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Aurora-Roswell Anniversary

From: Stig_Agermose@online.pol.dk (Stig Agermose)

Date: Thu, 31 Jul 1997 02:46:16 +0200

Fwd Date: Thu, 31 Jul 1997 09:01:39 -0400

Subject: Aurora-Roswell Anniversary

This one is a month old, but it is very interesting and I haven't seen it elsewhere. It was found at:=20

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk:80/et?ac=3D000239087618192&rtmo=3D33df905c&atmo=3D33df905c&pg=3D/et/97/6/28/tlufo28.html>

The links are in brackets.

Electronic Telegraph Saturday 28 June 1997 Issue 764 =20

Seeing the light

One hundred years since the first sighting, UFO mania is becoming almost a religion for Americans, reports James Langton

THE WAY Charlie Stephens would tell it, the flying machine, airship - call it what you will - came right over his head just after dawn. It was moving kinda slow and disappeared towards the ridge of hills a few miles north. Then there was an explosion and a real bright light.

Young Charlie was 10 at the time and driving the cattle to pasture with his Daddy. Curiosity got the better of the youngster and he wanted to rush off and see what all the fuss was about. "But Daddy said we had to finish our chores."

The next day, though, Mr Stephens snr saddled up his horse and rode off to town. He came back with a story of burnt wreckage and torn metal. And if he heard talk about the body, he never told, not being the sort to speak of what he hadn't seen with his own eyes.

Two days after the crash, the Dallas Times Herald carried a fuller version of the story. According to its correspondent, the inhabitants of the small north Texas town of Aurora "were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been travelling over much of the country.

"It was travelling due north and much nearer the earth than before. Evidently some of the machinery was out of order, for it was making a speed of only 10 or 12 miles an hour and gradually settling towards the earth.

"It sailed over the public square and when it reached the northern part

of town collided with the tower of Judge Proctor's windmill and went to pieces with a terrific explosion, scattering debris over several acres of ground, wrecking the windmill and water tank and destroying the judge's flower garden.

"The pilot of the ship is supposed to have been the only one aboard, and while his remains are badly disfigured, enough of the original has been picked up to show that he was not an inhabitant of this world."

The report was dated April 19, 1897, and by then the remains had been examined by T. J. Weems, a US Signal Service officer in the area and an enthusiastic amateur astronomer. From the body, and papers "written in some unknown hieroglyphics", Weems deduced the pilot "was a native of the planet Mars".

The next day, a similar account in The Fort Worth Register noted that "the pilot, who was not of this world, was given Christian burial in Aurora cemetery".

The past 100 years have not been kind to Aurora, a scattering of ranch houses about 20 miles north-west of Fort Worth. There is not much more than the two signs on Highway 114 to show you have entered the town, and one of those is for the cemetery. A dead dog rots by the roadside, just below the scrub-covered bluff where Judge Proctor's windmill once stood. Somewhere between a low brick bungalow and the rutted track to the town baseball park is the crash site of the Aurora UFO, now covered by wild cactus, coarse grass and the fading blooms of Texas blue bonnets.

Jim Marrs guns his pick-up truck down the cemetery road. He is looking for the grave of the Aurora alien, a task made difficult after the headstone was stolen in mysterious circumstances 25 years ago, when Marrs first investigated the long-forgotten crash with Bill Case, a local journalist.

Photographs of the grave show a crumbling fragment of sandstone. Half seems to be missing, but the remaining fragment has a roughly carved "V" turned on its side and three or four little circles inside. If the missing half matched, you would have the crude approximation of a flying saucer.

Case, now dead, ran a metal detector over the grave and found three large lumps of something. That was when the local folk began to worry, in Marrs' words, "That we might be going to dig up grandma." So Town Marshal H R "Pig" Idell rode shotgun on the grave with his deputies for a couple of weeks. When the fuss died down, the Marshal ended his patrols and the next night the tombstone was stolen.

Marrs suspects an official cover-up. Perhaps by the same people who drilled three neat holes into the turf and removed the metal underneath.

With his white beard and an accent that twangs like a steel guitar, Marrs looks more than a little like Texas' answer to Dickie Attenborough. He lives a few miles down the road, at the end of an unmarked track in a rambling house he built himself. It was here that he wrote Crossfire, the best-selling conspiracist account of the Kennedy assassination. The director Oliver Stone optioned Crossfire as the basis for his film JFK.

Now Marrs has written Alien Agenda, a definitive history of UFO sightings down the years. According to Marrs, the great UFO debate is over; for him the question is not "Are they here?" but "Who are they and what do they want?".=20

In 1973 Marrs interviewed the only three people then alive who remembered the Aurora crash. Charlie Stephens, then 86 and in failing health was one. Mary Evans, then 92, was 15 at the time of the crash. Her parents had gone into town to see the crash site and returned with stories of an exploding airship and a pilot "torn up and killed. The men of the town who gathered up his remains said he was a 'small man' ," she told Marrs.

There was also Robbie Hanson, 12 years old when a man rode by with the story. According to Robbie, the crash was a hoax; Judge Proctor never even had a windmill. Jim Marrs says you can take your choice. Whether you believe the evidence of the Aurora incident depends on what he calls "your mindset".

Public interest in unidentified flying objects has never been greater.

Alien Agenda is no exercise in vanity publishing, but a heavily promoted hardback from HarperCollins. The current Hollywood love affair with UFOs, which began with Independence Day last year, continues this summer with Men in Black (a Government cover-up, aliens as bad guys) and Contact (a Government cover-up, aliens as good guys).=20

By one of those neat arithmetical coincidences (coincidence? Hah!) the centenary of Aurora is followed next week by the 50th anniversary of the flying saucer; that is, the afternoon of June 24, 1947 when Kenneth Arnold, a businessman and private pilot from Boise, Idaho found himself trailing a formation of high-speed objects and later, struggling to describe them to a local newspaper reporter, said that they "flew like a saucer". Arnold estimated their speed at 1,300 mph - twice the speed of any conventional aircraft in 1947.

In fact, pilots had been reporting mysterious flying objects for some years. RAF and USAF pilots had seen glowing balls following their planes on missions over Germany which they dubbed "foo-fighters". They were thought to be Nazi secret weapons until after the war, when it was discovered that Luftwaffe pilots had also seen them and thought they were the Allies'.

But Arnold's UFOs that "flew like a saucer" caught the public's imagination. When, 10 days later, the information officer for the 509th Bomb Group announced that the authorities had recovered a "flying disc" that had crashed in the desert outside Roswell, New Mexico, mania became hysteria.

The military authorities at Roswell reacted quickly, replacing the "flying disc" story with one about the wreckage of a crashed weather balloon (the US Government admitted three years ago that this was also a lie: the "real" Roswell crash concerned a top-secret chain of "spy" balloons).

Reports of flying saucers continued undiminished. Project Blue Book, the official US air force monitoring programme begun in the summer of 1947, recorded several thousand sightings by the time it was disbanded in 1969, of which nearly a quarter could not be explained.=20

The UFO scare of 1897 has an innocence missing from those which begin half a century ago. The machines in the sky are objects of curiosity in a West that was opening up a world of wonders, both natural and technological.

The UFO mythology of recent years is something else. A popular sociological explanation links the stories of the threat from the skies, of abductions and cattle mutilations, to the paranoia of the Cold War. What is particularly interesting is that the current obsession dates not from 1947, but 1972, the 25th anniversary of Roswell.

Why should Roswell strike such a chord after so long? The American media this week has been full of another quarter-century anniversary, that of the Watergate break-in, which taught the American public that it could not trust its leaders. If the reaction to Nixon's frailties was disbelief and disillusion, then Clinton produces a weary cynicism. How easy, these days, to conceal almost anything.

So why should the US Government come clean about the fleet of crashed UFOs it has stored in secret military installations? Jim Marrs claims that the Moon might be an alien base, much like the Star Wars Death Star. He has an official NASA video taken on a 1993 shuttle mission which shows distant lights rising though the Earth's atmosphere and manoeuvring into formation.

Several accelerate into deep space after a bright flash off camera. Marrs says we may have been routinely firing at UFO intruders using ray guns placed in orbit during the Reagan "Star wars" programme. NASA says they are ice crystals.

Ready for the next instalment? Colonel Philip Corso is a retired senior officer with a distinguished service record. He served both President Eisenhower and in the Pentagon under Kennedy. Col Corso has just published an account of those years in which he claims to have secretly "seeded" technological marvels recovered from the crashed UFO at Roswell to American industry. Lasers, fibre optics and integrated circuit chips are said to be some of the results.

Some might say Col Corso is either a fantasist or simply barking. Others readily believe him, like the estimated 100,000 UFO enthusiasts preparing to gather in New Mexico on the weekend of July 4, an event dubbed "Weirdstock" by the same American media that happily reprints the latest flying saucer sightings.

Somehow these are never conclusive. The most recent have several thousand apparently sober Americans watching a huge and mysterious craft passing over Arizona on the night of March 13.

Yet there are no photos, nothing more than a few fuzzy video images. Perhaps it is, after all, a question of belief. In an age of religious uncertainty, the arrival of space ships from the stars offers a spiritual alternative for the age of science.=20

No wonder those who most vociferously condemn the new cult of the UFO are church leaders. At least the aliens of 100 years ago were given a Christian burial.

(25 January 1997: Eight-inch 'man' in Israeli UFO mystery)

(20 April 1997: When green children fell to planet Earth)

(3 April 1997: UFOs brought to earth with a bump)
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