



Flying Saucers: The Mysterious History of the UFO Phenomenon

Charles River Editors

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- *Includes accounts of purported UFO sightings and Roswell
- *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading
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“The point is that the idea of space vehicles shaped like flying saucers was imprinted in the national psyche for many years prior to 1947, when the Roswell incident took place. It didn't take much stretching for the first observers of UFOs to assume that the unknown objects hovering in the sky had the same disk shape as the science fictional vehicles.” – Frank Wu, illustrator for science fiction magazines

When people think about unidentified flying objects (UFOs), they tend to think of flying discs piloted by gray beings with large heads and enormous eyes. They tend to think that these sightings only started relatively recently and that belief in UFOs is some sort of modern religion brought on, perhaps, by the very justifiable fears of a nuclear age. But a study of the phenomenon quickly reveals that humanity has been seeing UFOs since the beginning of recorded history and perhaps a lot longer than that.

Modern Ufology focuses on mysterious lights on Ceres or tales of alien abduction, but this wasn't always the case. Looking at how belief in the UFO phenomenon has changed and how it has stayed the same sheds new light on how culture and belief changes over time. You don't have to believe humans are actually being visited by aliens from another planet to recognize the importance of UFOs in human society. Any widespread belief that endures for centuries is worthy of study, and as always, cases exist that can't be explained away as simple “belief” ...

Everyone is familiar with theories about UFOs, or “flying saucers” as they were often called then, but even this name dates back only to 1947. Before that time, they were called “ghost rockets” or “ghost airplanes” or “ghost airships.” Before the age of flight, the flying objects were called various things such as “flying chariots.” No matter what terminology is used, every generation has clearly had its own belief that mankind is not alone.

For example, few things in American history are as controversial as the Roswell Crash. The one undeniable fact is that something happened near Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947, but beyond that, the facts become murky as memories and evidence lose their luster over the years. That said, the impact of an unidentified object continues to mystify residents, visitors and the curious, and it has not only put Roswell on the map but has kept it there for thousands of tourists. Nonetheless, skepticism about the official version of the incident prevails, and a countless number of people continue to believe the American government covered up a crash landing by aliens. As John B. Alexander, Ph. D., a former project manager at the Los Alamos National Laboratory and consultant to the CIA, put it, “Attempting to come to any complete resolution of the incident is a fool's errand, as whatever the truth may have been has become so distorted over time that facts have merged inextricably with fiction.”

Flying Saucers: The Mysterious History of the UFO Phenomenon looks at the unidentified flying object

craze. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about flying saucers like never before, in no time at all.

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