded to warn it off by firing several shots at the mysterious stranger. For an hour or so it shadowed the village and then retraced its flight beneath the stars to its hidden and unknown destination."

1943 Aircraft/UFO Encounter

(Tacoma, WA *Western Flyer*, July 7, 1989)

Army flight instructor Gerry Casey described a close encounter with a UFO over California on April 5, 1943, at 9:50 a.m., which he and his student pilot believed to be a secret Lockheed aircraft. Later they found out it was not a secret U.S. aircraft. He described the encounter as follows:

"After a nice takeoff and climb through the cloud deck, we spent 40 minutes at 5,000 feet cruising back and forth on the southeast-northwest legs of the Long Beach low frequency radio range. I looked up and east toward distant Santiago Mountain. I'd thought I had seen a flash of light. Peering intently, I saw an aircraft in a moderate dive aimed at our BT-13 aircraft with a perfect interception angle. Unable to determine the craft's make or model, I knew it was unlike any airplane I'd ever seen. I was shocked to see it make a decidedly wobbly turn that quickly aligned it off our left wing in instant and perfect formation. The thing flying alongside us defied rationale. I'd noticed that its turn appeared totally independent of air-reaction. No question, its color was a radiant orange, which appeared to shimmer in the bright sunlight. As we watched, its aft end made a slight adjustment and it shot away from our position, disappearing in a climbing turn toward the ocean. Its color changed to white as it accelerated. It was gone from sight in 2 seconds. We hadn't seen any openings or glass indicating a cockpit. It definitely did not have a propeller or any other type of propulsion that we could determine. It was circular or elliptical and it had a rounded hump amidships topside and a smaller duplicate on its underside. 'When I used my pocket computer and attempted to determine its speed I came up with a reading of 7,200 mph.'

1896 UFO Sightings

(Newspaper unknown)

UFOs were spotted in September, 1896, by California astronomers, who first thought the mysterious lights in the sky were new stars or comets. But by October they had come frighteningly close, and observers discovered them to be six lights in a triangular pattern, with six more in an oval grouping directly behind them.

On December 20, the strange lights appeared closer still, and public concern started to grow. A prospector named Harry Lutz discovered three scorch marks totaling 100 feet in circumference on a hillside near Sacramento, and experts took soil samples of the area. Amazingly, a strange white, ash-like substance collected at the scene seemed to emit a continual warmth, as if it were radioactive.

Shortly after that, a local farm boy became sick, stricken with a strange rash and a high temperature. In his troubled sleep he babbled about a bizarre green-faced creature with silver rings on his fingers. A few days later the youngster died.

The owner of a lumber factory told authorities he saw one of the unusual craft circle Sacramento, almost striking a brewery tower. He also claimed to see lights within the craft, and strange figures working what appeared to be controls.

Several days later, similar sightings were reported throughout the nation. A panicked public demanded answers, and scientist Thomas Edison provided the following answer: "Airships they are not. Spacecraft they could be, be we don't know and perhaps never will."