

UFO terrified Kansas residents in 1913



Over a century ago a **strange and unidentified phenomenon** terrified the people of Meade County, Texas. At regular intervals, a mysterious light appeared in the southeast of the region, not far from the town of Lakeland.

Here the article published in 1913:

Hutchinson. Kan.. March 16 Special —There is something going on in Kansas which has the people guessing. They are not superstitious people — but yet they would like to know. After a disappearance of six years the ‘*Sand Creek ghost light*’ is once more beginning to put in an appearance nights in southeastern Meade county, near the town of Lakeland.

This mysterious light white and very bright, suddenly appearing on the prairie often accompanied by a sound as of escaping steam, so startled farmers and stockmen that it was with dread that they would venture out in the night in the Sand Creek neighborhood.

For several years, however, since that neighborhood has commenced to settle up the mysterious light has not made an appearance.

A few nights ago John C. Crompton, traveling overland with his family from Oklahoma to Larkin, Kansas, drove hasty into Meade and reported seeing a strange light, in the very vicinity where the mysterious Sand Creek "ghost light" formerly held forth.

"We were driving along slowly when suddenly a great white light, very bright, appeared to be coming toward us." said Crompton. *"When the light came within a few rods of us it suddenly disappeared, only to reappear in a short time."*

"It was northwest Lakeland : just how far we were from that postoffice I can not say. hut I should judge about six or seven miles. Every time the light appeared the horses reared and plunged and we were compelled to stop to avert a

runaway. At first I thought it was an automobile light, but it was too large and bright for that, and, as no machine appeared, I gave up that idea. It was certainly the most bewildering and grewsome light I ever saw and I can not understand what it was”

Meade people immediately recognized the light from the description given by the traveler, and there was much excitement over the news that the ‘ghost light’ had reappeared after several years.

Captain R. M. Painter, a wealthy ranchman. living near Lakeland, and in Sand Creek Township, vouches for the truth of the mysterious light, but is unable to account for it.

“I first saw the ghostly light some seven years ago.” said Captain Painter. “I have seen it on twenty-five or thirty different occasions, but never have been able to explain it. It would first appear like the light of a lantern, but immediately bloomed out as big as a full moon.”

“It looked somewhat like the headlight of a locomotive coming suddenly around a curve, and was accompanied by a roaring sound like the escaping of steam, but there is no railroad within twenty miles. It reappeared at Intervals of from one to seven days. It would never get closer than 60 or 70 rods and seemed always to come from the northwest.”

“I and members of my family have observed it many time. We know it in our neighborhood as the ghost light. When it shows up it always badly frightens horses, and has been the cause of many runaway accidents. The horses seem to know its approach before it is sighted.”

“About six years ago many others besides myself repeatedly saw this ghostly light, but it disappeared about the time that the Germans settled in that portion of the county and has not been heard of until now.”

At one time it appeared to be directly in front of the Lakeland postoffice, and several times while driving at night has it appeared, always causing the horses to be alarmingly frightened. One citizen saw it and attempted to go to it, but it disappeared, with no remaining sign or mark left to tell the tale.

“We have made many efforts to ascertain the cause of this strange light. It is not of a phosphorescent nature for there is no marsh or lowland there, and it appears to be of a brilliant white, while phosphorescent lights are bluish of tint, and besides phosphorus lights appear only in wet, marshy, low places. There are no low or wet lands out our way. It is high and dry there. All theories have been exploded after investigation. and the mystery of the light still remains. I am a non-believer in ghosts, but the ghost light never has been explained.”

Herman Tonhoff of Odee, Meade county, has been an eyewitness of the light and describes it exactly as does Captain Painter. He was riding a horse one night when the light appeared and his horse squatted down trembling with fear.

Frank Fuhr, editor of the Meade Globe, says the reappearance of the Sand Creek ‘ghost light’ is causing much concern. *“Whether one believes in ghosts or not, the strange light is a phenomena that is causing much anxiety”*, he said.

Several theories have been advanced. One is that the ghost light has some connection with the earth cracks which have attracted much attention in Meade county. The theory is that interior pressure of gases causes these cracks, and that the escaping gas being ignited forms this strange phenomenon. But no trace has ever been found of natural gas or of the effects of gas burning.

Another theory is that the lights are really mirages. If such a thing as a night mirage is possible, of Rock Island railway trains on the railroad twenty miles away, the electric headlight of the locomotive being lifted and shown miles away on the prairie by this optical phenomenon.

At any event the ‘Sand Creek ghost light’ has proved that it can ‘come back’ after having disappeared for several years.

Sources

- [*Strange prairie light that startles Kansas*](#), The Herald Democrat, March 17, 1913
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