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That Damned Thing Took My Picture!

The so-called Bermuda Triangle isn't the only place where strange things occur. There's also the Arkansas-Missouri-Arizona-and-Everywhere Else Triangle where peculiar things are seen... circular shapes, cigar shapes, triangular shapes, barrel shapes and many other UFOs, most of them shapes you probably wouldn't dream of.

We start with one sunny afternoon in September 1980, when the superintendent of schools for Redding, California, and a pilot were flying back to Redding after a business trip to Sacramento and they saw something that puzzled them.



Dr. John Ferguson Clark, then fifty-nine, and the pilot, Lloyd List, thirty-four, were in a Cessna 172 at six thousand feet near the city of Red Bluff when they overtook a metallic-looking object. They saw it in the distance and for a while it seemed to be going about the same speed as they were. Then they began to overtake it.

"Suddenly, it shot past our left wing not more than twenty or thirty feet off my wingtip," said List, who worked for the Redding school system and was also a flight instructor.

"I got an unobstructed view of it. It was football-shaped but wasn't sharp at the points. It was about three feet long and a foot and a half to two feet thick."

He thought it was a balloon at first, but it was completely unaffected by the turbulence caused by the plane. "This thing didn't bobble at all," List said. "I'm completely perplexed."

He radioed air traffic control in Oakland, immediately turned around and searched for it but they never saw it again. When List resumed course ten minutes later, the controller asked a number of questions about the object but said it hadn't been picked it up on radar.

Dr. Clark was as mystified as List was. "I just couldn't believe it," he said. "It just looked like a solid cylindrical object. I've ever seen anything like that before."

TINY UFO ANGERS INVALID

The oversized football is just one more example of the many unusual shapes and sizes of unidentified flying objects.

UFOs can be quite small. A Tennessee woman in her late seventies told me that on the afternoon of March 1, 1974, she and her invalid husband were sitting on their front porch enjoying the spring weather. Then some things in the sky caught their attention.

They were five saucer-shaped objects about two feet in diameter moving slowly and low in the sky. They leisurely floated in over a field across the road from the couple's house and settled down in the midst of a herd of cows about five hundred yards away.

Only one of the cows paid any attention to the small discs. It seemed to be offended by the intrusion and kept turning and walking toward one of the mini-UFOs. Each time it did, the object would simply rise up, pass over the cow and settle down on the other side.



The woman's husband became upset. He got his rifle and started hobbling toward the field. The phone rang at that moment and by the time his wife got rid of the caller, the objects were flying away. As they did, one passed very close to her husband's head and then joined the others.

By that time her husband had reached the fence and was standing still. His hands were down at his sides, the rifle clutched in one of them. When she got to him, he was icy cold and shivering. All he'd say was: "That damned thing took my picture!"

She helped him back up to the house and he went inside and lay down on a daybed. He stayed there the rest of the day and said nothing more.

The next morning the woman looked out and saw the cow lying dead next to a pond. Two weeks later her husband died. The doctor said it was a heart attack. He'd had several before.

Their farm was near Millington, a town just north of Memphis. I phoned her again a couple of years later to see how she was doing and she told me the same story about the little UFOs all over again.

1906 'MONSTROUS THING'

One of my favorite stories regarding unusual shapes of UFOs came from another elderly woman, this one in western Missouri. She called herself Gretchen. She said that in 1906 or 1907, when she was about nine or ten, she and her father were at a revival meeting at a rural church one night when someone looking out a window spotted a bright light far to the north.

Everyone thought a house or barn was on fire. They ran out of the church, got in

their wagons and buggies and on their horses and went racing down the dirt road to help.

"The light kept getting closer and brighter and all of a sudden there appeared this strange object just floating along in the sky!" Gretchen said. "It was a monstrous thing. I was just a child but to me it seemed like it must have been two hundred feet long. The whole area was lit up it was such a dazzling sight.



"It was real long and seemed to be larger in the middle and tapered off at each end. It made no noise at all. There were some things on top that looked like stovepipes. They looked to be red, orange and blue or green. And there was this dazzling bright, orange-green light. Underneath were some things that looked like bright colored ropes, and along the sides were dark streaks, like they could have been windows.

"The people were scared almost to death. The horses got excited, people screamed and two ladies fainted. The men on horseback had guns and they shot at it but nothing happened."

The thing continued going south and they could still see the light from it fifteen to twenty minutes later as it passed slowly out of sight. This happened in Ray County, Missouri, less than a dozen miles north of the town of Richmond. The narrow dirt road has long since been widened and paved and is now known as Highway 13.

"I can shut my eyes right now and see it," Gretchen said. "I've read so much about UFOs in recent years and what I want to know is, could this have been a UFO?"

Possibly so, Ma'am, but some people would have you believe it was Venus or Mars or a meteor or that you all were high on religion.

Of course, Gretchen could have been pulling my leg, but I could detect no hint of guile or trickery. She first told me her story in a letter and I later interviewed her at length on the phone. She was, I felt, just a woman with a memory of something so unusual it was still fresh in her mind more than seventy years later.

SLOW TRIANGULAR OBJECTS

What is being reported more and more, especially in the United States since the 1970s, is a very large triangular or diamond-shaped object, usually flying slowly and low in the sky. Witnesses by the thousands have said the object is as big as a football field, and some say even larger.

Frequently it has two bright lights like headlights, along with a number of other lights. Usually it is silent or gives off only a faint humming sound. Sometimes it moves back and forth in one area for several hours, almost as if it wanted be seen.

Triangular-shaped objects have been reported throughout the world for years, but not as frequently as the ovals, discs, cigar shapes, fireballs and so on. When some policemen described such an object in 1977, I thought it was an isolated incident. Later that year, dozens of people in northwestern Arkansas saw a large diamond-

shaped object pass slowly overhead.

After that, I began to keep an eye out for reports of similar objects, but it wasn't until December 1980 that I realized these huge objects were being seen much more frequently than I had believed. At that time I went to north-central Missouri, where hundreds of people had seen a large triangular object for several hours one night.

Looking back through my own records and checking with other sources, I tried to try to find out how widespread these sightings might be. With help from John F. Schuessler, then an aerospace engineer who became international director of the Mutual UFO Network in 2001, and several other people, I came up with nearly two hundred such reports.

Most were of triangular-shaped objects, some diamond-shaped and some described only as a large object with two bright lights (see triangles).

It's possible there are two distinctly different objects, one triangular and the other like a diamond, or there may be only one, with the differing descriptions stemming from the fact that people see the object from different angles. Regardless, there seems to be a category of UFOs that is very large and not disc-shaped or oval-shaped.

OBJECT AS BIG AS A FIELD

The first time I ever heard of a UFO of such size was while investigating an encounter reported in Maine on the night of October 27, 1975. This was the same night a UFO penetrated the security of Loring Air Force Base at the other end of the state and hovered over the base's nuclear weapons storage area. The base has since closed.

In the case I was investigating – I didn't learn of the Loring incident until much later – a young man said he and a companion had seen two bright lights as they drove past a field late that night. At first, they thought it was a truck, but then they saw an object rise out of the field that was as large as the field itself, maybe two hundred yards long and a hundred wide.

I had trouble accepting that at the time, although the young man seemed sincere and said things under hypnosis that tended to support his story. A local police officer said that he, too, had seen what he believed was a UFO the very same night, lending further credibility to the young man's account (for details, click here).

At that time I had been a UFO reporter only about a year and had come to accept the possibility that a UFO might be the size of, say, a two-story house. But something as big as a field seemed a shade too much.

A year later, five Memphis, Tennessee, police officers saw a triangular-shaped object and two of them, who had stood almost underneath it as it hovered over a golf course, said it was as big as a football field. That, too, seemed a bit far out.

It wasn't until March 1978 that I finally accepted the idea that UFOs really could be that big and triangular-shaped.

What convinced me was a case where many people watched a large object pass slowly over a twenty-five to thirty mile stretch of Carroll County in northwestern Arkansas on the night of December 15, 1977. Over a two to three-hour period, dozens of

people saw a huge object pass overhead from west to east before it disappeared.

So they come in all sizes and shapes, from about two feet in diameter to bigger than a football stadium, from discs to triangles to basketball shapes to fireballs. Nothing surprises anymore.

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