



## Mystery Stalks The Prairie

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### Chapter 13

#### UFO Reported in 1897

Many people look upon the sighting of UFOs as something that has happened only in recent years. But there was at least one such incident almost 80 years ago, according to a story in a newspaper published at that time. The strange episode reportedly took place in mid-April of 1897 on a farm in Kansas and involved the theft of a cow by the UFO, right before the farmer's eyes!

The news story, published in the *Woodson County Advocate* on April 23, 1897, relates the following incident, as told by the farmer, Alexander Hamilton, of Vernon:

*Last Monday night about half past ten o'clock, we were awakened by a noise among the cattle. I arose, thinking perhaps my bulldog was performing some of his pranks, but upon getting to the door, I saw to my amazement, an airship slowly descending over my cow lot about 50 rods from the house. Calling Gib Heslop, my tenant, and my son, Wall, we seized some axes and ran to the corral. Meanwhile, the ship had been gently descending until it was no more than 30 feet above the ground and we came up within 50 yards of it.*

*It consisted of a great cigar-shaped portion, possibly 300 feet long, with a carriage underneath. The carriage was made of panels of glass or other transparent substance, alternating with a narrow strip of some other material. It was brilliantly lighted within and everything was clearly visible. there were three lights, one like an immense searchlight and two smaller - one red and the other green. The largest was susceptible of being turned in any direction. It was occupied by six of the strangest beings I ever saw. There were two men, a woman and three children. They were jabbering together, but we could not understand a syllable they said.*

*Every part of the vessel that was not transparent was a dark reddish color. We stood mute in wonder and fright when some noise attracted our attention and they turned their light directly upon us. Immediately upon catching sight of us, they turned on some unknown power and a great turbine wheel about thirty feet in diameter which was slowly revolving below the craft began to buzz, sounding precisely like the cylinder of a separator, and the vessel rose as lightly as a bird.*

*When about 300 feet above us, it seemed to pause and hover directly over a three-year-old heifer which was bawling and jumping apparently fast in the fence. Going to her, we found a cable about a half-inch in thickness, made of some red material fastened in a slip knot around her neck, one end passing up to the vessel and tangled in the wire. We tried*

*to get her off, but could not. So, we cut the (fence) wire loose and stood in amazement to see the cow, ship and all rise slowly and sail off, disappearing in the northwest. We went home, but I was frightened and could not sleep.*

*I rose early Tuesday morning, mounted my horse and started out hoping to find some trace of my cow. This I failed to do, but coming back to LeRoy in the evening, I found that Lank Thomas, who lives in Coffey County about three or four miles west of LeRoy, had found the hind legs and head in his field that day. He, thinking someone had butchered a stolen beast and thrown the hide away, had brought it to town for identification. But he was greatly mystified in not being able to find any track of any kind on the soft ground.*

*I went home that night, but every time I would drop off to sleep, I would see that cursed thing with its big lights and hideous people. I don't know whether they were devils or angels or what, but we all saw them and my whole family saw the ship and I don't want any more to do with them."*

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The farmer's description of the craft bears a strong resemblance to those given by many who have seen UFOs in recent years. But what makes the 1897 account even more startling is that it happened almost seven years before the Wright Brothers made history with the first recorded airplane flight. And space travel was yet an undreamed of event of the future!

If the past was puzzling, so was the present, as reports continued to come in during the spring of 1976. Several incidents happened within a day or two of the first of May, which may or may not be significant. Two cases of cattle mutilation were reported to the Cascade County Sheriff's Office on April 29. One involved a cow belonging to a Castner Falls rancher. The Black Angus cow had been dead too many days for a successful autopsy, but it was obvious to the investigating officers that the tongue, an eye, an ear and the lips were gone. The rectal area may have also been cut out. the cow's head and neck had apparently been bent back at an angle to the right and a white fiber-looking substance covered one side of the cow. It resembled the petroleum distillate found on the calf in Judith Basin County, but laboratory tests proved it was not the same substance.

The other mutilated animal was a yearling steer belonging to a Simms area rancher. The rectal area appeared to be cut and there was what appeared to be a puncture mark on the right side of the carcass. The veterinarian who performed an autopsy on the steer noted that the steer had been eating up to the time of its death and had apparently been in good health.

An unusual factor, not encountered before, was a ruptured area about four inches across on the inside of the chest cavity. There was also a rupture the full length of the body on the animal's right side. The veterinarian commented that the ruptures were unusual. There were no external bruises.

Adding another note of mystery to the investigation was a report by a neighbor woman of the man who owned the steer that she had heard a "funny noise" three nights earlier which frightened her. She said she was home alone watching television about 11:30 p.m., when she noted that there seemed to be a lot of traffic going by. She turned off the lights, leaving on the television, so she could watch for lights.

It was at this time that she heard an odd noise, which she described as a whirring sound, going on and off intermittently. It was not loud, but continued for about ten minutes. Since the veterinarian estimated the steer had been dead two or three days, it is possible the noise the woman heard was the same night the steer was killed.

The night after officers investigated the mutilated steer (April 30, 1976), they

received a phone call from a woman in the Fife area reporting a group of flying objects maneuvering over her community. She watched the objects through binoculars and said they appeared to have yellow, green and blue lights around the outside of the craft and that their centers seemed to glow. They appeared to be headed south at a high rate of speed, she said. She added that she had seen such craft before, but had not reported them. In a later conversation with the woman, Captain Wolverton learned that she often watches airplanes and helicopters and is familiar with them. She said she never phoned in a report unless she was unable to identify the craft.

A Great Falls couple, parked on a country road near Great Falls about 3 a.m., were badly frightened when they saw a UFO that did a disappearing act. The incident happened about May 1, 1976, but was not reported until two weeks later. The couple told Captain Wolverton that they had just parked on an approach road and turned off their lights when they noticed a small triangular-shaped object hovering about four feet above the ground very close to their car and ahead of it. It glowed with a blue light. They described the size of the object as about one foot by two feet.

When the car headlights were turned on, the object disappeared. When the lights were turned off, it appeared. The procedure was repeated three or four times, but when the object seemed to be coming closer to them, the couple turned on their lights and engine and "took off" in a hurry! The incident was similar to one Captain Wolverton had heard about in another state.

The strange sounds attributed to the hairy creatures cropped up again in a report to the Cascade County Sheriff's Office on May 7, 1976. A man whose ranch is in the vicinity of Gore Hill, location of the Great Falls International Airport, phoned to say that he was out feeding stock early that morning when he heard a wailing-moaning sound. It was very loud and he thought it was close, but could not determine the direction from which it came. He said his horses acted strange and restless.

When Captain Wolverton played a tape recorded (of Sasquatch howls?) in the Puyallup, Washington, area of the strange sounds heard there, the man said, "That is exactly what I heard." Captain Wolverton and Undersheriff Osborne checked the area carefully, but nothing was found.

The reports continued to come in and with them came the theories and speculations. Some people have said in all sincerity that they consider the strange events to be signs of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ or the end of the world, as foretold in the Bible's Book of Revelation. This theory, like the others, has been neither discounted nor endorsed by those conducting the investigation.

A man who is, and has been, a professional government trapper for 18 years was asked his opinion as to whether predators could have caused the mutilations. He said that when coyotes feed on a dead animal, they do not take the hide, nor will they start in an area where they have to break the hide. He said they would eat three to four pounds of meat in one or two days, but would not eat the entrails if any meat was exposed. He based his opinion on his experience in examining over 2,000 animals killed by predators over the years.

Investigating officers appreciate the comments of anyone who thinks he or she may have information which could possibly help solve the mystery. They are especially grateful to those cooperative residents who have reported cattle mutilations or sightings of UFOs or hairy creatures. Without this help, they would be unable to assemble the evidence that they hope will lead to an eventual solution.

*I want people to know, Captain Wolverton said, that our department, under a directive from Sheriff John Krsul, is looking at this whole situation as serious."*

Captain Wolverton urged anyone who might have something unusual to report

to phone their local law enforcement officers or get in touch with him. It is only by continuing to follow every lead, to investigate every incident, that lawmen will be able to solve the mystery of cattle mutilations and other strange incidents that are plaguing Montana and other areas.

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## Epilogue

This book, in a sense, has no ending. It can't have as long as the story it tells is not solved. At this writing, no one has produced proof as to who, or what, is mutilating cattle, or why. And although there have been many conjectures, some of them most convincing, no one has yet proved the identity and origin of the unidentified flying objects. Or the hairy creatures (Bigfoot/Sasquatch) The mystery goes on and on, with new bits of the puzzle added now and then to further perplex those who are striving so hard to solve it.

One fact is certain. The officers in the Cascade County Sheriff's Department, from Sheriff John Krsul on down, take the strange incidents seriously and they are conducting a serious investigation. They realize, of course, that there are times when a person's imagination plays tricks on him. And they also leave room to discount calls from pranksters. But the men who have investigated the strange episodes related here have seen and heard too much to casually disregard it. They believe those persons who say they have seen hairy creatures or UFOs. In fact, some of the officers have seen UFOs themselves.

As for the cattle mutilations, the officers have observed too many strangely butchered cows to mark it all up to natural causes or predators. There has to be an explanation for the strange and frightening incidents and a solution to the syndrome of puzzling events. Those in the Cascade County Sheriff's Department have no intention of giving up before they unravel the mystery - no matter how long it takes. They feel strongly that local sheriff's officers will probably be the people responsible for solving the mutilation mystery, when and if it is solved. At that time, this book might have a sequel.

The End

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