

UFO Crash Is Debated By Experts

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The question of what happened, if anything, at Aurora, Tex., April 19, 1897, turned Saturday into disputes between two Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) experts.

The mass of evidence is on the side of reports that something did strike Judge J. S. Proctor's windmill on that date and exploded. The reports also say some creature died in the explosion and was buried by the citizens of Aurora.

During the weekend, Hayden Hewes, director of the International UFO Bureau, Inc., of Oklahoma City, added fuel to the dispute. He said there was nothing to the reports and that newspapers were only fanning the fire to keep it alive.

This was disputed by the Midwest Unidentified Flying Network and Bill Case, aviation writer for the Dallas Times Herald who has investigated the story deeply.

Case said the tests of metals found at the site by Hewes were not the same samples found by Case and others which several scientists have said are at least puzzling.

Walter H. Andrus Jr. took issue with Hewes' statement. Andrus is executive director of MUFON (Midwest Unidentified Flying Object Network).

Andrus told Case, "His (Hewes') announcement implies investigation of the reported crash of a UFO . . . is closed simply through analysis of four pieces of metal.

"Nothing could be further from the truth.

"MUFON investigators and reporters from the Dallas Times Herald are still vigorously working on the investigation."

One point of dispute is a fused nugget of aluminum alloy which metallurgists say could not be produced on earth until this century.

The nugget was found beneath other metal fragments at Aurora. One speculation is that its depth in the earth shows that it came from the reported flying object. Others say that its composition indicates that it was manufactured well after the crash date.

Andrus said, "If we determine it is a hoax, we will announce it candidly. And we will have the evidence to show why we believe it is. But at the moment, our findings indicate the possibility it is a hoax are more and more improbable. MUFON's investigation is at its most intensive points."

The original 1897 story came from S. E. Hayden, cotton buyer and part-time newspaper correspondent at Aurora, a village which has become a ghost community. It is between Fort Worth and Decatur.

At least three old-timers have been found who heard direct reports from persons who saw the wreckage.

One is Charlie Stephens who said, "My daddy, Jim Stephens, said he was putting the cows out to pasture on our ranch about 4 a.m. three miles south of Aurora when he noticed a cigar-shaped airship with a white light pass over.

"It was very low and just went straight ahead until it crashed at a well site on a high hill on Judge J. S. Proctor's farm. He said there seemed to be an explosion and a fire that lit up the sky for several minutes.

"The next day my father rode a horse into Aurora to look at the scene and said it looked like a mass of torn metal and burned rubble."

Mrs. Mary Evans, 91, says her mother and father would not let her go with them when they went to the site.

"That crash certainly caused a lot of excitement," Mrs. Evans said. "Many people were frightened. They didn't know what to expect. That was years before we had any regular airplanes or other kinds of airships." She said there was a body, which Stephens did not mention.

G. C. Curley, 98, said two friends went to the reported crash site and told him that sightseers were picking pieces of metal of a type unknown then. Curley said his friends also told of a dismembered body.