

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:02,000

Cowboys with six shooters.

2

00:00:02,000 --> 00:00:05,000

Covered wagons crossing the plains.

3

00:00:05,000 --> 00:00:10,000

And Native Americans wearing war paint and feathers.

4

00:00:10,000 --> 00:00:15,000

These are the images most people associate with America's Old West.

5

00:00:15,000 --> 00:00:19,000

The Wild West is, we know it, tends to come from Hollywood movies.

6

00:00:19,000 --> 00:00:24,000

And that's a very cleaned up, sanitized version of what the West was really like.

7

00:00:24,000 --> 00:00:29,000

But might there be a chance that the West will be able to get away with it?

8

00:00:29,000 --> 00:00:33,000

But might there be more to the story?

9

00:00:33,000 --> 00:00:36,000

Much, much more.

10

00:00:36,000 --> 00:00:43,000

When we think of the Old West, the last thing we think about would be Billy the Kid chasing a flying saucer across the desert.

11

00:00:43,000 --> 00:00:49,000

From cowboys to lawyers to doctors to housewives washing the clothes and taking care of the sheep.

12

00:00:49,000 --> 00:00:53,000

People were seeing things in the sky that couldn't explain.

13

00:00:53,000 --> 00:00:58,000

This is a replica of one of the bars that was in one of the light ships.

14

00:00:58,000 --> 00:01:02,000

And they're guarded by the star people.

15

00:01:02,000 --> 00:01:07,000

Ancient aliens have been around for tens of thousands, if not millions of years.

16

00:01:07,000 --> 00:01:10,000

Why would they avoid the American Southwest?

17

00:01:10,000 --> 00:01:17,000

Millions of people around the world believe we have been visited in the past by extraterrestrial beings.

18

00:01:17,000 --> 00:01:20,000

What if it were true?

19

00:01:20,000 --> 00:01:25,000

Did ancient aliens really help to shape our history?

20

00:01:25,000 --> 00:01:37,000

And did the cowboys and natives of America's Wild West actually come in contact with alien beings from another much more distant frontier?

21

00:01:50,000 --> 00:01:55,000

The Old West

22

00:02:14,000 --> 00:02:18,000

What kind of a man goes around blowing up other people's cows?

23

00:02:18,000 --> 00:02:22,000

You kind of believe there's white lights, there's bright lights.

24

00:02:22,000 --> 00:02:26,000

It was this big life and you fell in the river.

25

00:02:26,000 --> 00:02:30,000

And when you come back, doing my best hands has just disappeared.

26

00:02:30,000 --> 00:02:33,000

There were no light in the missing of me.

27

00:02:36,000 --> 00:02:45,000

In the 2011 film, Cowboys and Aliens, a man awakens in the desert with no clue to his past,

28

00:02:45,000 --> 00:02:50,000

except for a mysterious metal device shackled to his wrist.

29

00:02:52,000 --> 00:03:03,000

This may provide the key, not only to his identity, but to his ability to protect the town of  
absolution from a deadly attack.

30

00:03:03,000 --> 00:03:06,000

By Alien Spaceships

31

00:03:07,000 --> 00:03:19,000

Based on the graphic novel by Scott Mitchell Rosenberg and directed by visionary filmmaker John  
Favreau,

32

00:03:22,000 --> 00:03:34,000

Cowboys and Aliens, skillfully blends the conventions of the classic Hollywood western with the futuristic effects of an alien invasion film.

33

00:03:36,000 --> 00:03:41,000

But although Cowboys and Aliens is the product of its creator's imagination,

34

00:03:41,000 --> 00:03:48,000

there are those who believe this story might have a few roots in historical fact.

35

00:03:54,000 --> 00:03:56,000

Aurora, Texas

36

00:03:57,000 --> 00:04:03,000

This rural southwestern town covers an area of just over three square miles.

37

00:04:07,000 --> 00:04:16,000

Headstones at the local cemetery mark the final resting places of the area's hard-working ranchers and farmers.

38

00:04:16,000 --> 00:04:23,000

But one body allegedly buried here has no marker at all.

39

00:04:26,000 --> 00:04:31,000

The Aurora Cemetery was founded in 1861 right at the start of the war between states.

40

00:04:31,000 --> 00:04:41,000

Texas State Historical Commission has a marker here that states the cemetery is well known because of the legend of a spaceship crashed nearby in 1897

41

00:04:41,000 --> 00:04:45,000

and the pilot killed in the crash was buried here.

42

00:04:50,000 --> 00:04:57,000

Fifty years before the United States Army announced that a flying disk had crashed at Roswell, New Mexico,

43

00:04:58,000 --> 00:05:05,000

there was a report of a strange unidentified object that crashed on the property of a local judge.

44

00:05:07,000 --> 00:05:17,000

On an April morning in 1897 an airship supposedly ran into a windmill on the property of a gentleman named Judge Proctor.

45

00:05:17,000 --> 00:05:23,000

The ship exploded in flame and was burnt to a crisp essentially.

46

00:05:28,000 --> 00:05:34,000

There was an explosion. In those days this was before television, before jet aircraft.

47

00:05:34,000 --> 00:05:41,000

Any big noise got your attention. Plus the ground shook so they knew something tremendous had happened.

48

00:05:43,000 --> 00:05:55,000

A local reporter arrived on the scene. He reported that there was a large debris field and also that there was the charred remains of what appeared to be to him an alien from another planet.

49

00:05:55,000 --> 00:06:03,000

The occupant described as unworldly by witnesses was given a Christian burial and put in an unmarked grave.

50

00:06:08,000 --> 00:06:16,000

In 1897 this was six years before the Wright brothers actually made heavier than aircraft work.

51

00:06:16,000 --> 00:06:28,000

So this is why I consider the Aurora spaceship crash the smoking gun of the UFO controversy because this occurred six years before there was anything man-made in the air.

52

00:06:29,000 --> 00:06:36,000

Witnesses claimed that debris from the crash was recovered by local law enforcement and never seen again.

53

00:06:37,000 --> 00:06:42,000

Others claim that Judge Proctor buried it at the bottom of a deep well.

54

00:06:43,000 --> 00:07:05,000

For decades the incident remained largely forgotten until in 1945 a man named Brawley Oates who had purchased Proctor's land reportedly was cleaning out the debris from the well when he later developed an extremely severe case of arthritis which he claimed to be the result of the contaminated water.

55

00:07:07,000 --> 00:07:20,000

He believed that the water from the well contained some sort of element to it that gave him a severe case of arthritis. It was a bad enough case of arthritis he'd eventually killed him.

56

00:07:21,000 --> 00:07:29,000

So a lot of people today wonder if the well wasn't contaminated with some sort of radioactive agents which was the rationale behind his arthritis.

57

00:07:30,000 --> 00:07:42,000

We find that people who are using that well actually get ill and so what happens at a moment in time is that the descendants of these people actually decide to cement the well.

58

00:07:42,000 --> 00:08:00,000

The incident at Roswell in 1947 also began stirring controversy about the Aurora incident this time concerning the strange body supposedly still resting in an unmarked grave.

59

00:08:01,000 --> 00:08:07,000

Researchers wanted to exhume the body but the local cemetery association wouldn't let them.

60

00:08:07,000 --> 00:08:17,000

My first question is why not what's it going to hurt as a historian it makes me suspicious when somebody's trying to hide something from your toes you can't you can't do something.

61

00:08:18,000 --> 00:08:32,000

I first got onto the Aurora story back in 1973 and was there before the tombstone went missing and actually probably one of the few people around who still remember where the actual grave site was.

62

00:08:32,000 --> 00:08:49,000

Now the little grave is located right here. It was a short little grave that was child or very small person and the two little heads stone the marker was right about there.

63

00:08:53,000 --> 00:09:00,000

A few years ago scientists with ground penetrating radar established that there really had been a short grave here.

64

00:09:01,000 --> 00:09:08,000

Now back in 1973 Bill Case was the aviation writer for the Dahls Times Herald. I was working for the Star Telegram.

65

00:09:09,000 --> 00:09:19,000

We met up here he had a metal detector and we found three readings of metal in the grave. A couple of months after the headstone went missing.

66

00:09:20,000 --> 00:09:33,000

Bill invited me to meet him up here. We went over the grave and there was no readings in the grave. He showed me three little holes that had been drilled in the grave. Someone extracted the middle of the grave.

67

00:09:34,000 --> 00:09:53,000

In recent decades further investigation of the crash site has turned up inconclusive evidence including unusually high traces of aluminum at the bottom of the now sealed well where Judge Proctor had supposedly disposed of the wreckage.

68

00:09:54,000 --> 00:10:17,000

Could the events that happened on a Texas farm in the early hours of April 17 1897 really be evidence of an alien close encounter? Could it have been the first such event to occur in America's western region? Or was it only one of many?

69

00:10:18,000 --> 00:10:24,000

Adams County, Ohio

70

00:10:24,000 --> 00:10:41,000

At the end of the 1700s President George Washington awarded what was then the uncharted land beyond the Appalachian Mountains to revolutionary war veterans in 600 acre parcels as payment for their service.

71

00:10:42,000 --> 00:10:54,000

But when the settlers arrived they found much of the land covered with thousands of Indian burial mounds. And one of these was very different from the rest.

72

00:10:54,000 --> 00:11:08,000

Imagine when you're pushing west and all of a sudden you find this gigantic effigy mound in the form of a serpent. What you have is a gigantic structure which just sits there in the middle of a very interesting landscape.

73

00:11:08,000 --> 00:11:19,000

Serpent mound was one of the amazing mysterious mounds found by the first settlers as they came over the Appalachian Mountains. There were thousands of mounds but serpent mound must have been special.

74

00:11:20,000 --> 00:11:37,000

Like the Nazca lines in Peru, serpent mound is a giant prehistoric structure that looks as though it is meant to be viewed only from the sky.

75

00:11:38,000 --> 00:11:52,000

When you see the great serpent mound in Ohio it's massively huge and it can't really be appreciated when you're standing there looking at it. What we have here is meant to be seen from the sky.

76

00:11:53,000 --> 00:12:16,000

It's mysterious in the fact that it is on an elevated plateau and concealed from the world. Unless you're flying over it in a plane and it's on very uneven ground and really to lay that out and make it right you'd almost have to be above looking down to get it right. Which is a mystery.

77

00:12:17,000 --> 00:12:42,000

This 1330 foot long structure winds across the land and depicts a coiled snake, eating what appears to be an egg. It is the largest effigy mound in the world and curiously, unlike most Native American mounds, the great serpent mound was not constructed for burials.

78

00:12:43,000 --> 00:13:01,000

Serpent mound had no burials. It's one of those mysterious mounds that offered us no clue as to who

the builders were. But on the property there were burial mounds dated from about very early, a Dina period, nearly 3,000 years ago.

79

00:13:02,000 --> 00:13:14,000

Another curious aspect of serpent mound is where the ancient Native Americans chose to build it on the outside swell of a five mile wide meteor crater.

80

00:13:14,000 --> 00:13:22,000

300 million years ago meteor came into this area and struck the earth going about 50,000 miles an hour.

81

00:13:22,000 --> 00:13:35,000

The serpent mound is built right on the very edge of the crater and there's magnetic anomalies and faults that go across the serpent mound and that the Native Americans could douse them and they could feel the positive energy that's coming out of the ground.

82

00:13:37,000 --> 00:13:50,000

If you bring a compass to the great serpent mound, there's certain spots where the compass needle just keeps going. So obviously we have some weird magnetic fields there and also some gravitational anomalies.

83

00:13:50,000 --> 00:14:06,000

The myth has it that the Native Americans when they came here could see birds similar to passenger pigeons or homing pigeons circling by the millions because within the skull of the pigeon is a little piece of hematite or magnetite and that's how they navigate.

84

00:14:06,000 --> 00:14:13,000

And they couldn't figure out where north was. Can you imagine millions of birds flying on a circle five miles wide?

85

00:14:14,000 --> 00:14:29,000

In addition to creating magnetic anomalies, the meteor also deposited a number of elements not indigenous to the area including one of the rarest elements on earth, iridium.

86

00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:45,000

When we look at the location of the serpent mound, we find not only that there is iron, that there is uranium, but also iridium. Iridium can withstand temperatures up to 2,000 Celsius. It is non-corrosive and it's actually been used in unmanned spacecraft.

87

00:14:46,000 --> 00:15:13,000

A lot of iridium apparently comes from outer space rather than being found on the earth. There is a use of iridium for thermoelectric circuits. These deep space probes include actually a radioactive source because it's the only thing that can provide enough power when you're out beyond Jupiter and there's no sunlight and there's no nothing.

88

00:15:14,000 --> 00:15:25,000

We have iron, iridium and uranium. Three substances which definitely should not be considered to be of any use to Native Americans. The question then is to who are they of use?

89

00:15:26,000 --> 00:15:40,000

Ancient astronaut theorists believe extraterrestrials may have come to this site to mine iridium for their spacecraft and point to numerous caves found in the crater's swell beneath the mound as evidence of this.

90

00:15:41,000 --> 00:15:52,000

Right here we can see one of those caves. It's pretty large and since this site is believed to be many, many millions of years old, there's a chance that there are many, many caves.

91

00:15:53,000 --> 00:16:05,000

But if alien visitors really did come here to mine iridium and other elements, might this explain why the serpent mound was built on a scale that made its shape visible from the sky?

92

00:16:06,000 --> 00:16:19,000

The serpent mound is a marker for space according to the Shawnee Indians. They're convinced that space travelers are using serpent mound as a marker.

93

00:16:20,000 --> 00:16:30,000

According to Zuni elder Clifford Mahudi, the Shawnee aren't the only Native Americans who believe serpent mound has an extraterrestrial connection.

94

00:16:31,000 --> 00:16:40,000

The star ancestors taught the American Indians about where they came from and how they're supposed to carry out their rituals.

95

00:16:42,000 --> 00:16:50,000

The mound builders I believe were those Indian tribes that had contact with the extraterrestrials.

96

00:16:51,000 --> 00:17:06,000

It's the essence of our culture and the mounds were a place where we would practice and learn from those beings that come in from outside of this world to visit.

97

00:17:07,000 --> 00:17:20,000

Ancient astronaut theorists also point to the placement and shape of the great serpent mound as proof of its extraterrestrial origins.

98

00:17:21,000 --> 00:17:31,000

The serpent itself was aligned to a constellation that had its apex at the height of the night sky 5,000 years ago.

99

00:17:31,000 --> 00:17:37,000

The constellation Draconis was used to align the Great Pyramid.

100

00:17:39,000 --> 00:17:54,000

In addition to lining up with the stars of Draconis, the coils of serpent mound also align with the solar events of the solstice and equinox, as well as the 18.6 year lunar cycle.

101

00:17:55,000 --> 00:18:04,000

Could these precise astronomical alignments suggest that the serpent mound served a greater purpose than just acting as a marker?

102

00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:13,000

Some believe that because of its magnetic anomalies, this site may also have been used to harness energy.

103

00:18:14,000 --> 00:18:17,000

This magnetic anomalies, these faults attract lightning.

104

00:18:18,000 --> 00:18:31,000

The serpent mound is right on the edge of an outcropping of pure limestone or dolomite, which is even better than the limestone they built the Great Pyramid from, and it's highly semiconductor.

105

00:18:33,000 --> 00:18:37,000

This is what I call the serpent mound stone.

106

00:18:38,000 --> 00:18:39,000

It's an unusual feature.

107

00:18:40,000 --> 00:18:46,000

It seems to be made of a different kind of dolomite than what exists on the outcropping of the general serpent.

108

00:18:47,000 --> 00:18:58,000

The stone could have been placed in the center of the oval, therefore you wouldn't get a lot of random strikes, so much as you would, a lot of strikes that would tend to come to the stone.

109

00:19:04,000 --> 00:19:07,000

Could the serpent mound have been a source of great energy?

110

00:19:08,000 --> 00:19:13,000

Might it have held an advanced alien technology that was somehow lost?

111

00:19:13,000 --> 00:19:32,000

When I look at our history of building ancient monuments like Stonehenge, the Sphinx, the Pyramids, the Mayan temples, what it tells me is no matter how technologically advanced we are today, we've lost a knowledge of something tremendous that came thousands and thousands of years ago.

112

00:19:33,000 --> 00:19:42,000

And it's a tragedy that not only have we forgotten how to utilize it, but we've relegated it to the

realm of folklore and mythology.

113

00:19:43,000 --> 00:19:51,000

When the lightning lamps were eliminated, the native cultures fell into darkness again about 5,000 years ago.

114

00:19:52,000 --> 00:19:58,000

But we know that if their prophecies hold true, the serpent mound will be reactivated again one day.

115

00:19:59,000 --> 00:20:06,000

And when that reactivation occurs, that will be the beginning of the restoral of the earth.

116

00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:13,000

Was the great serpent mound really a hub of ancient extraterrestrial visitation?

117

00:20:14,000 --> 00:20:24,000

If so, perhaps there is also truth in legends of other, even more bizarre alien encounters in the American West.

118

00:20:25,000 --> 00:20:39,000

Palmyra, New York, September 21, 1823

119

00:20:40,000 --> 00:20:45,000

In the upstairs bedroom of a log cabin just south of this small rural village,

120

00:20:46,000 --> 00:20:53,000

17-year-old Joseph Smith had a vision of someone, or something, not of this world.

121

00:20:54,000 --> 00:20:58,000

It was late at night, it was dark, and the room filled with a very, very bright light.

122

00:21:02,000 --> 00:21:10,000

And this personage was floating in midair. His feet were off the ground, and he identified himself as Barona.

123

00:21:11,000 --> 00:21:22,000

After talking with Joseph Smith for a while, Maronite seemed to ascend into the air, completely leaving the room again dark.

124

00:21:24,000 --> 00:21:35,000

The next morning also Maronite came back to Joseph Smith to show him the hidden golden book, which

is what we know as the Book of Mormon today.

125

00:21:36,000 --> 00:21:46,000

According to the Book of Mormon, Maronite identified himself to Joseph Smith as a man who lived in America in the late fourth and early fifth centuries.

126

00:21:47,000 --> 00:21:53,000

But America was not Maronite's home. He claimed to have much more distant origins.

127

00:21:54,000 --> 00:22:09,000

Maronite claimed to be from the Pleiades Star Cluster, so a church today, 9 million members strong, believed that their church may have originated not of this world, but of another world.

128

00:22:11,000 --> 00:22:22,000

According to Joseph Smith, not only did Maronite claim to be from another planet, he also directed him to dig up the golden plates from the hill Kamorra,

129

00:22:22,000 --> 00:22:30,000

which scholars believe is a reference to an ancient Native American mound, much like the serpent mound.

130

00:22:31,000 --> 00:22:40,000

We have since found out that in burial mounds and other refugee mounds across the Native American region, we have such plates.

131

00:22:41,000 --> 00:22:47,000

These writing tablets have been found, and not just in North America, but also in South America.

132

00:22:48,000 --> 00:22:58,000

This entity tells Joseph Smith to go on a physical search for an object, which we know could have been an archaeological finding.

133

00:22:59,000 --> 00:23:08,000

But if Maronite was a spiritual or metaphysical being, why would he give Joseph Smith physical objects with which to translate the plates?

134

00:23:09,000 --> 00:23:25,000

According to ancient astronaut theorists, Maronite may, in fact, have been a star being, an extraterrestrial whose mission was to pass down to Smith and his followers the advanced knowledge of the mound builders.

135

00:23:26,000 --> 00:23:34,000

In Mormonism, actually a lot of their theology is directly related to this idea of God, and various angels and various spiritual beings live on different planets.

136

00:23:39,000 --> 00:23:48,000

According to Native American legends, the star beings left Earth thousands of years ago.

137

00:23:49,000 --> 00:23:55,000

At about the same time, ancient astronaut theorists believe extraterrestrials left Egypt.

138

00:23:56,000 --> 00:24:06,000

But if Joseph Smith's vision of Maronite was real, might this have been not so much a spiritual encounter as an extraterrestrial one?

139

00:24:06,000 --> 00:24:18,000

If so, perhaps there were other such alien visitations, ones which in turn fueled an increased interest in the stars throughout the 1800s.

140

00:24:19,000 --> 00:24:28,000

In the 19th century, people were very interested in astronomy. There was some thought that there might be life on other planets, so oftentimes lights in the sky were attributed to possibly visitors from another world.

141

00:24:29,000 --> 00:24:44,000

Joseph Smith felt such a strong connection to the Native Americans that he believed they could help guide him to a new holy land, which he called the New Zion.

142

00:24:45,000 --> 00:24:59,000

Although Smith died in 1844, the victim of mob violence, his successor, Brigham Young, ultimately led the Mormons further west to Utah.

143

00:25:00,000 --> 00:25:17,000

In 1849, when the Mormons arrived in the area of Perawan Gap, local youth leader Chief Wakara told them they had entered God's own house, and showed them proof in the form of petroglyphs dating back thousands of years.

144

00:25:18,000 --> 00:25:31,000

All throughout Utah, petroglyphs depict hunters with bows and arrows going after buffalo, very ordinary daily life occurrences.

145

00:25:32,000 --> 00:25:46,000

But there are also some other depictions which are very odd. And they look like spaceships. They look like beings with halos.

146

00:25:47,000 --> 00:25:59,000

They look like beings with antennae on their heads or beings that wear some type of a suit. For all intents and purposes, they look like depictions of spacemen.

147

00:26:02,000 --> 00:26:14,000

Great Falls, Montana, October 19th, 1865. Six months after the assassination of President Abraham

Lincoln.

148

00:26:14,000 --> 00:26:22,000

A fur trapper reports what might be the first documented UFO crash in the Old West.

149

00:26:22,000 --> 00:26:29,000

In 1865, the Missouri Democrat reported that a trapper saw a light traveling through the sky at night.

150

00:26:32,000 --> 00:26:36,000

He flew over his camp, broke apart, and crashed in the forest some miles away.

151

00:26:42,000 --> 00:26:49,000

The next day, he tracked it down, found a large stone embedded inside the mountain. It was hollow, it was cracked open.

152

00:26:49,000 --> 00:26:55,000

He claimed there were chambers inside of it, and there were hieroglyphic markings on it.

153

00:26:55,000 --> 00:26:59,000

And there was also some mysterious liquid spilled around the area.

154

00:27:00,000 --> 00:27:08,000

But the newspaper went so far as to suggest that these were meteoric conveyances of aliens from Mercury or Uranus.

155

00:27:08,000 --> 00:27:16,000

So the whole idea of UFO crashes was explored in the 19th century, almost 100 years before Roswell.

156

00:27:19,000 --> 00:27:28,000

But what makes this story even more intriguing to ancient astronaut theorists is the location of the siding along the upper Missouri River.

157

00:27:28,000 --> 00:27:39,000

This is the home of the Blackfoot Indians, a tribe whose ancient legends include strange tales of star beings visiting the region from other worlds.

158

00:27:39,000 --> 00:27:53,000

The Blackfoot have very profound legends and myths relating to beings which quite clearly are said to have come down from some kind of sky world to Earth and in these sky vehicles.

159

00:27:56,000 --> 00:28:02,000

And the way that they are described, these can be modern ideas of flying saucers or UFOs.

160

00:28:03,000 --> 00:28:16,000

Could the object that the Montana fur trapper claimed to have found really have been one of the alien crafts described in Blackfoot legends?

161

00:28:16,000 --> 00:28:22,000

And might the markings have been the same as what Joseph Smith found on the Golden Plates?

162

00:28:23,000 --> 00:28:37,000

To some Native Americans, like Chief Standing Elk of the Yankton Dakota tribe, star beings are still very much amongst us and they are still making contact with humans.

163

00:28:38,000 --> 00:28:52,000

A lot of our relatives that come from the stars, they speak on a telepathic level and there were some that came to me and showed me a bar with symbols on there.

164

00:28:53,000 --> 00:28:58,000

They talked to me and I understood them very, very well.

165

00:28:58,000 --> 00:29:10,000

This is a replica of one of the bars that was in one of the light ships and they represent universal loss and they're guarded by the star people.

166

00:29:11,000 --> 00:29:13,000

So these are universal loss.

167

00:29:14,000 --> 00:29:25,000

Did early Americans really encounter what the natives called star beings as they crossed the frontier?

168

00:29:27,000 --> 00:29:35,000

And what other strange encounters might they have experienced as they made their way further west?

169

00:29:43,000 --> 00:29:45,000

Tombstone, Arizona.

170

00:29:48,000 --> 00:29:57,000

In 1881, this mining boom town was the home of Wyatt Earp and the site of the gunfight at the Okei Corral.

171

00:30:00,000 --> 00:30:08,000

Less than 10 years later, it would become the location of one of the most bizarre UFO sightings in history.

172

00:30:09,000 --> 00:30:21,000

According to a story in the Tombstone epitaph in 1890, two ranchers were out in the desert of Arizona when they saw some sort of monstrous bird flying overhead with a huge wingspan.

173

00:30:22,000 --> 00:30:27,000

The body was described as being like an alligator and the wings were described as membranous.

174

00:30:27,000 --> 00:30:38,000

There's another version of the story told by the two old cowboys when they were very old. They never really, they just shot at the bird and it got away. It was literally bulletproof.

175

00:30:40,000 --> 00:30:50,000

There were a number of reports of big birds that cowboys would shoot at or chase for great distances and they reported the bullets would bounce off the leathery skin.

176

00:30:51,000 --> 00:31:01,000

But was the story of this giant bird simply a hoax as many believe? Or was there some degree of truth to it?

177

00:31:02,000 --> 00:31:13,000

In the Old West, we have stories of the Tommyknockers, these creatures that resided in mines.

178

00:31:14,000 --> 00:31:22,000

The ghost rider, which was this cowboy that was flying across the sky, but also of ghost trains.

179

00:31:24,000 --> 00:31:35,000

So were all of those stories just campfire stories that were invented on the spot or were they based in some type of truth?

180

00:31:36,000 --> 00:31:47,000

For many Americans living in the early and mid 1800s, the vast western frontier offered both opportunity and profound sociological change.

181

00:31:48,000 --> 00:32:03,000

Freed of the constrictions of European tradition and Judeo-Christian fundamentalism, the early pioneers could now experiment with political, social and religious philosophies which their eastern counterparts had frowned upon.

182

00:32:04,000 --> 00:32:09,000

One such newly emerging philosophy was called Transcendentalism.

183

00:32:10,000 --> 00:32:18,000

Transcendentalism was perhaps the leading philosophy developed in America in the 19th century.

184

00:32:19,000 --> 00:32:23,000

One of the founding figures in it was Ralph Waldo Emerson.

185

00:32:24,000 --> 00:32:31,000

It was belief in extraterrestrial life that led him to depart from Christianity.

186

00:32:33,000 --> 00:32:37,000

And another author who was part of that is the poet Walt Whitman.

187

00:32:38,000 --> 00:32:41,000

His most famous book, 1855, is *The Leaves of Grass*.

188

00:32:42,000 --> 00:32:47,000

And in *The Leaves of Grass*, there are like 200 references to astronomy.

189

00:32:48,000 --> 00:32:52,000

He believed strongly in extraterrestrials.

190

00:32:53,000 --> 00:33:01,000

In a nutshell, Transcendentalism reminded young America that all things are not knowable and that some things are knowable but not through the five senses.

191

00:33:01,000 --> 00:33:05,000

So it opened up the Easterners as they went west to new ideas and new sites.

192

00:33:07,000 --> 00:33:17,000

Another strong influence on the way 19th century Americans viewed the world was the emergence of a new genre of literature, science fiction.

193

00:33:19,000 --> 00:33:27,000

I think the image that has come down to us from lots of movies and TV shows, the cowboy is kind of a rough illiterate character.

194

00:33:28,000 --> 00:33:30,000

Most cowboys were extremely literate.

195

00:33:31,000 --> 00:33:35,000

In fact, there wasn't a lot of entertainment out on the plains.

196

00:33:37,000 --> 00:33:48,000

One of the first great American science fiction writers was Civil War veteran Ambrose Beers, who believed strongly in the possibility of life beyond our world.

197

00:33:50,000 --> 00:33:54,000

Ambrose Beers was an author of some very strange short stories.

198

00:33:54,000 --> 00:34:02,000

The difficulty of crossing a field was about an Alabama farmer who one day was taking a walk across the field when he just disappeared. He was gone.

199

00:34:04,000 --> 00:34:11,000

And years later, his wife would say that she could hear his voice from time to time, coming from the circle, but he wasn't there.

200

00:34:13,000 --> 00:34:18,000

Ambrose Beers was trying to show us that this man traveled interdimensionally to another place.

201

00:34:19,000 --> 00:34:21,000

And while he was still there, he wasn't there.

202

00:34:22,000 --> 00:34:35,000

It is thought by many scholars and historians that Beers, as well as other authors of early fantasy fiction, had been influenced by Native Americans and their folklore.

203

00:34:37,000 --> 00:34:49,000

In addition to belief in star beings, they believed in the existence of interdimensional gateways or portals, which would enable visitors to travel between time and space.

204

00:34:50,000 --> 00:35:03,000

If you're thinking about people suddenly disappearing through a hole in space-time into another dimension, at the surface of it, when we think about our modern theory of relativity and that you can bend space and time, it seems not so crazy.

205

00:35:04,000 --> 00:35:10,000

Because we know mathematically how to describe holes in space-time that connect different regions of space to others.

206

00:35:11,000 --> 00:35:23,000

The mystery of whether such portals really exist may have been solved by Ambrose Beers himself when he ventured south of the border into the Mexican desert.

207

00:35:24,000 --> 00:35:30,000

At the very early part of 20th century, Ambrose Beers was in northern Mexico.

208

00:35:31,000 --> 00:35:42,000

In this area that's known for strange phenomenon called the Quime, this area too is thought to be another one of these interdimensional portal areas.

209

00:35:45,000 --> 00:35:48,000

One theory is that Beers may not have traveled into Mexico alone.

210

00:35:49,000 --> 00:35:56,000

Another very colorful figure by the name of F.A. Mitchell Hedges may have traveled with him into Mexico.

211

00:35:57,000 --> 00:36:05,000

Mitchell Hedges was a great British adventure, most noted for his discovery of a Mayan crystal skull.

212

00:36:07,000 --> 00:36:12,000

In the ancient city of Pacame, it's just a few miles away from the crystal cave.

213

00:36:13,000 --> 00:36:15,000

The largest crystal deposits in the world are found here.

214

00:36:16,000 --> 00:36:27,000

Mitchell Hedges believed that his skulls were capable of psychically communicating with the person and interdimensionally transferring that message to an extraterrestrial being.

215

00:36:29,000 --> 00:36:44,000

The theory is that Hedges, along with Beers, may have discovered or mastered the method of speaking through the crystals or imploring their power and may have transported, as in his stories, to an interdimensionally.

216

00:36:45,000 --> 00:36:47,000

He never had to be heard from again.

217

00:36:49,000 --> 00:36:55,000

While there he sent his last communication that we know of which was a letter and that letter ended with this ominous line.

218

00:36:56,000 --> 00:36:58,000

As for me, I leave tomorrow for an unknown destination.

219

00:36:59,000 --> 00:37:06,000

The man who wrote about so many strange disappearances was never seen or heard from again.

220

00:37:07,000 --> 00:37:11,000

Did Ambrose Beers meet with foul play?

221

00:37:12,000 --> 00:37:19,000

Or did he find an interdimensional portal, like the ones described in his stories?

222

00:37:21,000 --> 00:37:32,000

Perhaps the answer can be found in a mysterious lake in California, one thought by many to be an actual gateway to another world.

223

00:37:37,000 --> 00:37:43,000

Elizabeth Lake, Southern California

224

00:37:44,000 --> 00:37:53,000

This high desert body of water sits at the junction of the tectonic plates that form the powerful San Andreas Fault.

225

00:37:54,000 --> 00:38:02,000

The Mexicans who colonized California in the 1700s called it Laguna del Diablo, Lake of the Devil.

226

00:38:03,000 --> 00:38:10,000

And it was said that the devil's own pet would come into this world through a portal at the bottom of the lake.

227

00:38:11,000 --> 00:38:18,000

Local legend says that at the bottom is actually an entrance to the underworld. They call it the Lake of the Devil.

228

00:38:19,000 --> 00:38:27,000

And as I said that in the middle of the 18th century from up until about 1880 onwards something was happening there which frightened locals.

229

00:38:27,000 --> 00:38:43,000

Some of the rich landowners built ranches there. These ranchers claimed to have been harassed and tormented by some sort of monstrous beast that would come out of the water and steal cattle and menace the locals.

230

00:38:45,000 --> 00:38:51,000

The ranchers who claimed to have witnessed this beast called it the Thunderbird.

231

00:38:52,000 --> 00:39:01,000

And their description of it was nearly identical to that of the giant bird witnessed by cowboys in Tombstone in 1890.

232

00:39:02,000 --> 00:39:09,000

Eventually one of the landowners got it in his head that he was going to hunt this creature down and sell it to the circus.

233

00:39:09,000 --> 00:39:17,000

So according to the story this rancher was able to actually fire a few shots at this creature which seemed to be bullet proof and metallic.

234

00:39:18,000 --> 00:39:24,000

The bullets bounced off and after that encounter the bird flew east never to be seen again in California.

235

00:39:26,000 --> 00:39:32,000

Could this so-called Thunderbird really have been the same creature that cowboy shot at in Tombstone?

236

00:39:33,000 --> 00:39:37,000

And why was it referred to by locals as the Devil's pet?

237

00:39:37,000 --> 00:39:46,000

They didn't have the vocabulary we had today so when things happened that they couldn't explain it was called the Devil's Tower.

238

00:39:47,000 --> 00:39:52,000

It was called the Devil's Lake. It was called the Devil's this or the Devil's that.

239

00:39:53,000 --> 00:40:05,000

Take it away from the legend and you might find that this was a portal to another dimension which the locals knew about and might have something to do with the fact that this mysterious entity was present at that very specific location.

240

00:40:08,000 --> 00:40:26,000

If a portal to another dimension or another part of the universe does lie at the bottom of Elizabeth Lake might it also be possible that the Thunderbird was not really a creature at all but something even more incredible?

241

00:40:27,000 --> 00:40:34,000

A Thunderbird was enormous. It made enormous noises so the thunder part of it could sound like a jet engine.

242

00:40:34,000 --> 00:40:39,000

Its eyes was able to literally pierce and emanate fire.

243

00:40:40,000 --> 00:40:47,000

We have this large flying wing creature which gives off a thunderous sound and lights fly from its eyes.

244

00:40:48,000 --> 00:40:51,000

That to me suggests that we could be dealing with some sort of craft.

245

00:40:51,000 --> 00:41:04,000

Native Indians in North America they know of course the bird but now something differently arrived.

246

00:41:05,000 --> 00:41:14,000

An object which could fly which is bigger than the eagle but at the same time makes tremendous noise so you have the creation of the Thunderbird.

247

00:41:14,000 --> 00:41:25,000

Even when the airplanes first started going up in the sky here in the Southwest they referred them to as metal birds.

248

00:41:26,000 --> 00:41:35,000

As a matter of fact when the first fixed wing craft landed in Zuni the Indians over there actually went out there and worshipped the airplane.

249

00:41:36,000 --> 00:41:47,000

It makes me think of a concept called cultural tracking which is the idea that UFOs can mask themselves to appear as almost anything.

250

00:41:48,000 --> 00:41:55,000

You go back to ancient China and they talk about the flying dragons. You go back to the ancient Egyptians they talk about flying boats.

251

00:41:56,000 --> 00:42:04,000

You go to the Roman times and they're talking about flying shields. Perhaps that was just their interpretation or perhaps that's what they actually saw.

252

00:42:05,000 --> 00:42:18,000

Did the cowboys in Tombstone, Arizona and ranchers at Elizabeth Lake witness an alien vehicle? One that may have been visiting North America for thousands of years.

253

00:42:19,000 --> 00:42:28,000

The truth of the matter is there's some very interesting incredible stories that come from the 1800s about flying objects and strange encounters and events.

254

00:42:29,000 --> 00:42:43,000

The Old West was not only rugged, deadly, bloody but it was also mysterious. It was a time when people often encountered things that they didn't understand and had to make up stories to account for it.

255

00:42:44,000 --> 00:42:46,000

And you see this in nearly every society.

256

00:42:47,000 --> 00:42:52,000

How many things do we know today that were thought to be just impossible?

257

00:42:52,000 --> 00:43:01,000

I always try to keep an open mind when I hear a story and I might not believe, I don't disbelieve either.

258

00:43:05,000 --> 00:43:15,000

Aliens invade a quiet western town and terrified residents scramble for their guns in a valiant attempt to defend themselves.

259

00:43:16,000 --> 00:43:20,000

A mere product of Hollywood's high concept imagination?

260

00:43:21,000 --> 00:43:28,000

Or are films like Cowboys and Aliens actually inspired by historical events?

261

00:43:29,000 --> 00:43:34,000

Stories that challenge everything we know or believe about ourselves.

262

00:43:36,000 --> 00:43:43,000

As we continue to explore the vastness of the universe and examine more and more of the mysteries of the earth,

263

00:43:45,000 --> 00:43:53,000

are we getting closer to unlocking the secrets of our past and opening a doorway to our future?