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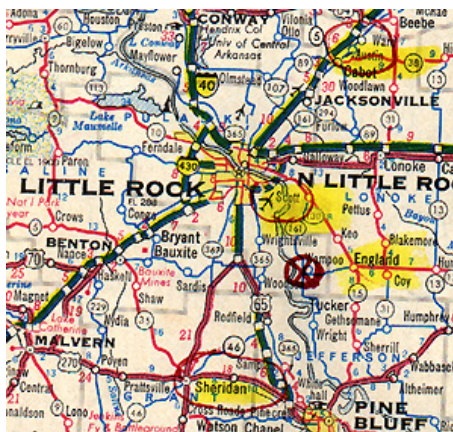
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Update - Mysterious Fires Southeast of Scott, Arkansas

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Red X marks area of mysterious fires at the intersection of Lonoke, Pulaski and Jefferson Counties in Arkansas, first reported to 911 by the Little Rock Airport and a Scott resident around 11:20 PM CST on Thursday, March 9, 2000.

March 16, 2000 Scott, Arkansas - The mystery of unexplained fires about 25 miles southeast of Little Rock, Arkansas might actually be related to a fiery bolide that apparently came down and evaporated north of Austin around 8:30 PM CST, March 9th. I interviewed one eyewitness from Cabot, Arkansas today who wishes to remain anonymous, but told me, "It was 8:25 p.m. We were on Stagecoach Road and Highway 38 outside Old Austin. We started driving down the road heading home and I looked over at my husband and right there to his left, I could see out of nowhere running parallel with us on the road was what we thought at first was a small airplane on fire."

Earthfiles, news category.

Interview:

How high above the ground was it?

Little over tree top. All I remember seeing was a long tail that was red, orange, white sparkly - it was awesome! It was something I have never seen in person before. To me - like I said, my first instinct when I saw it was a small airplane coming down on fire because we do have a small airport outside of Cabot and the Air Force base is less than fifteen minutes from our house. They were flying over at the same time, the C-130s.

You could see the C-130s?

I heard them. I didn't see them.

Could you see any vehicle or structure in front of the flame?

No, Ma am. All I saw was the flame. It was so sudden. I told him, 'Stop!' Whenever NASA sends up the space shuttle - that's how it looked. The bottom, the flames and everything that comes out. It's going in front of us and we watched it as it was coming down in front of us. We just knew it was fixing to

hit, so we sat there waiting for it to hit and explode. And it never did! What I mean, the fire was gone.

What did you both say to each other at that point?

What the hell was that? It was exactly 8:27 p.m. CST when it quit because I looked at the clock in the Blazer. Because I thought, whatever that was, it's going to be on the news and I stayed up and watched the news at 10 o'clock that night. There was nothing. I got up Friday morning to get ready for work, turned on the TV, and they were discussing a mysterious fire in England. Where we saw this was in a total opposite direction."

Bright Shooting Stars

About that same 8:30 p.m. CST time, other eyewitnesses reported bright flashes or "shooting stars like fireworks" in the sky moving from a southerly to a northerly direction over Sheridan, Scott and other Little Rock communities. John Rehrouer, Public Information Officer at the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office told me on Friday, March 10, "I saw myself earlier in the evening what looked like a shooting star - very bright shooting star." He said it had an orange color and was moving toward the northwest.

The Old Austin eyewitness and her husband saw the large fiery object disappear in front of them, probably because a meteorite burned up before it hit the ground.

Current Speculation:

Fragments from the meteorite might have fallen into the swampy farm land southeast of Little Rock. No one knows what kinds of fertilizers and pesticides were in that soil, but hot rocks from a bolide could explain the sudden mushroom cloud explosions at 11:20 p.m. that were reported by a pilot to the Little Rock Arkansas Airport that in turn called 911. Another eyewitness at the same time called 911. He was sitting on his porch a half mile away looking at the field when he saw the three mushroom clouds. Meteorite pieces could have fallen over the one or two mile area into the swampy wet land where sporadic fires occurred, eventually heating up chemicals in the soil to a point of combustion. That would also explain the odd burning of the tree roots down several inches into the soil without affecting the rest of the trees which puzzled firefighters and other investigators. That also might explain why dry leaves in some areas that had no subterranean connection were not even scorched. The few trees that burned to ash might have been set afire directly by the falling pieces of fiery meteorite and burned longest. Other tree tops were burning, perhaps where the fiery fragments came through the branches.

The following comments were made by reporter Mark Minton in the March 16, 2000 *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*: "A falling star arced across the central Arkansas skies last Thursday night, its fiery tale lingering as it descended. About two hours later, a caller reported a fire burning a patch of brush southwest of England. Nearly a week later, investigators have determined that the falling star did not start the fire. But it did start a commotion.

"Nearly a week later, Jefferson County sheriff's Lt. Eugene Butler still doesn't know the precise cause. But he could say for certain Wednesday that it was not a meteor that started the fires near Scott. Butler had no doubt that a meteor did fall, though several people reported it, including John Rehrouer at the Pulaski County Sheriff's Office.

"But Butler said a witness emerged Wednesday to tell investigators he had seen the fire on the property in Scott on March 8, the day *before* the falling star shot through the sky. The witness, a retired farmer who Butler said did not want his name released, did not view the fire as an immediate concern and did not report it that day."

If there really was fire at the Scott location on March 8, it might be that chemicals in the soil are very concentrated and combustible.

Below are four photographs taken by Little Rock, Arkansas banker Craig McGinley on Tuesday, March 14, 2000 at the quarter mile long by 150 yard section in which most of the heat and flames were concentrated when the Scott Volunteer Firefighters arrived about midnight on March 10th.



Uprooted tree, possibly toppled over from root burn in the wet, swampy soil.
Photograph © 2000 by Craig McGinley.



Explosives expert with the Pulaski County Office of Emergency Services sampling magenta-colored residue in the middle of grey-white ash ten inches below ground level where tree roots had burned and charred the hole. Lab analyses yet to be reported. Photograph © 2000 by Craig McGinley.



Freshly broken tree trunk in lower left quadrant of photograph © 2000 by Craig McGinley.



White area between tree trunks was ash of a tree that burned up completely.
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