

The Aurora, Texas UFO incident of 1897

In 1897, six years before humans took to the sky by airplane, eyewitnesses from California to Michigan to Louisiana reported seeing mysterious cigar-shaped crafts sailing gently through the sky. But one of them stood out from the others. A craft had crashed.

"A WINDMILL DEMOLISHES IT"

Early on the morning of April 17, 1897 a craft was seen over the little Texas town of Aurora. The craft came from the south and seemed to have mechanical problems. The craft lost altitude and crashed into a windmill on Judge J.S. Proctor property about 06:00 am. local time.

The craft destroyed upon impact and debris was scattered around the windmill. Witnesses that seen the craft coming rushed to the scene to see the still smoldering wreckage. As they searched through the debris, a small dead body was found, said to be the pilot of the craft.

NOT OF THIS WORLD

T.J. Weems, an army officer from nearby Forth Worth, said that it was not of this world and said it had to come from Mars. The body was given a proper Christian burial on April 18, the day after.

Almost all of the above information comes from an article published in the April 19 edition of *Dallas Morning Star*, who was written by one S.E. Hayden, a resident of Aurora. It states as follow:

"About 6 o'clock this morning the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing throughout the country. It sailed directly over the public square, and when it reached the north 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.

A Windmill Demolishes It.
Aurora, Wise Co., Tex., April 17.—(To The News.)—About 6 o'clock this morning the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing through the country.
It was traveling due north, and much nearer the earth than ever before. Evidently some of the machinery was out of order, for it was making a speed of only ten or twelve miles an hour and gradually settling toward the earth. It sailed directly over the public square, and when it reached the north 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 on board, 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.
Mr. T. J. Weems, the United States signal service officer at this place and an authority on astronomy, gives it as his opinion that he was a native of the planet Mars. Papers found on his person—evidently the record of his travels—are written in some unknown hieroglyphics, and can not be deciphered.
The ship was too badly wrecked to form any conclusion as to its construction or motive power. It was built of an unknown metal, resembling somewhat a mixture of aluminum and silver, and it must have weighed several tons.
The town is full of people to-day who are viewing the wreck, and gathering specimens of the strange metal from the debris. The pilot's funeral will take place at noon to-morrow.
S. E. HAYDEN.

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CONFIRMED BY WITNESSES

This incident was soon forgotten and it became just a tall tale that spread from resident to resident. That was until May, 1973 when it was commented in UPI like this:

"Aurora, Tex. -- (UPI) -- A grave in a small north Texas cemetery contains the body of an 1897 astronaut who was 'not an inhabitant of this world,' according to the International UFO Bureau.

The group, which investigates unidentified flying objects, has already initiated legal proceedings to exhume the body and will go to court if necessary to open the grave, director Hayden Hewes said Wednesday."

"After checking the grave with metal detectors and gathering facts for three months, we are certain as we can be at this point [that] he was the pilot of a UFO which reportedly exploded atop a well on Judge J.S. Proctor's place, April 19, 1897," Hewes said." "He was not an inhabitant of this world."

As by over a night, the crash was big news again. And in article published some days, an interview with a living witness to the crash was. The 91-year old lady was fifteen at the time for the incident. She stated that her parents had been to the crash site, but that she wasn't allowed to join for fear of what might be in the debris. She also recalled a burial of "a small man" at Aurora Cemetery.

MUFON INVESTIGATES - UNCOVERS PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

Not only became the press interested in this story. Later that year, Bill Case, an aviation writer Texas state director of MUFON, decided to investigate the alleged crash. MUFON was able to uncover a new eyewitness to the crash. Charlie Stephens, who was 10 in 1897, told MUFON how he saw airship heading north toward Aurora. He continued to tell that his father went to the town the next and saw the wreckage from the crash

Eyewitnesses aside, were there any actual physical evidence from the crash? According to MUFON, there was. Under the investigation, MUFON was able to uncover a piece of

metal that was said to be from the wreckage. The metallic piece was analyzed and it was revealed that it was composed 95 percent aluminum and 5 percent iron. This alloy is very uncommon in nature and after further analysis they were able to conclude that it had been air-cooled on the ground. This led to the assertion raised in MUFON's report that, given the presumption that it originated in 1897, the sample could not be of terrestrial nature, but they also stated that it just could have been an object put there at any time during the last century.

MUFON continued their investigation at the Aurora Cemetery and found a grave marker that appeared to show a flying saucer. Near the grave marker, detectable readings from a metal-detector were made. MUFON asked the cemetery association for permission to exhume the grave, but they declined.

After MUFON's investigation, the grave marker mysteriously disappears and a three-inch pipe was placed into the ground. MUFON's metal detector could no longer pick up any readings from the grave, thus it was presumed that the metal was removed from the grave.

THE QUEST FOR AN EXPLANATION

As amazing this as this story might be, it could as easily all been an elaborate hoax. The town of Aurora had reasons to make this story up. Just months before the alleged crash, Aurora had gone through a series of tragic incidents. First, the economic source for the town (cotton farming) had been destroyed by a boll weevil infestation. Second, there was a fire on the west side of town claimed several buildings and lives.

Not long after the fire, an epidemic of spotted fever hit the town, nearly wiping those who had survived the fire. The fever also placed the town under quarantine, not making the situation any better. And finally, a planned railway never made it to Aurora, making Aurora even more isolate to the outside world. The town of Aurora was in danger of dying, and that's why several researchers sees Haydon's article as a last attempt to keep Aurora alive.

But if it weren't a hoax, what was it then. Could an extraterrestrial actually crashed down on Earth in 1897. Of course there's the possibility of that, but the explanation is probably more earthly than extraterrestrial. At the time of the crash, several patents for flying aircraft already existed, so crafts like the one who reportedly crashed could already have taken to the skies, but there is no proof of that. And the body that was said to be alien could very well have the badly burned body of the human pilot.

But there is one evidence left to investigate, the alien's alleged grave at Aurora Cemetery. Over the there have several movements for exhuming the grave, but every permission have been denied by the Aurora Cemetery Association. They say they deny

for the respect of others on the cemetery. But by making impossible to investigate the grave, it will be impossible to close this case. Just by a single look into the grave, we would be able to say that really as says in the news article or confirming that it all was just a hoax. Maybe one they will give away and open the grave, but if not we'll maybe never know the real truth of what happened in Aurora 1897. The story lives on.