



# Aliens On Earth.com

Resources for those who are stranded here



## Our Bookstore is **OPEN**

*Over 5000 new & used titles, competitively priced!*

Topics: [UFOs](#) - [Paranormal](#) - [Area 51](#) - [Ghosts](#) - [Fortean](#) - [Conspiracy](#) - [History](#) - [Biography](#) - [Psychology](#) - [Religion](#) - [Crime](#) - [Health](#) - [Geography](#) - [Maps](#) - [Science](#) - [Money](#) - [Language](#) - [Recreation](#) - [Technology](#) - [Fiction](#) - [Other](#) - [New](#)

Search... for keyword(s)

in Page Titles

Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [2000](#) -> [May](#) -> McMinnville UFO Photos Soar The Globe

## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### McMinnville UFO Photos Soar The Globe

From: Blair Cummins <[ufoblair@hotmail.com](mailto:ufoblair@hotmail.com)>  
Date: Thu, 11 May 2000 17:43:15 -0700 (PDT)  
Fwd Date: Fri, 12 May 2000 09:19:29 -0400  
Subject: McMinnville UFO Photos Soar The Globe

Greetings list -

Source: The News-Register, McMinnville, Oregon

[http://www.newsregister.com/news/story.cfm?story\\_no=115476&category=Local+News](http://www.newsregister.com/news/story.cfm?story_no=115476&category=Local+News)

McMinnville UFO photos soar the globe

Published: May 9, 2000

By Pat Forgey Of the News-Register

Fifty years ago, the most important event in human history happened in McMinnville when a local farm couple captured evidence of interplanetary visitors on film.

Or they merely snapped a couple of pictures of a still-secret military craft. Or maybe it was an optical illusion, or a hoax.

Even after 50 years, nobody yet knows what to make of the two photographs taken by Paul and Evelyn Trent a bit after dinner on May 11, 1950. Much has been made of the photographs, nonetheless.

What set the Trents' photographs apart wasn't the timing. They weren't the first photos purporting to show unidentified flying objects, and they've hardly been the last.

"There have been a lot of such events, but this was of particular interest because of the clarity of the photos," said Bruce Maccabee, a researcher who has performed an exhaustive analysis. "Without the photos, it would have been just another sighting by some people, but the Trent case stands out because these photos are so clear that it's either the real thing or a hoax."

Unlikely hoaxers

Beyond the relative clarity of the photos, though, it was the Trents themselves who really set the photos apart.

Both Paul and Evelyn Trent died in the late 1990s. The house where the photographs were taken has long since been torn down.

But the Trents were, by all accounts, simple farm folk. They weren't the sort of people likely to either imagine or make up a flying saucer story, said Maccabee, who spent hours interviewing them over several years while he studied the photographs.

"I basically concluded that they were not the type of people who

would attempt a UFO hoax, to say the nothing of pulling one off," he said.

That conclusion was echoed by journalist Bill Powell, who showed the Trent photographs to the world and touched off a media circus decades before that term came into common use.

Working for the Telephone-Register, predecessor of the News-Register, Powell got word of the photos in June 1950. They had been snapped a month earlier.

There were two of them. Retrieving the negatives from Paul Trent, Powell published them across the top of the Telephone-Register and told the Trents' story.

Evelyn Trent had been feeding rabbits in the backyard of their Ballston-area farm when she saw a flying disc in the sky to the northwest. She called for her husband, Paul, who snapped a photograph with his Kodak camera, rewound the film as rapidly as possible, and snapped a second shot 30 seconds later.

Both photos appear to show a disc zipping through the sky.

Paul Trent may have had photos of the biggest news story ever to hit McMinnville, but all he did was put the camera away. Later, after finishing off the roll of film on Mother's Day, he took it to a drug store on McMinnville's Third Street to be developed.

"The reason I thought they were authentic was that the negatives were in the middle of the roll," said Powell from his retirement home in Idaho Falls, Idaho. "He'd taken some more pictures so that he'd make sure he got his money's worth when he developed the things."

Maccabee said that story is part of why the photographs have taken on such importance in the UFO movement. If the Trents had been trying to fake a photograph, they'd likely have taken several practice shots and shown the world only the best of what they ended up with.

The other thing that makes the photos believable is that the Trents didn't seem to be trying to take advantage of them.

The day Paul Trent got the film developed, he told banker Ralph Wortman about it. Wortman mentioned it to Telephone-Register Editor Phil Bladine, who dispatched Powell to investigate.

Photos go national

Once the photos were published, however, they touched a national nerve.

Several supposed UFO sightings, usually called flying saucers then, had recently made the news. The photos went out on the wires and were reprinted across the nation.

Life, then the nation's top circulation magazine, published them in July.

Mutual Broadcasting System radio personality Frank Edwards obtained a copy of the Telephone-Register and called Bladine.

"Your paper is 10 cents," Edwards said to Bladine. "Can I tell people that if they send you a dime, you'll send 'em a copy?"

"I said 'sure', figuring that we might get a request for three or four papers," Bladine recalled.

Instead, requests flooded in. Dimes came taped to cards and wrapped in paper.

Sometimes payment was made in stamps. Sometimes dollar bills were sent and multiple copies were requested.

The Telephone Register's headline the next week reported, "Saucers Top Story in U.S. Inquiries Flood TR office."

At the time, the paper's circulation was less than 4,000, Bladine guesses. But by the end of week, requests for an extra 2,000 copies had come in.

That led to a special reprinting of the front page on high quality paper. By late summer, most of a special press run of 10,000 copies had been mailed out to people in all 48 states, the District of Columbia and Canada.

Bladine said many of the people contacting the paper had stories to tell. "People said that they'd seen a flying saucer, but didn't want to tell anyone because they were afraid they'd be thought nuts."

The Trents were eventually invited to New York for a radio appearance.

The photos have been reprinted many times since. They were included in the Condon Report, a University of Colorado study conducted into UFO sightings on behalf of the U.S. Air Force.

Before Life published the photographs, they were cropped by someone. Nothing but the cropped versions have been published since, said Tim Hills, a McMinnville historian who researched the photos as part of a look at the area's history when the pub chain reopened Hotel Oregon in McMinnville.

"The Telephone Register is the only source of the full-frame photos," he said. "They were never published full-frame ever again."

Skeptics abound

UFO skeptics have challenged the photos' authenticity, saying the story the Trents told of how the photos came to be taken was inconsistent. Maccabee, who interviewed the Trents many times, said he didn't find the inconsistencies significant.

"If they had said exactly the same thing every time, they (skeptics) would have said it was a hoax because they'd memorized it," he said. "You can't win with that one."

Other critics have said the shadows in the pictures indicate the photos were taken in the morning, rather than evening as the Trents said, but no one has come up with an explanation for why they'd lie about an insignificant element like that.

Hills finds the Trents and their story credible, even after the variations of multiple tellings.

"Their stories really didn't change significantly," he said. "It's a credit to them, and bolsters their credibility."

That doesn't mean that it's not a hoax of some sort, he said.

But it's stood up for five decades. "If it is a fake it's a masterful one," he said.

Maccabee said he's convinced of the photos' authenticity. What he doesn't know is what Paul Trent snapped a picture of that day in 1950.

Trent himself thought it was some type of secret military plane, Maccabee said.

He was reluctant at first to even let the newspaper publish the photos. He was quoted in the first story as saying, "I'm afraid I'll get into trouble with the government."

Hills is among those who doesn't think it was a top secret Air Force project.

"If we had the capability in 1947 to make a flying saucer, we should be able to do that today, and we can't. It's a big question mark to me," he said.

Powell still doesn't know what to make of it. The story he published carried the headline, "At Long Last -- Authentic Photographs of Flying Saucer [?]"

Powell said it should be read carefully.

"You'll notice that on my screamer, I put a question mark," he said. "I was covering my butt a little bit."

Hills said he may not be able to explain it, but he knows one thing. "It's a great story."

---

Best regards,

- Blair Cummins  
[ufoblair@hotmail.com](mailto:ufoblair@hotmail.com)

---

[ [Next Message](#) | [This Day's Messages](#) ]  
[ [This Month's Index](#) | [UFO UpDates Main Index](#) | [MUFON Ontario](#) ]

**UFO UpDates - Toronto - [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)**  
Operated by Errol Bruce-Knapp - ++ 416-696-0304

A Hand-Operated E-Mail Subscription Service for the Study of UFO Related Phenomena.  
To subscribe please send your first and last name to [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
Message submissions should be sent to the same address.

---

[ [UFO Topics](#) | [People](#) | [Ufomind What's New](#) | [Ufomind Top Level](#) ]

**To find this message again in the future...**  
Link it to the appropriate [Ufologist](#) or [UFO Topic](#) page.

Archived as a public service by [Area 51 Research Center](#) which is not responsible for content.  
Software by Glenn Campbell. Technical contact: [webmaster@ufomind.com](mailto:webmaster@ufomind.com)

Financial support for this web server is provided by the [Research Center Catalog](#).