

Historical Sightings 1860 - 1881

1860 USA, Louisiana, Shreveport: "Our attention was called to a strange light in the heavens. On going out into the gallery we had a magnificent view of it. It appeared to the naked eye, about 300 yards in length, extending from North to West appearing just above the tallest trees. Its color was that of a red hot stove from the center beautiful rays resembling those of the sun drawing water would ascend to a considerable height, the whole presenting a very beautiful and sublime appearance. We watched it for about an hour without perceiving it to change any."

1862 Indian Ocean: A shipwrecked Danish sailor reported seeing a strange aircraft as large as a battleship with four huge wings. This object was seen to crash into a cliff and was destroyed. Kevin Randle states this case to be a hoax.

1868

- Chile, Copiaco: A strange "aerial construction bearing lights and making engine noises flew low over this town." Local people also described it as a giant bird covered with large scales producing a metallic noise. Although not an actual landing, this is the first instance of close observation of an unknown object at low altitude in the nineteenth century.
- England, Oxford: Astronomers at Radcliffe Observatory saw a luminous object that moved quickly across the sky, stopped, changed course to the west, then to the south, where it hovered for four minutes, then headed toward the north.

1869 USA, Tennessee, Ashland: A whirlwind came along over the neighboring woods, taking up small branches and leaves of trees and burring them in a sort of flaming cylinder that traveled at a rate of about five miles an hour, developing size as it traveled. It passed directly over the spot where a team of horses were feeding and singed their manes and tails up to the roots; it then swept towards the house, taking a stack of hay in its course. It seemed to increase in heat as it went, and by the time it reached the house it immediately fired the shingles from end to end of the building, so that in ten minutes the whole dwelling was wrapped in flames. The tall column of traveling caloric then continued its course over a wheat field that had been recently cradled, setting fire to all the stacks that happened to be in its course. Passing from the field, its path lay over a stretch of woods, which reached the river. The green leaves on the trees were crisped to a cinder for a breadth of 20 yards, in a straight line to the Cumberland. When the 'pillar of fire' reached the water, it suddenly changed its route down the river, raising a column of steam which went up to the clouds for about half-a-mile, when it finally died out. Not less than 200 people witnessed this strangest of strange phenomena, and all of them tell substantially the same story about it." *Symon's Monthly Meteorological Magazine, 1869*

1870

- African Coast: Capt. F.W. Banner and crew reported “A semi-circle divided into four parts, and a central shaft extending far outward & curving backward emitted vivid shafts of light.”
- Atlantic Ocean: An object was seen from the ship Lady of the Lake that appeared to be a light-gray colored disk that flew against the wind.

1871 France, Meudon Observatory: Astronomer Trouvelot noted a number of objects that resembled those witnessed at Nuremberg and Basel. Among the objects he saw was a circle that first seemed about to fall, then descended "like a disk falling through water.”

1872 England, Banbury: At King's Sutton an object resembling a haystack flew on an irregular course, sometimes high, sometimes very low. It was accompanied by fire and dense smoke. It produced the same effect as a tornado, felling trees and walls. It suddenly vanished.

1873 USA, Texas, Bonham: A huge cigar-shaped object swooped low over the town of on two occasions and in broad daylight. It then disappeared quickly to the east.

1874 Mexico, Oaxaca: Residents saw a huge, gently swaying, trumpet-shaped object estimated to be 425 feet long hovering in the sky for six minutes.

1875 Czechoslovakia, Prague: A Professor Schafarick saw "an object of such strange nature that I do not know what to say about it. It was of blinding white and crossed slowly the face of the moon. It remained visible afterwards.”

1877 France, Venice: Reports of a "cloud cigar.” "Fiery spheres, extremely luminous, came out of a cloud of peculiar shape and went slowly toward the north for one hour.”

1878 USA, Texas: John Martin, a farmer, spotted a fast moving dark object high in the southern sky. When it passed overhead, he saw that it was the size of a “large saucer.” It continued on its way and was soon lost to view. In recounting the event, a local newspaper remarked, "Mr. Martin is a gentleman of undoubted veracity and this strange occurrence, if it was not a balloon, deserves the attention of our scientists.”

1879 Persian Gulf: The S.S. Vulture crew reported, two luminous rotating wheels, about 130 ft. across, seen above the water before diving.

1880

- England, Aldershot: A strange being dressed in tight-fitting clothes and shining helmet soared over the heads of two sentries, who fired without result. The apparition stunned them with something described as blue fire.
- France: A member of the French Academy observed a glittering, white gold cigar-shaped object in the sky that had pointed ends.
- Persian Gulf: The British steamer Patna was traversing the waters of the Persian Gulf, when around midnight the captain and several other members of crew all saw two enormous glowing wheels each estimated to be 500 to 600 meters in diameter appear

underwater on each side of the ship. The wheels were spinning, one on each side with the spokes touching the ship. The sighting lasted 20 minutes and was witnessed by Captain Avern, third officer Manning, and Lee Fort Brace.

- Russia, St. Petersburg: A large illuminated globe, accompanied by two smaller lights is seen to follow a ravine outside the city.
- USA, New Mexico, Lamy: Four men walking near Galisteo Junction were surprised as they heard voices coming from a "strange balloon," which flew over them. It was shaped like a fish and seemed to be guided by a large fanlike device. There were eight to ten figures aboard. Their language was not understood. The object flew low over Galisteo Junction, and rose rapidly toward the east.
- Venezuela: A 14-year-old boy saw a luminous ball descending from the sky and hovering near him. He felt somehow "drawn" to it, but succeeded in backing away.

1881

- Australia, Melbourne: Between Melbourne and Sydney at sea. The two sons of the Prince of Wales [*then Albert Edward, later King Edward VII*], one of them the future king of England [*George Frederick Ernest Albert, later King George V, who succeeded his father on the throne*] were cruising aboard "La Bacchante" when an object resembling a fully lighted ship was seen, "a phantom vessel all aglow."
- USA, Georgia, Americus: Mr. Z. T. Baisden, of Americus, gives us the following story of a whirlwind that visited his place, scaring all his hands and some visitors very badly. "A whirlwind occurred in a twelve acre cornfield that was about four feet in diameter and sometimes a hundred feet high. The body of it was perfectly black, with fire in the center and emitted a strong sulfurous vapor that could be smelt three hundred yards from it. The whirlwind would divide into three and move rapidly over the field, twisting up the corn stalks by the roots and carrying them up. These three minor whirlwinds would then come together with a loud crash, cracking and burning and shoot high up into the heavens. Three young ladies who were visiting Mrs. Baisden went in about 150 feet to observe it, but received such a shower of burning sand upon their face and necks that they ran affrighted to the house. Mr. Baisden says that he cannot account for this strange phenomenon, and it certainly frightened all who saw it. The strange part was that it contained fire, yet did not appear to burn the corn that it did not tear up, and its sulfurous vapor sickened and burnt all who got close enough to get a full breath of it."

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