

UFOs and Intelligence: A Timeline

July 5, 2025

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After an effort of many years, I have prepared a comprehensive timeline of UFO history that will be useful to UFO researchers and historians. “UFOs and Intelligence” is an up-to-date retrospective of UFO history (from the airship of Clonmacnoise to the newly appointed US investigation agency All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office), intertwined with events in US and world history concerning military and civilian intelligence agencies and the cult of secrecy. It is now more than 1,200 pages and more than 1 million words (including a substantial “Sources and Further Reading” appendix). Readers will discover or rediscover many events, people, and UFO cases they may not be familiar with. Some will find it useful for current or planned research projects. Military cases, those involving commercial aircraft, close encounters involving physical traces and other evidence, reports involving occupants or entities, and events surrounding military and sensitive nuclear sites are emphasized, but this timeline covers the full spectrum of UFO history, from contactee experiences to misidentifications of mundane phenomena and notorious hoaxes. Links to online sources are given, and links to biographical information are provided when available. A timeline like this allows us to view events from a different perspective, letting us make connections we might not otherwise see. It forces us to view the big picture, amid the grand flow of UFO cases, military security decisions, a vast swathe of personalities, and world history. As of 2022, all references have proper bibliographical citations with **embedded links**; if you have a version with **raw URL links**, it is an earlier version. **Dead links** will be repaired as quickly as possible. A special note of thanks to Jeff Knox, a UFO researcher in Washington State who has been helping me improve this document with corrections, additions, and amplifications.

597

597 (or 593), June 9 — Around midnight. At the time of the death of Abbot [Columba](#) of Iona Abbey, Iona, Inner Hebrides, Scotland, several groups of people fishing in the River Finn, County Donegal, Ireland, see an “immense pillar of fire” in the eastern sky. As it ascends, it briefly illuminates the entire area “like the summer sun at noon.” (Adomnan, *The Life of Saint Columba*, William Reeves, ed., Edmonston and Douglas, 1874, [pp. 99–100](#); Dolan, USO1, 37–38)

743

743 (or 744 or 748) — Ships with men aboard are seen in the air over Ireland, according to entries in the *Annals of Ulster*, the *Annals of Tigernach*, the *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, the *Annals of the Four Masters*, and some manuscripts of *Leabar Gabála*. Later accounts through the Middle Ages progressively expand on this with picturesque details. First the ships are reduced to one ship over Teltown, County Meath, from which a crewman throws and then recovers a fishing-spear. Then the scene shifts to the abbey of Clonmacnoise in County Offaly, and later to Britain, and the fishing-spear is changed to an anchor that snags on some feature of a church. The sailor who climbs down to release it is also said to be in danger of drowning in the thicker air of this lower world. The event is variously interpreted as unusual cloud formations, an aurora borealis, an ocean mirage, or UFOs. (Wikipedia, “[Airship of Clonmacnoise](#)”; Felix Liebrecht, “[De mari](#),” in *Des Gervasius von Tilbury Otia Imperialia*, Hannover, 1856, pp. 2–3; Kuno Meyer, “[The Irish Mirabilia in the Norse ‘Speculum Regale](#),” *Ériu* 4 (1910): 1–16; John Carey, “[Aerial Ships and Underwater Monasteries: The Evolution of a Monastic Marvel](#),” *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium* 12 (1992): 16–28; Michael McCaughan, “[Voyagers in the Vault of Heaven: The Phenomenon of Ships in the Sky in Medieval Ireland and Beyond](#),” *Material Culture Review*, vol. 48, no. 1 (Fall 1998): 170–180; Clark III 157; Clark IV 184)

776

776 — Two red shields are seen in the sky moving above the church in the hillfortress of Sigiburg [the site is now occupied by the ruins of the Hohensyburg castle] on the Syberg hill, Dortmund, Rhein-Westphalia, Germany, just

as the army of [Charlemagne](#) is assembling to retake the fort from the Saxons. ([Annales Regni Francorum](#), Anno DCCLXXVI; Andreas Müller, “[776 AD, Two Red Glowing Shields in the Sky: Charlemagne and UFOs](#),” Society for UAP Studies, December 15, 2024)

812

812 — [Agobard](#), the archbishop of Lyon, France, writes *De Grandine et Tonitruis* (“On Hail and Thunder”), in which he condemns pagan folk beliefs, such as the notion of a “certain region called Magonia, from which ships, navigating on clouds, set sail to transport back to this same region the fruits of the earth ruined by hail and destroyed by the storm.” He cites an episode in which some foolish peasants capture “three men and one woman who they said had fallen from these ships.” Brought out in front of an enraged mob, Agobard intervenes and prevents their lynching, persuading the crowd that the charges are false and absurd. Some ufologists, particularly [Jacques Vallée](#) in *Passport to Magonia*, interpret this as a visitation from an alternate reality or an abduction case, while Jean-Louis Brodu observes that in the 9th century the atmosphere was likened to an ocean in which aerial ships could navigate from point to point on the earth. Miceal Ross argues that Magonia is a corruption of *Magonianus*, relating to the city of Mahón, the port of the island of Menorca, Spain. (Wikipedia, “[Magonia](#)”; Agobard, *De la Grêle et du Tonnerre*, Lyon, 1841, [pp. 8–11](#); Jean-Louis Brodu, “Magonia: A Re-Evaluation,” *Fortean Studies* 2 (1995): 198–215; Miceal Ross, “[Anchors in a Three-Decker World](#),” *Folklore* 109 (1998): 63–75; Vallée, *Magonia*, [pp. 23–24](#); Vallée and Aubeck, *Wonders in the Sky*, Tarcher, 2009, [pp. 70–73](#); Pierre Chambert-Protat, “[Florus de Lyon et les Extra-terrestres](#),” *Florus de Lyon*, November 4, 2014; Pierre Lagrange, “[Agobard, la Magonie et les ovnis](#),” *Actualité*, no. 440 (October 2017): 28–29; Clark III 157, 1213–1214; Clark IV 184, 1389–1390)

939

939, June 1 — A fire is said to arise from the Bay of Biscay and set several towns in northern Spain ablaze, including part of Zamora, Carrión, Castrojeriz, Burgos, Birviesca, Calzada, Pancorbo, and Buradón. Possible meteorite fall or a fall of multiple meteorites. (“[939 Era DCCCCLXXVII](#),” *Chronicon Burgense*, in Enrique Flórez, ed. *España Sagrada*, vol. 23, Madrid, 1767, p. 308; Francisco de Berganza, *Antigüedades de España, propugnadas en las noticias de sus reyes, en la Coronica del Real Monasterio de San Pedro de Cardena*, Francisco del Hierro, 1721, [p. 588](#); George Moir, ed., *Table-Talk; or, Selections from the Ana, Containing Extracts from the Different Collections of Ana, French, English, Italian, and German*, Constable & Company, 1827, vol. 10, [pp. 280–281](#); Pio Ballesteros, “[Un extraño meteoro de Siglo X](#),” *Iberica: El progreso de las ciencias y de sus aplicaciones* 18 (July 1, 1922): 14–15; Dolan, USO1, 38; Jason Colavito, “[What Richard Dolan Got Wrong about the Spanish ‘USO’ of 939 C.E.](#),” Jason Colavito Blog, July 1, 2025)

1060

1060 (approximately) — A large luminous object (a “pearl”) begins to appear near Yangzhou, China, for a period of 10 years. At first it is seen in a swamp, then it changes location to two different lakes. A friend of the author sees it one night when it opens a door so that light shoots out from the crack “like a golden ray.” The door opens further, revealing a bright, silvery light inside, so much so that the trees are illuminated as if by a sunrise. Suddenly it takes off through the air and over the water, “shining like the sun.” It appears so frequently that the location attracts regular tourists, but it stops appearing and people search for it in vain. (Wikipedia, “[Dream Pool Essays](#)”; Paul Dong, *The Four Major Mysteries of Mainland China*, Prentice-Hall, 1984, [pp. 69–72](#); Shen Kuo, “[Brush Talks from Dream Book](#),” in *The Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, Columbia University, 1994, p. 593; Clark IV 190, 1221, 1272; Dolan, USO1, 41–42)

1071

1071, December — The scholar-official [Su Shi](#) watches a large light emerge from the Yangtze River near Zhenjiang, China, scaring away some mountain birds. (Shi Bo, *La Chine et les extraterrestres*, Mercure de France, 1983, p. 26; Dolan, USO1, 42–43)

1252

1252 — A bright globe of light nearly as large as the moon is seen above Padua, Italy, for one hour before vanishing. It moves faster than the moon, just as fast as a falling star. (Rolandino of Padua, *Cronica in Factis circa Facta Marchiae Trivixane*, a cura di Antonio Bonardi, in *Raccolta degli Storici Italiani...ordinata da L. A. Muratori*, vol. 8, part 1, Castella, 1908, [p. 100](#))

1290

1290, October 28 — The story of a large silver disk seen in the sky over Byland Abbey, in North Yorkshire, England, is a hoax perpetrated by two British teenagers in 1953. ([Letter], *London Times*, January 9, 1953; Desmond Leslie and George Adamski, *Flying Saucers Have Landed*, British Book Centre, 1953, [pp. 22–23](#); Condon, [pp. 493–495](#); Jason Colavito, "[The Byland Abbey UFO Sighting: Anatomy of a Hoax](#)," Jason Colavito blog, May 4, 2015)

1440

1440 — [Nicholas of Cusa](#) publishes *On Learned Ignorance*, in which he advocates not only the idea of a plurality of worlds but also the existence of life on the moon and sun. (Wikipedia, "[De Docta Ignorantia](#)")

1457

1457 — French theologian [William Vorilong](#) agrees that God could create another inhabited world, but adds that [Jesus of Nazareth](#) only redeemed this world. God would have to address the issue of sin in other worlds on an individual basis. (David Darling, "[Encyclopedia](#)")

1461

1461, November 1 — Night. A bright object like a long and thick iron bar is seen in the vicinity of Arras, France. It appears as bright as the full moon and remains visible for about 7 minutes, apparently moving in a spiral. (Frédéric de Reiffenberg, ed., *Mémoires de J. du Clercq*, vol. 3, [chapter 37](#), Brussels, 1823, p. 189; Jason Colavito, "[The UFO over Arras on November 1, 1461: Six Decades of Translation Issues](#)," Jason Colavito blog, March 22, 2015)

1492

1492, October 11 — 10:00 p.m. Standing on the deck of the *Santa María*, [Christopher Columbus](#) sees a light in the distance "like a small wax candle that rose and lifted up." Another sailor also sees the faint light. Columbus considers it an indication of land, and he indeed makes landfall on San Salvador Island, or one of the other islands in the Bahamas, about four hours later. Historians attribute the light to canoes, fires onshore, or bioluminescence. ("[The Diario of Christopher Columbus \(October 11–15, 1492\)](#)," History Is a Weapon; Washington Irving, ed., *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus*, G. & C. Carvill, 1828, vol. 1, [p. 146](#); Laura Geggel, "[A Mysterious Light Gleamed as Columbus Drew Near](#)," *New York Times*, Green blog, October 8, 2012; Dolan, USO1, 44–46)

1532

1532 — [Juan Maldonado](#), a Spanish cleric, writes *Somnium*, in which he travels to the Moon in a dream. There he is taken to a lunar city, whose houses around the square are identical and symmetrical. The building is exceptional, with fine materials which remind him of the New Jerusalem. The temple's central location and its wonderful execution stand out. The inhabitants play, dance, and bathe in a lake in the center of the city. They are all equal and treat each other with respect. He finally comes back to the Earth, to a city in America, where he talks to locals who are Christians. (“[Utopian Texts](#)”; Daniel Garcia Valdes, “[Somnium, de Juan Maldonado: ¿Primera novela de ciencia ficción de la historia?](#)” La Soga: Revista Cultural, January 13, 2020)

1547

1547, December 15 — Mariners in the port of Hamburg, Germany, see a fireball moving to the south. Its rays are so hot that passengers cannot remain inside the ships. Thinking the vessels are about to burn, they hide and take cover. (Simon Goulart, *Thrésor d'histoires admirables et mémorables de nostre temps*, Geneva, 1600, [vol. 1, p. 55](#))

1561

1561, April 14 — Dusk. A “frightening vision” is seen in the sky above Nuremberg, Germany, said to be observed by many. Printer [Hans Glaser](#) describes in his broadside many blood-red, blue, and black balls or discs near the Sun. “They were three alongside each other, sometimes four in a square, and several alone, and between these balls blood-colored crosses” are seen. Two “great pipes” (cannon) are also observed, and everything starts to “fight against each other.” The battle lasts about one hour, then the burning balls fall to the earth and vanish on the ground. Although cited as a possible early UFO report, the narrative is simply about a battle in the sky by phantom armies told as an allegory of what awaits an unrepentant humanity on Judgment Day. A meteorological cause is also possible. (“[Nürnberger Flugblatt von 1561](#),” Wikipedia; Hans Glaser, *Himmelserscheinung über Nürnberg am 14. April 1561*, Holzschnitt, 1561; Carl Jung, *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies*, Mentor ed., 1969, pp. 103–104, between pp. 120–121; Frank Johnson, “[Nuremberg 1561 UFO ‘Battle’ Debunked](#),” Ancient Aliens Debunked, December 12, 2012; Ulrich Magin, “A UFO in the Year 1561,” *Fortean Times* 283 (February 2012): 40–42; Ulrich Magin, “[Ein UFO im Jahr 1561?](#)”; “[14th April 1561: The Nuremberg Celestial Phenomenon](#),” HistoryPod YouTube channel, April 13, 2015)

1566

1566, July 27–28, August 7 — Sunrise. In Basel, Switzerland, numerous large black balls are said to have been seen passing around the sun, apparently engaged in a fight. Many turn red and are extinguished. [Ulrich Magin](#) suggests that the description is an apocryphal sky battle that is a warning sign from God. (“[Basler Flugblatt von 1566](#),” Wikipedia; Samuel Koch, *Seltzame gestalt so in diesem M.D.LXVI. Jar Gegen auffgang und nidergang, under dreyen malen am Himmel ist gesehen worden, zu Basel auff den xxvij. Und xxvij. Höwmonat und volgends auf den vij Augsten*, Basel, Samuel Apiarius, 1558)

1584

1584 — Italian philosopher [Giordano Bruno](#) introduces in his *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* the idea of multiple worlds supporting the infinite possibilities of a pristine, indivisible One. His character Philotheo claims that “innumerable celestial bodies, stars, globes, suns, and earths may be sensibly perceived therein by us and an infinite number of them may be inferred by our own reason.” (Wikipedia, “[De l'infinito, universe e mondi](#)”; Giordano Bruno, *De l'infinito universo e mondi*, Venice, 1584)

1608

1608 — German astronomer [Johannes Kepler](#) writes *Somnium* to describe what practicing astronomy would be like from the perspective of another planet and to show the feasibility of a non-geocentric system. The manuscript, which disappears after changing hands several times, describes a fantastic trip to the Moon; it is part allegory, part autobiography, and part treatise on interplanetary travel, and is sometimes described as the first work of science fiction. It is published posthumously by his son, Ludwig Kepler. (Wikipedia, "[Somnium \(novel\)](#)"; Johannes Kepler, *Somnium, seu opus posthumum De astronomia lunari*, Frankfurt, 1634)

1627

1627 — English bishop [Francis Godwin](#) writes *The Man in the Moone*, describing a Spaniard named Gonsales who flies to the Moon (with the help of some swans) and visits people there who are Christians living in a utopian society. The Lunars speak a language consisting "not so much of words and letters as tunes and strange sounds," which Gonsales succeeds in gaining some fluency in after a couple of months. He discovers that their unruly children are swapped out for better-behaved kids on Earth. (Wikipedia, "[The Man in the Moone](#)")

1630

1630, January 25 — 7:00 p.m. German astronomer [Wilhelm Schickard](#) observes a bright-white oval or egg-shaped object in the northern sky above Tübingen, Germany. The object is later joined by two other white shapes, although in differing stages of intensity. One looks like an "overturned cauldron," while the other is similar to a "long whetstone ground down on both sides." The cloud-like objects do not flicker like stars but seem to fade in and out of visibility. Colored lights also appear around the original object over a period of three hours. (Wilhelm Schickard, *Beschreibung des Wunder-Zeichens, welches Montags den 25. Januar 1630 gegen Norden gesehen worden*, 1630; Andreas Müller, "[Prof. Wilhelm Schickard \(1592–1635\): UFO-Zeuge und Deutschlands erster UFO-Forscher.](#)" *grenzWissenschaft-aktuelle.de*, August 19, 2023)

1632

1632 — Italian astronomer [Galileo Galilei](#) writes in *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* that if life exists on the Moon, it must be "extremely diverse and far beyond our imagining." (Wikipedia, "[Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems](#)")

1638

1638 — English clergyman and philosopher [John Wilkins](#) writes *The Discovery of a World in the Moone*, in which he highlights the similarities of the Earth and the Moon (seas, mountains, atmosphere) and concludes that the Moon is likely to be inhabited by living beings, whom he calls "Selenites." (John Wilkins, *The Discovery of a World in the Moone*, 1638; Maria Avxentevskaya, "[How 17th Century Dreamers Planned to Reach the Moon.](#)" *Real Clear Science*, December 2, 2017)

1638 — Night. [James Everell](#) and two companions are crossing the Muddy River near Boston, Massachusetts, in a boat when a "great light" appears above them. It darts back and forth across the river, sometimes hovering and "flaming up," for about 2–3 hours. After they stop watching it, they discover that their boat has moved about one mile against the current to the place where they had embarked. (John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, Little, Brown, 1853, [vol. 1, pp. 349–350](#))

1644

1644, January 18 — 12:00 midnight. Three men in a boat near Boston, Massachusetts, watch two lights rise out of the water, move toward the town, and disappear after 15 minutes. One week later, two lights are again seen around 8:00 p.m., moving back and forth above Nottles Island in Boston harbor. (John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, Little, Brown, 1853, [vol. 2, p. 184](#); Daniel Tobias Hinchey, “[“Great Sights upon the Water...”: Unexplained Phenomena in Early Boston](#),” The Beehive, January 23, 2019)

1647

1647, June 6 — French philosopher [René Descartes](#) in a letter opines that he sees no reason why God would not create intelligent creatures in the stars. ([Letter to Pierre Chanut](#), in *Oeuvres des Descartes*, ed. Charles Adam and Paul Tannery, 1903, vol. 5, pp. 54–55)

1648

1648, June — Evening. People in New Haven, Connecticut, see the form of a ship’s keel with three masts, complete with sails, in the air above the harbor. A man can be seen standing on the deck with a sword. Soon some smoke issues from the apparition, engulfing it, and it vanishes. (John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, Little, Brown, 1853, vol. 2, [pp. 399–400](#))

1657

1657 — The French dramatist [Cyrano de Bergerac](#)’s novel, *L’Autre monde ou les états et empires de la Lune* is published, detailing his attempts to reach the Moon to prove there is a civilization that sees the Earth as its own moon. (Wikipedia, “[Comical History of the States and Empires of the Moon](#)”)

1661

1661, October — Afternoon. More than a dozen people are walking along the southern shore of the River Severn near Bristol, England, when they supposedly see a kite-like object ascend from the water and take the form of a cloud. Within the cloud they see, at various times, a black man moving swiftly, a man on horseback, and a beautiful woman. Afterward, the cloud disperses. Most likely a political allegory related to the Restoration of [Charles II](#). (*Mirabilis Annus Secundus, or The Second Year of Prodigies*, 1662, [pp. 10–11](#); Dolan, USO1, 40–41)

1663

1663, August 15 — 12:00 noon. The faithful gathered in a church in a village near Lake Zarobozero, Vologda Oblast, Russia, hear a loud noise outside and see a large ball of fire descend from the north and then head south following the lake, low over its surface. The fireball seems to measure about 140 feet across and has blue smoke issuing from its sides. Two fiery rays extend from its front part. Less than an hour later, a similar fireball reappears over the same lake. Moving from south to west, the object again disappears. It reappears a third time a short while later, this time larger than before, and stays over the lake for an hour and a half. Peasants in a boat try to get close to it, but the heat is too intense. The water of the lake is illuminated to a depth of 30 feet, and fish are seen swimming away from the object, which then flies off to the west. (*Akty istoricheskie, sobranye i izdanye Arkheograficheskaja Kommissiia*, Vol. 4, Saint Petersburg, 1842, [pp. 331–332](#); Hobana and Weverbergh 54–61; Paul Stonehill, *The Soviet UFO Files*, 1998, pp. 16–17; Jacques Vallée and Chris Aubeck, *Wonders in the Sky*, Tarcher, 2009, [pp. 215–217](#); Thomas E. Bullard, “[Defending UFOs](#),” *IUR* 34, no. 2 (March 2012): 31; “[Russian Fireball Weirdness, 1663](#),” Beachcombing’s Bizarre History Blog, March 8, 2014; Clark III 163–164; Stonehill and Mantle, *Russia’s USO Secrets*, Flying Disk, 2020, pp. 157–161; Clark IV 190–191; Dolan, UDO1, 43–44)

1665

1665, April 8 — 6:00 p.m. Numerous wonders are seen in the sky over Stralsund, Germany, including ships, large flocks of birds, fire, and smoke, as well as a dark “round flat form like a plate and like a big man’s hat” that hovers above St. Nicholas Church for one hour. Witnesses include several fishermen who later complain of tremors in their hands and feet. ([Eine abgebildete Beschreibung von dem wunderbarlichen Stralsundischen Lufft-Kriege und Schiff-streite](#), Leipzig, 1665; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 23–38; Andreas Müller, “[UFO 1665: Sonderausstellung in der Kunstbibliothek Berlin widmet sich historischen Darstellungen unidentifizierter Flugobjekte und Phänomene](#),” *grenzWissenschaft-aktuelle.de*, May 3, 2023; Moritz Wullen, “[A UFO in 1665: The Air Battle of Stralsund](#),” Kunstbibliothek, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, May 5, 2023)

1686

1686 — French philosopher [Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle](#) writes *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, in which he expresses the idea that the stars are distant suns that might have their own planetary systems, including the possibility of extraterrestrial life. He imagines Venusians to be “little black people, scorched with the Sun, full of fire, very amorous.” (Wikipedia, “[Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds](#)”)

1698

1698 — Dutch astronomer [Christiaan Huygens](#) has a work posthumously published, *Cosmotheoros* (or, in its English title *Celestial Worlds Discover’d: Or, Conjectures Concerning the Inhabitants, Plants and Productions of the Worlds in the Planets*) that will within two decades be available in five languages beyond its original Latin version. He speculates that other planets also harbor plant and animal life. (Christiaan Huygens, [Celestial Worlds Discover’d](#), 1722)

1717

1717, March 6 — 2:00 a.m. [François Antoine Ricouart](#), captain of the French frigate [La Valeur](#), is navigating southwest of Martinique in the Caribbean Sea, when he observes an object like a ship’s mast pass alongside, standing up about 2 feet above the water. (Michel Bougard, *La chronique des OVNI*, Jean-Pierre Delarge, 1977, p. 104; Dolan, *USO1*, 51–52)

1737

1737, December 5 — 5:00 p.m. Physician [Thomas Short](#) witnesses a blood-red luminous display in the sky around Sheffield, England, which moves from west to north and then to the east. The cause seems to be one or more clouds in which are embedded brilliant lights as bright as the full moon that give off slow-moving streamers or rays. The display is accompanied by unseasonable heat and lasts until 10:30 p.m. Short hears that a similar phenomenon is seen at the same time in Venice, Italy, and Kilkenny, Ireland, where it appears as a bursting fireball. (Thomas Short, “[An Account of Several Meteors](#),” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 41 (1741): 625–627)

1737, December 6 — Afternoon. A large, blood-red object is seen in the western sky at Bucharest, Wallachia [now Romania]. It lingers for two hours before splitting up then reuniting once again. The phenomenon is said to have occurred at night in the Banat region. (Hobana and Weverbergh 222; Romania 4)

1740

1740, February 23 — Night. A purple globe of fire is seen slowly rising above the harbor of Toulon, France. It plunges into the water, then rises up again and explodes with a loud blast like a bomb, breaking into several fireballs that fall either into the sea or nearby hills. The witnesses are interviewed by [Jacques Nompard de Caumont](#), 7th Duke of La Force, who passes the information on to [René Antoine Ferchault de Réaumur](#) of the Académie des Sciences. (“[Observations de phisique generale](#),” *Histoire de l’Academie Royale des Sciences*, 1740, tome 1, pp. 3–4; Dolan, USO1, 52–53)

1741

1741, September 21 — Dawn. Parson-naturalist [Gilbert White](#) wakes up at his vicarage in Selborne, Hampshire, England, and finds the neighboring clover fields matted all over with a thick coat of cobwebs, laced with dew. The dogs are blinded by it when they attempt to hunt. At 9:00 a.m. more cobwebs fall from the sky and continue until dusk. They are “perfect flakes or rags; some near an inch broad, and five or six long, which fell with a degree of velocity that showed they were considerably heavier than the atmosphere.” The fall extends to the neighboring villages of New Alresford and Bradley. (Gilbert White, *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, 1789, [Letter XXIII](#); Clark III 123; Clark IV 151)

1742

1742, December 16? — 8:40 p.m. Physician [Cromwell Mortimer](#), secretary of the Royal Society, is walking through St. James’s Park in Westminster, London, England, when he sees a light ascend from behind the trees and houses in the southwest. When it reaches 20° against the sky, it takes a horizontal path with an undulating motion before disappearing in the northeast after a full 30 seconds. The front part is luminous with a frame-like structure behind it, and it has a faint trail. The date is questionable since Mortimer calls this a “Thursday” and December 16 was a Sunday. ([A Note by Cromwell Mortimer](#)], *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 43 (1745): 524–525)

1745

1745, July 14 — Astronomer [George Costard](#) observes a meteoric stream of fire whose trail persists for at least one hour at Standlake Broad west of Oxford, England. (“Part of a Letter from the Reverend Mr. Geo. Costard to Mr. John Catlin, concerning a Fiery Meteor Seen in the Air on July 14, 1745,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 43 (1745): [522–524](#))

1749

1749, November 4 — 11:50 a.m. The crew of the [HMS Montagu](#) watches a large blue fireball, apparently low on the water, head directly toward them from the northeast and explode some 150 feet away from the ship, causing some damage to the mast, before it continues on toward the southwest. The incident takes place in the North Atlantic Ocean some 240 miles west of Cape Finisterre, Spain. (Chalmers, “[An Account of an Extraordinary Fireball Bursting at Sea](#),” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 46 (1752): 366–367; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 67–75; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 2, Anomalist, 2021, pp. 105–114)

1755

1755, March — German philosopher [Immanuel Kant](#) publishes *Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens*, in which he theorizes that distance from the Sun determines the intelligence level of a world’s inhabitants; thus, the people who live on Mercury are the stupidest, and the Venusians are only dimly brighter—making any Jupiterians and Saturnians much smarter than earthlings. (Wikipedia, “[Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens](#)”)

1756

- 1756** — Scottish astronomer [James Ferguson](#) writes *Astronomy Explained upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles*, proclaiming the certainty of a plurality of inhabited worlds “peopled with myriads of intelligent beings, formed for endless progression in perfection and felicity.” (James Ferguson, *Astronomy Explained upon Sir Isaac Newton's Principles*, 8th ed., London, 1790, [p. 6](#); Matthew Goodman, *The Sun and the Moon*, Basic Books, 2008, pp. 189–190)
- 1756**, November 27 — A luminous object, as large as the full moon, passes from southwest to northeast above a town in Sweden. It brightens the landscape and leaves a trail of thick smoke. (“[Historical Chronicle](#),” *Gentleman's Magazine* 26 (1756): 38)

1758

- 1758** — Swedish theologian and mystic [Emanuel Swedenborg](#) writes in *The Earths in the Universe* that that he has conversed with spirits from Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Saturn, Venus, and the Moon, as well as spirits from planets beyond the solar system. From these encounters, he concludes that the planets are all inhabited and that such an enormous undertaking as the universe cannot have been created for just one race on one planet. (Emanuel Swedenborg, *The Earths in the Universe*, London, 1875; Clark III 298; Richard Smoley, “[Is There Really Life on Other Planets?](#)” Swedenborg Foundation, February 15, 2019; Clark IV 203, 337–338)

1759

- 1759**, April 27 — 4:00 p.m. Following a clap of thunder, a flat, pale object is seen “dancing” in the sky over Longdon, Somerset, England. It is joined by three similar objects, all of which move from west to east for 30 seconds and disappear in a cloud. (London *Universal Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, May 5, 1759; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 83–96)

1762

- 1762**, August 9 — 12:00 noon. An amateur astronomer named de Rostan is observing the Sun at Lausanne, Switzerland, when he notices a large, spindle-shaped body moving across the solar disc from east to west at a slower rate of speed than sunspots move. It is surrounded by a thin “nebulosity.” An observer named Croste in Solothurn, Switzerland, also observes the object, but French astronomer [Charles Messier](#), who is also taking solar measurements in Paris, France, does not see it. It remains visible until September 7, when it passes the Sun's western limb. (“[Observation Astronomique](#),” *Histoire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences*, 1766, pp. 106–107; “[An Account of a Very Singular Phaenomenon Seen in the Disk of the Sun](#),” *Annual Register*, 1766, pp. 120–122; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 2, Anomalist, 2021, pp. 33–45)

1767

- 1767**, September 9 — A cloud “like a house on fire” that soon takes on a pyramidal form is seen traveling along the course of the River Isla near Coupar Angus, Perth, Scotland. It moves northeast to the confluence of the River Erich and follows that stream to the west toward Blairgowrie where it disappears. It is accompanied by strong winds that destroy two houses. (*Annual Register*, 1767, [pp. 127–128](#); “[Scotland UFO Report from the Year 1767](#),” Filer's Files, #34-2000, August 28, 2000; Dolan, USO1, 53–56)

1775

1775 — [Louis-Guillaume de Lafolie](#) writes *Le Philosophe sans prétention*, a work of proto-science fiction in which he follows a narrator, an Arab named Nadir who, in a vision, beholds the voyages of a Mercurian named Ormisais. In his description of life on Mercury, Ormisais relates the workings of an elite scientific-literary organization (like the British Royal Society) but much more restrictive, with only a dozen members. One of the applicants for the latest vacancy is a young inventor, Scintilla, the true hero of the tale. He shows the Academy members his flying machine, “an elaborate combination of wheels, globes of glass, springs, wires, glass-covered wooden uprights, a plate rubbed with camphor and covered with gold leaf.” After a short demonstration flight, Ormisais is chosen to take the trip to Earth, but he crashes and is stranded, a stranger in a strange land. He tells Nadir that it took him 500 hours to ascend or descend to Earth; the universe, he says, has neither height nor depth nor center nor frontiers. (Chris Aubeck, *Alien Artifacts, Volume 1: From Antiquity to 1880*, The Author, 2022, p. 35)

1777

1777, June 17 — 11:46 a.m. French astronomer [Charles Messier](#) views a large number of round, dark-brown globules passing in front of the disc of the sun for 5 minutes from west-southwest to east-northeast. He sees them through an achromatic refractor at the naval observatory located in the Hôtel de Cluny in Paris, France. His estimate of their size (one-600th the size of the solar disc) puts them near the limit of resolution for his telescope, but Messier claims the objects are far away and in focus. Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht conclude, based on the telescope Messier used and his observational data, that the globules were “not grossly out-of-focus nearby particles” (in other words an optical artifact) and probably were objects at a distance of several miles or so away. What those objects were is impossible to determine today. (Charles Messier, “[Observation singulière d’une prodigieuse quantité de petits globules qui ont passé devant le disque du soleil, le 17 juin 1777.](#)” *Mémoires de l’Académie Royale des Sciences*, 1777, pp. 464–472; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 7–18)

1783

1783 — British astronomer [William Herschel](#) has been observing the lunar surface since the mid-1770s in Bath, England, and writes journal entries in which he details sightings of immense trees, forests, and pastures, comparing it to the English countryside. By 1778, he is seeing circular formations that he thinks are towns and villages. He also notes canals, roads, and patches of vegetation, but never writes about it publicly, since he knows that telescopic observations can be tricky. (George Basalla, *Civilized Life in the Universe*, Oxford University, 2006, [pp. 51–52](#))

1783, August 18 — 9:15–9:30 p.m. An unusually bright bolide is observed in the British Isles on a clear, dry night. Analysis indicates that the meteor has entered the Earth’s atmosphere over the North Sea, before passing over the east coast of Scotland, England, and the English Channel; it finally breaks up, after a passage within the atmosphere of around 1,000 miles, over southwestern France or northern Italy. Perhaps the most prominent witness is [Tiberius Cavallo](#), an Italian natural philosopher who happens to be among a group of people on the terrace at Windsor Castle, Berkshire, England, at the time the meteor appears. (Wikipedia, “[1783 Great Meteor](#)”; Tiberius Cavallo, “[Description of a Meteor, Observed Aug. 18, 1783.](#)” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 74 (1784): 108–111; Charles Blagden, “[An Account of Some Late Fiery Meteors.](#)” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 74 (1784): 202–232; Martin Beech, “[The Great Meteor of 18th August 1783.](#)” *Journal of the British Astronomical Association* 99 (1989): 130–134; Roberta J. M. Olson and Jay M. Pasachoff, *Fire in the Sky: Comets and Meteors, the Decisive Centuries, in British Art and Science*, Cambridge University, 1989, [pp. 63–78](#); Kaushik Patowary, “[The Great Meteor of 1783.](#)” *Amusing Planet*, September 8, 2021)

1783, September 19 — The [Montgolfier brothers](#), Joseph-Michel and Jacques-Étienne, publicly demonstrate their *Aérostat Réveillon* balloon at Versailles, France, for [Louis XVI](#) and [Marie Antoinette](#). It is flown with the first living beings in a basket attached to the balloon: a sheep called Montauciel (“Climb-to-the-sky”), a duck, and a rooster. The sheep is believed to have a reasonable approximation of human physiology. The duck is expected to be unharmed by being lifted aloft. It is included as a control for effects created by the aircraft rather than the altitude. The rooster is included as a further control, as it is a bird that does not fly at high altitudes. The flight

lasts approximately eight minutes, covers 2 miles, and reaches an altitude of about 1,500 feet. Some 100,000 people witness the event. The craft lands safely in the woods of Vaucresson, with the sheep unperturbed, the duck upset, and rooster killed with a broken neck. (Wikipedia, "[Montgolfier brothers](#)"; *The Romance of Ballooning: The Story of the Early Aeronauts*, Viking Press, 1971, pp. 18–19; C. C. Gillispie, *The Montgolfier Brothers and the Invention of Aviation, 1783–1784*, Princeton University, 1983, pp. 92–93)

1783, November 21 — 1:54 p.m. The first balloon to carry humans aloft in free flight is launched by the [Montgolfier brothers](#) in a public demonstration at the Château de la Muette in Paris. The aeronauts are [Jean-François Pilâtre de Rozier](#) and [François Laurent d'Arlandes](#). They take off, observed by [Louis XVI](#), various members of the court and Academy, and [Benjamin Franklin](#). The balloon travels slowly for 25 minutes and 5.5 miles to the southeast, attaining a height of 3,000 feet. Burning embers are scorching the balloon fabric and have to be daubed out with sponges and Pilâtre's coat, so even though they have fuel remaining, they return to the ground at Butte-aux-Cailles between two windmills. Upon landing, the pilots drink champagne. (Wikipedia, "[Montgolfier brothers](#)"; *The Romance of Ballooning: The Story of the Early Aeronauts*, Viking Press, 1971, pp. 20–21; C. C. Gillispie, *The Montgolfier Brothers and the Invention of Aviation, 1783–1784*, Princeton University, 1983; Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder*, Vintage, 2008; S. L. Kotar and J. E. Gessler, *Ballooning: A History, 1782–1900*, McFarland, 2011, pp. 9–17)

1790

1790, June 12 — 5:00 a.m. Several farmers in Alençon, Normandy, France, see a large globe surrounded by flames and making a whistling sound. The object slows, oscillates, and moves toward the top of a hill, unearthing some plants along the slope. The heat is so intense that grass and small trees start burning. In the evening the sphere is still warm. Witnesses include two mayors, a doctor, and three other authorities in addition to the dozens of peasants who are present. A kind of door opens and a person emerges. He is dressed in a tight-fitting suit and, seeing all the people, says some words that are not understood. He runs into the woods. The sphere explodes silently, throwing pieces everywhere, and these pieces burn until they are powder. The original source is allegedly from a June 17 report by a Police Inspector Liabeuf and forwarded to the French Academy of Sciences. However, the Academy reported in 2006 that it has no knowledge of such a report in its archives. Probable hoax. (Alberto Fenoglio, "[Antichi Visitatori dal Cielo](#)," *Clypeus* 3, n. 3 (1966): 13–14; Gordon Creighton, "[A Landing in France in 1790](#)," *Flying Saucer Review* 13, no. 5 (Sept./Oct. 1967): 10; Vallée, *Magonia*, pp. 60–61; "[1790 UFO Crash or Time Traveller?](#)" Cool Interesting Stuff, June 1, 2014; Clark IV 1258)

1794

1794, August 20 — 7:45 p.m. Witnesses in Balasore, Odisha, India, watch a meteor descending into the nearby hills, making short and frequent pauses. After falling below the hills, it rises and falls two more times. (*The Star* (London), March 14, 1795; Jacques Vallée and Chris Aubeck, *Wonders in the Sky*, Tarcher, 2009, [p. 272](#))

1798

1798, September 10 — Before midnight. Schoolmaster Alexander Campbell and one other person observe a "remarkable comet, or meteor" at Alnwick, Northumberland, England. It rapidly increases in brightness, changing from a star-like object to a shape like "two half-moons, back to back, having a short luminous stream between the two backs" over the course of 5 minutes. (*Annual Register* 1798, [p. 83](#))

1801

1801 — British astronomer [William Herschel](#) writes that the Sun's cold interior is inhabited. (George Basalla, *Civilized Life in the Universe*, 2006, [pp. 52–53](#))

1803

1803, February 22 (or March 24) — An attractive young woman aged 18–20 years old arrives on a beach aboard a “hollow ship” (*Utsuro-bune*) that looks like a rice cooking pot or incense burner in Hitachi province, Japan. Fishermen bring her inland to investigate further, but the woman is unable to communicate in Japanese. She is dressed in a foreign fashion made of unknown fabrics and is clutching an ornate box also marked with the unknown script. The vessel is covered in hieroglyphs that no one can decipher. The fishermen return her and her vessel to the sea, where it drifts away. Accounts of the tale appear in three texts: *Toen shōsetsu* (1825), *Hyōryū kishū* (1835), and *Ume-no-chiri* (1844), but no official records mention it. (Wikipedia, “[Utsuro-bune](#)”; Kazuo Tanaka, “[Did a Close Encounter of the Third Kind Occur on a Japanese Beach in 1803?](#)” *Skeptical Inquirer* 24, no. 4 (July/August 2000): 37–60; Masaru Mori, “The Female Alien in a Hollow Vessel,” *Fortean Times* 48 (Spring 1987): 48–50; Junji Numakawa, “[On a UFO-Shaped Boat in 1803.](#)” *UFO Criticism* 1, no 1 (January 2001): 2–3; Shoichi Kamon [pseud. of Tanaka Kazuo], *The Mystery of Utsuro-bune: Ancient UFO Encounter in Japan?* Flying Disk Press, 2019; Tanaka Kazuo, “[‘Utsurobune’: A UFO Legend from Nineteenth-Century Japan.](#)” nippon.com, June 26, 2020; “[Japan’s 200-Year-Old UFO Mystery: Close Encounter of the Third Kind?](#)” Japanese Tales, September 17, 2020; “[A UFO with a Female Alien Flew to Japan 220 Years Ago? Mysterious Record of the ‘Utsuro-bune.’](#)” Medium: Otakupapa, May 20, 2024; “[UFO Landed in Japan 220 Years Ago? The Mystery of the Utsuro-Bune.](#)” Medium: Otakupapa, June 28, 2024)

1808

1808, May 16 — 4:00 p.m. Swedish lichenologist [Erik Acharius](#) watches a stream of dark-brown spherical objects moving slowly through the sky in a straight line over Biskopsberga, near Skänninge, Sweden. Some hover temporarily and speed up, while others fall to earth. The objects appear in the western sky and stream to the east for 2 hours. Some are apparently linked together in groups of three, six, or eight, and all of them have some kind of trail. A few of them fall in the vicinity of K. G. Wettermark, who has also been observing. They resemble soap bubbles and dissipate quickly, leaving a film like cobweb. (Erik Acharius, “[Besynnerligt Meteor-Phenoméén.](#)” *Konglige Svenska Vetenskapsakademiens Handlingar*, ser. 2, vol. 29 (July/September 1808): 215–218; “[Account of an Extraordinary Meteoric Phenomenon.](#)” *North American Review* 3 (1816): 320–322; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 18–29; Clark III 1101; Clark IV 1227)

1813

1813 — A 15-year-old German girl develops a mediumship in which she makes repeated trips to the moon, led by deceased relatives, and describes the scenery. (C. Römer, *Ausführliche historische Darstellung einer höchst merkwürdigen Somnambule nebst dem Versuche einer philosophischen Würdigung des Magnetismus*, Metzler, 1821; Frank Podmore, *Mesmerism and Christian Science*, George W. Jacobs, 1909, [p. 213](#); Clark IV 203)

1813, April 8 — Day. The US merchant ship *Niagara*, under Captain Merry, is sailing southwestward in the Atlantic Ocean about 40 miles south of Nova Scotia when the crew sees a “large hump” in the water 6–8 miles northwest of their position. As they draw closer, they realize it is moving. They estimate it is 200 feet long, 30 feet wide, and extending 17–18 feet above the surface. Near its head is a large hole or archway. (“Something Strange,” *Plattsburgh (N.Y.) Republican*, May 14, 1813, p. 1; Jacques Vallée and Chris Aubeck, *Wonders in the Sky*, Jeremy P. Tarcher, 2009, [pp. 292–293](#); USO1, 56–58)

1819

1819, August 13 — 8:00–9:00 p.m. A brilliant white fireball streaks across the sky at Amherst, Massachusetts. The next morning, Erastus Dewey finds a strange substance 20 feet from his front door and assumes it is residue from the meteorite. It is about 8 inches in diameter, resembles an upside-down salad dish, and consists of buff-colored pulpy substance with an overwhelmingly bad smell. It is covered with a nap that, when removed, causes the interior to liquefy and form a starchy substance. A couple days later, it largely dissipates. Geologist [Edward](#)

[Hitchcock](#) thinks it is some kind of “gelatinous fungus” common to the area in the late summer. (Rufus Graves, “[Account of a Gelatinous Meteor](#),” *American Journal of Science* 2 (1820): 335–337; Edward Hitchcock, “[On the Meteors of Nov. 13, 1833](#),” *American Journal of Science* 25 (1834): 354, 362–363; Clark III 1101; Clark IV 1227–1228)

1820

1820, February 12 — 10:45 a.m. A German astronomer and cleric named Steinhübel watches a clearly defined dark orange-red spot traversing the disc of the Sun in about five hours. Canon Augustin Stark also observes the object at a slightly different time from Augsburg, Germany; it has an orange-gold tint. (Richard C. Carrington, “[On Some Previous Observations of Supposed Planetary Bodies in Transit over the Sun](#),” *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* 20 (1860): 192–194; Joseph Johann von Littrow, “[Further Note on the Supposed Observation of an Intra-Mercurial Planet on the 12th of February, 1820](#),” *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society* 22 (1862): 276)

1824

1824 — Bavarian astronomer [Franz von Gruithuisen](#) of Munich, Germany, writes *Discovery of Many Distinct Traces of Lunar Inhabitants, Especially of One of their Colossal Buildings*, in which he announces his discovery of a city on the Moon in the rough terrain to the north of Schröter crater that he names the *Wallwerk*. This region contains a series of somewhat linear ridges that have a fishbone-like pattern, and, with the small refracting telescope he is using, can be perceived as resembling buildings complete with streets. His claims are readily refuted using more powerful instruments. Gruithuisen also thinks that the mysterious “ashen light” observed on Venus’s dark side is due to a festival of fire in honor of the “ascension of a new emperor to the throne of the planet.” Later, he speculates that the illumination is caused by burning jungles to create new farmland. (Franz von Paula Gruithuisen, [Entdeckung vieler deutlichen Spuren der Mondbewohner, besonders eines collossalen Kunstgebäudes](#), München, 1824; “[Gruithuisen’s Lunar City](#),” [whatsupinthesky.com](#); David Dunér, “[Venusians: The Planet Venus in the 18th-Century Extraterrestrial Life Debate](#),” *Journal of Astronomical Data* 19, no. 1 (2013): 162; Andrew May, “The Lost Ruins of the Moon,” *Fortean Times* 358 (October 2017): 56)

1825

1825, August 12 — 3:30 a.m. English naturalist [Andrew Bloxam](#) is aboard the [HMS Blonde](#) in the Pacific Ocean east of the Cook Islands. The men on watch suddenly find the sea lit up and they see a round, glowing-red object about the apparent size of the sun rising up 7° above the waves, then falling out of sight. It rises and falls once more, completely silent. It gives off such a great light that the ship’s deck is illuminated. (Andrew Bloxam, [Diary of Andrew Bloxam, Naturalist of the “Blonde.”](#) Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Special Publication 10, 1925, p. 88; Dolan, USO1, 59–60)

1826

1826, April 1 — 4:00 p.m. Stone mason Johannes Becker hears a noise resembling thunder at Rastpfuhl, northwest of Saarbrücken, Germany, and sees a grayish object “like two pieces of tin” approaching the earth with lightning speed and expanding itself like a sheet before falling to earth, apparently not far away. After one minute there is another sound like thunder and a strong whirlwind, as if coming from an impact. Pastor Köllner collects testimony from other nearby witnesses and visits the supposed landing site but finds no burn marks or meteoritic stones. (Ernst Chladni, “[Über eine merkwürdige meteorische Erscheinung, am 1 April 1826, nicht weit von Saarbrücken](#),” *Annalen der Physik und Chemie* 7 (1826): 373–377; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 31–38; Andreas Müller, “[Saarbrücken 1826: Deutschlands älteste UFO-Akte weiterhin verschollen](#),” [grenzWissenschaft-aktuell.de](#), May 28, 2020)

1829

1829, August 20 — 11:00 p.m. A man on the York Road east of Leeds, England, sees a moon-like object split into two halves, the upper half of which gives off an apparent shaft of light. He sees two human figures visible to the waist, one of which has a red cloth around its head. The object is visible for more than one hour and is seen by others, during which time a cloud passes in front of it. (“[Celestial Phenomena](#),” *York Herald*, August 22, 1829, p. 2; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 111–125)

1832

1832 — Philippine Demuth Bäurle, 16, of Weilheim an der Teck, Germany, begins slipping into hypnotic trances in which spirit guides take her on multiple psychic journeys to the moon, other planets, and even the sun, all of which have cities and inhabitants. (Philippine Demuth Bäurle, *Reisen in den Mond, in mehrere Sterne und in die Sonne*, Schätzler, 1834; [Journeys into the Moon, Several Planets, and the Sun](#), Vollmer and Hagggenmacher, 1837; Clark IV 203–204)

1835

1835, May 11 — At the Palermo Observatory in Italy, astronomer [Niccolò Cacciatore](#) detects a starlike object in the Southern sky between the constellations Virgo and Crater moving at a slow rate that might indicate a planet beyond Uranus. It is nowhere to be seen during his next observation on May 14. (“[Supposed New Planet](#),” *American Journal of Science* 31 (1837): 158–159)

1835, August 25–31 — The *New York Sun* publishes a series of six articles on the alleged discovery by English astronomer [John Herschel](#) of plants, animals, and winged people on the lunar surface. Using a huge and powerful telescope, Herschel supposedly sees herds of bison-like quadrupeds, a spherical amphibious creature, and a bipedal beaver that lives in huts. The humans are man-bats “covered, except on the face, with short and glossy copper-colored hair, and had wings composed of a thin membrane, without hair, lying snugly upon their backs.” The article is an elaborate hoax. Herschel hasn’t observed life on the moon at all, nor is Herschel even aware of the story until much later. The announcement causes enormous excitement throughout America and Europe. Authorship of the article is usually attributed to Richard Adams Locke, a reporter who is working for the *Sun* at the time. Locke publicly admits to being the author in 1840, in a letter to the weekly paper *New World*, although his intent is satire, not misinformation. (Wikipedia, “[Great Moon Hoax](#)”; Richard Adams Locke, [The Moon Hoax](#), Gowans, 1859; István Kornél Vida, “[The ‘Great Moon Hoax’ of 1835](#),” *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies* 18 (2012): 431–441; Doug Dunlop, “[The Moon Hoax of 1835: Great Astronomical Discoveries](#),” Unbound, August 28, 2013; Doug Dunlop, “[Great Moon Hoax Continues: Lunarians Discovered](#),” Unbound, August 29, 2013; Doug Dunlop, “[The Great Moon Hoax or Was It: The Joke’s On Who?](#)” Unbound, September 4, 2013; Stephanie Hall, “[Belief, Legend, and the Great Moon Hoax](#),” Library of Congress Blogs: Folklife Today, August 26, 2014)

1836

1836, January 12 — 6:30 p.m. An unusual meteor is observed in Cherbourg, Manche, France. About two-thirds the size of the full moon, it has a dark spot or cavity in its center and seems to rotate on its axis. Its apparent altitude is 1,000 feet and moves at the rate of 1,800 mph. (Robert P. Greg, “A Catalogue of Meteorites and Fireballs from A.D. 2 to A.D. 1860,” *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* 30 (1860): 48, [76–77](#); Clark III 1158; Clark IV 1334)

1838

1838 — Scottish minister and science writer [Thomas Dick](#) publishes *Celestial Scenery: The Wonders of the Planetary System Displayed*, in which he suggests that every planet in the solar system is inhabited. At his home in Broughty Ferry, Dundee, he computes that the solar system contains 21.9 trillion inhabitants, 53.5 billion of them on Venus. This is done comparing the surface area of each planet and the population density of England. (Thomas Dick, *Celestial Scenery*, Harper, 1838)

1840

1840, May 13 — Before sunrise. Some Polynesians at Felalatai on the island of Upolu, Samoa, observe a bright red star, “closely encircled by a number of other stars of the ordinary appearance.” (“[A Strange Phenomenon](#),” *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 7 (1898): 49)

1845

1845, June 18 — 10:30 p.m. The British brig *Victoria*, captained by [George Henry Caithness](#), is becalmed in the Strait of Sicily about 30 miles southwest of Licata, Sicily, Italy, when a huge wind suddenly blows from the east for two hours. Then the wind suddenly stops, and the crew feels an overpowering heat and smells a sulfuric stench. At this moment three “luminous bodies” emerge from the sea about one-half mile away and remain visible for 10 minutes. Shortly thereafter the wind picks up again. (This could be a magma plume from an undersea volcanic vent.) Around 7:10 p.m., at Ainab, Lebanon, two objects five times as large as the moon, joined by “streamers or appendages,” are observed in the west and remain visible for one hour, moving slowly on an easterly course. The objects are so bright they are painful to look at. A possible outgassing event from the Madrepore subsea vent. (“[Atmospherical Phenomena](#),” *London Morning Chronicle*, August 8, 1845, p. 5; *The Athenaeum*, August 19, 1848, p. 833; James Glaisher, et al., “Report on Observations of Luminous Meteors, 1860–61,” *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science*, 1861, pp. 30–31; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 139–152; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 2, Anomalist, 2021, pp. 115–126; Dolan, USO1, 61–63)

1845, November — American clairvoyant [Andrew Jackson Davis](#) begins writing *The Principles of Nature* while in a hypnotic trance. He describes nine planets in the solar system, which are all inhabited except the three outer ones. (Andrew Jackson Davis, *The Principles of Nature*, Colby and Rich, 1847, pp. 165–209; Clark IV 204)

1846

1846, July 5 — 5:57 a.m. Brazilian Frigate Captain [Augusto Leverger](#) is in command of two gunboats on the Río Paraguay about 19 miles away from Asunción, Paraguay, when he observes a luminous globe moving quickly to the north-northwest. It leaves a luminous trail in which three objects can be seen that are as bright as the full moon. The bottom object is shaped like a fan with “broken rays” at its rear; the middle one is nearly circular; and the top object is an irregular quadrangle. Above them is a ribbon of faint light in a zigzag pattern. The three objects gradually change shape to flat ellipses and become misty, remaining in sight for 25 minutes before fading away. The display is also seen by the Brazilian ambassador to Paraguay, [José Antônio Pimenta Bueno](#). (*Gazeta Official do Imperio do Brasil*, vol. 1, no. 74 (November 26, 1846), p. 295; “[Diario do Reconhecimento do Rio Paraguay desde a cidade da Assumpção, Até o Rio Paraná](#),” *Revista Trimestral do Instituto Histórico, Geographico e Ethnographico do Brasil* 25 (1862): 183–186; Antonio Huneus, “[Brazil’s Very First Official UFO Report in 1846](#),” *OpenMinds*, October 6, 2010)

1847

1847, March 19 — 8:30 p.m. A woman and her companion are in Highbury East, London, England, when they notice what seems to be a fire balloon ascending slowly in the west, seemingly over Hampstead. It shoots out “several fiery coruscations” and turns into an intensely radiant cloud, which moves on further west. Its light shines down

on the houses below. Suddenly another bright cloud appears above the first. After 2–3 minutes, a fiery ball drops from the upper cloud to the lower one, followed by two others. Soon after this, both clouds disappear. (“[Meteoric Stones](#),” *Littell’s Living Age* 56 (1858): 503)

1850

1850, September 15 — 6:20 p.m. Senior medical officer [Elisha Kent Kane](#) and other crew members of the [USS *Advance*](#), participating in the First Grinnell Expedition to the Arctic to determine the fate of the lost Franklin Northwest Passage expedition, watch a balloon-like object over the Wellington Channel between Cornwallis and Devon islands, Nunavut, Canada. It is floating slowly northward and appears to be 2 feet long by 18 inches wide. After a short time, a small object appears below it. (Elisha Kent Kane, *The U.S. Grinnell Expedition in Search of Sir John Franklin*, Harper and Brothers, 1854, [p. 190](#); Dolan, *USO1*, 63–66)

1854

1854, March 21 — 9:30 p.m. People in Washington, D.C., see a brilliant light in the sky overhead “like a coal of fire glowing,” red in color and stationary. It is visible for 20–30 minutes before it fades away. (“[Atmospherical Phenomenon](#),” *Gettysburg (Pa.) Adams Sentinel*, March 27, 1854, p. 1)

1855

1855, January 22 — 10:00 p.m. A witness walking in the public square in New Haven, Connecticut, sees a brilliant red fireball in the sky near the star Gamma Draconis. At first it is stationary, but after 15 seconds it moves slowly toward the east with a slight undulatory motion. It passes below the star Eta Ursae Majoris and disappears not far from Denebola in the constellation Leo. The object is visible for 10 minutes. (“[Meteoric Phenomenon](#),” *New York Times*, January 25, 1855, p. 1)

1857

1857, June 19 or 20 — Sunset. A large cloud moves in over Carbondale, Pennsylvania, from the northwest, accompanied by considerable wind. It emits a dark-looking substance that falls to the ground, where it becomes highly luminous. It moves toward a large barn and passes through its center, setting it on fire, and continues on in a straight course for the woods, burning up the underbrush. It makes a path about 16 feet wide for a distance of 3 miles, and it finally stops against an outcrop of anthracite coal 60 feet in thickness. It leaves a sulfurous mass behind. (“[Extraordinary Meteoric Phenomenon](#),” *Baltimore (Md.) Sun*, June 27, 1857, p. 1)

1860

1860, July 13 — Night. A pale blue illumination lights up the skies of Wilmington, Delaware, as a 200-foot-long object passes overhead in a straight line at a height of 200 feet. In front of it is a black cloud, and behind it at 100-foot intervals are three fireballs, which are joined by a fourth as the main object, giving off sparkles, turns southeastward and over the Delaware River. The object then turns east and is lost to view. It is visible for one minute. (*Wilmington (Del.) Tribune*, July 20, 1860; Clark III 1158; Clark IV 1332)

1860, July 20 — 9:40 p.m. A poem by Brooklyn, New York, poet [Walt Whitman](#), “Year of Meteors (1859-60),” published in a later edition of *Leaves of Grass*, describes a “strange huge meteor-procession dazzling and clear shooting over our heads.” For many years, no one could identify the event. Then in 2000, Texas State University–San Marcos physicist [Donald W. Olson](#) discovered a painting by Hudson River artist [Frederic Edwin Church](#) depicting two large meteors streaming across the sky and dated July 20, 1860. An examination of contemporary newspapers revealed that this was probably Whitman’s meteor procession. Around 9:40 p.m., two meteors with trails, one behind another, are seen in New York, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Norfolk, and other

locations in the East, proceeding slowly from northwest to southeast for nearly one minute. They are as bright as Venus. A rare event, and little understood until 1913, a meteor procession occurs when an earth-grazing meteor breaks apart and the fragments travel across the sky in the same horizontal path. Olson and his colleagues finally publish their discovery in the July 2010 issue of *Sky & Telescope*. (“[The Wonders of the Heavens: The Meteor Train](#),” *Brooklyn (N.Y.) Evening Star*, July 21, 1860, p. 2; “[The Meteor of Friday Night](#),” *New York Herald*, July 22, 1860, p. 1; “[Texas State Astronomers Solve Walt Whitman Meteor Mystery](#),” Office of Media Relations, Texas State University, May 28, 2010; David Dickinson, “[Remembering the Great Meteor Procession of 1860](#),” *Universe Today*, July 20, 2013)

1860, August 2 — 11:00 p.m. Another seeming procession of two meteors is observed in Norfolk, Virginia, moving with an undulating motion in the western sky in a northerly direction. One of the lights is clear red and the other is greenish, and they both emit flashes of light, leaving a sparkling trail. The phenomenon is also seen in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Some unnamed contemporary scientists compare it to the July 20 meteor procession. (“[Another Splendid Meteor](#),” *Baltimore (Md.) Sun*, August 6, 1860, p. 1)

1862

1862 — French astronomer [Camille Flammarion](#) publishes *La pluralité des mondes habités*, in which he proposes that many worlds in the universe are inhabited. It is a huge success, going through 33 editions in its first 20 years. Flammarion is one of the first to put forward the idea that extraterrestrial beings are genuinely alien and not simply variations of earthly creatures. (Camille Flammarion, [La pluralité des mondes habités](#), Mallet-Bachelier, 1862)

1862, September — The Danish brig *Christine* is allegedly wrecked on a deserted island in the Indian Ocean. The survivors see an immense airship that crashes into a cliff. The sailors make their way to the airship, which contains strange implements, boxes covered with odd inscriptions, large tools, and the bodies of a dozen dark-bronze men, 12 feet tall and “dressed in garments of strange fashion.” The sailors build a raft out of the wreck and make their way back to civilization. (John Leander, “[Airship of the Past](#),” *Houston (Tex.) Post*, May 2, 1897, p. 4; Clark III 313–314; Clark IV 387–388)

1862, November — Early morning. Magistrate [Osman Edward Middleton](#) hears a “peculiar rushing noise” at Morpeth, New South Wales, Australia, and looks up to see a dark object traveling rapidly toward the southeast. It appears to be revolving on its axis. ([[Letter](#)], *Sydney (N.S.W.) Morning Herald*, November 20, 1866, p. 5; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 167–173)

1864

1864, June 17 — The French newspaper *Le Pays* reports on the discovery of artifacts and a mummified body inside a meteorite found while digging for oil on James Peak, Colorado. The mummy is barely 3 feet long, hairless, wrinkled, and a trunk protrudes from its forehead. A small metal disk engraved with a rhinoceros, a palm tree, and the solar system (with Mars oddly oversized) accompanies the body, leading to speculation that the mummy had traveled from Mars in the meteorite. However, the story is fiction concocted by engineer and science writer [Henri de Parville](#), who reveals the fabrication in a book the following year. The story resurfaces in various forms in 1877 and 1878. (“Un habitant de le planète Mars,” *Le Pays*, June 17, 1864; “[Un canard scientifique de haut vol: L’habitant de Mars](#),” *L’année scientifique et industrielle* 9 (1865): 33–37; Henri de Parville, *Un habitant de la planète Mars*, J. Hetzel, 1865; Clark III 312; Chris Aubeck, *Alien Artifacts, Volume I: From Antiquity to 1880*, The Author, 2022, pp. 182–187, 335–341; Clark IV 387, 1259–1260)

1864, July 16 — Night. A sailor named Timofeev is aboard the Russian Navy clipper *Vestnik* in the South China Sea near the Gulf of Thailand when he notices two large luminous wheels in the water consisting of 10–12 curved rays rotating in different directions. The wheels are making a full revolution every 6 seconds and they appear to be as large as 1,500 feet in diameter. (Vladimir G. Azhazha and Evgeny P. Litvinov, *Подводные НЛО: Загадочные места мира [Underwater UFOs]*, 2015; Dolan, *USO1*, 66–67)

1865

1865 — French novelist [Jules Verne](#) publishes *From the Earth to the Moon*. It tells the story of the Baltimore Gun Club, a post-American Civil War society of weapons enthusiasts, and their attempts to build an enormous Columbiad space gun and launch three people—the Gun Club’s president, his Philadelphian armor-making rival, and a French poet—in a projectile with the goal of a lunar landing. (Wikipedia, “[From the Earth to the Moon](#)”)

1865, December — The British Board of Trade asks Trinity House to investigate the “false lights” of the Durham, England, coast, mysterious revolving lights seen above a rocky headland at Whitburn by mariners negotiating a hazardous stretch of the northeast coast. Between 1860 and 1870, more than 150 ships are wrecked on the rocks near Whitburn after following a light or lights in the sky that they wrongly believe are from a lighthouse at the mouth of the Tyne. A commission led by Rear Admiral [Richard Collinson](#) meets in Sunderland on December 28 to interview witnesses and determine whether salvagers are responsible for the lights that are causing shipwrecks. Although the commission decides that the false lights are not deliberately lit, they are puzzled about the true cause. The lights and wrecks continue until January 1871 when the Souter Lighthouse is erected on Lizard Point. (“[False Lights on the Durham Coast](#),” *Newcastle Weekly Courant*, January 12, 1866, p. 5; David Clarke, “[Britain’s First X-File?](#)” August 14, 2010; David Clarke, “The False Lights of Durham,” *Fortean Times* 266 (October 2010): 40–42; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 77–79)

1866

1866, June 21 — The US Hydrographic Office is established by Congress. It is assigned to the Navy Bureau of Navigation and collects reports from ships’ officers on observations of various marine phenomena, hazards, and other activities. Among the reports collected are meteors, ball lightning, and other celestial and meteorological phenomena. (Wikipedia, “[United States Hydrographic Office](#)”)

1867

1867, November 4 — 3:00–4:00 p.m. James E. Beveridge is passing the mill by the Waterworks Reservoir in Chatham, England, when he and the miller see numerous black discs moving in the air to the west, some in groups, others scattered. They are visible for more than 20 minutes. In passing in front of the sun they appear like large cannon shot. Several groups pass over his head, disappearing suddenly, and leaving puffs of grayish brown smoke. (“[Three Strange Stories](#),” *Symons’s Monthly Meteorological Magazine* 2 (1867): 130)

1868

1868, June 8 — 9:50 p.m. John Lucas Sr., an observer at Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford University, England, notices a comet-like object with a trail a bit west of the star Polaris. As he is pointing it out to some others, it begins moving west. It moves in a straight line at first, then moves south for a bit, then continues to the north. They watch it for 4 minutes until it disappears below the northwestern horizon. (“[Remarkable Meteor](#),” *English Mechanic* 7 (July 10, 1868): 351)

1868, July 25 — Engineer [Frederick William Birmingham](#) of Parramatta, New South Wales, watches a bizarre procession of the faces of two prominent Australians (Archbishop of Sydney [Frederic Barker](#) and New South Wales Premier [James Martin](#)) through the air as well as a vessel he calls an “ark.” He hears a voice suggesting that “That’s a machine to go through the air.” The voice comes from a “spirit” whom he describes as “like a neutral tint shade and the shape of a man in his usual frock dress.” After the ark maneuvers for a while in the air, the spirit says, “Have you a desire or do you wish to enter upon it?” He is then lifted up and carried through the air into the object about 60 feet away. The spirit guides him into the “pilot house” of the machine where he is given some papers with formulas on them that will help him construct a flying machine. He observes another UFO-like craft on March 9, 1873, and later attempts to build a mechanical replica of what he has seen. (Bill Chalker, “[The Mystery of a Machine to Go through the Air: A UFO Vision?](#)” 1998; Clark III 60–65; “[Did Frederick William](#)

[Birmingham Build a Flying Machine Based on His Bizarre 1868 UFO ‘Vision’ in Parramatta, NSW, Australia?](#) TheOzFiles, November 30, 2013; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 185–190; Michael Organ, “[UFO Encounter, Parramatta Park, Australia 1868](#),” *Rambling Thoughts of an Overactive Mind*, November 12, 2023; Bill Chalker, “[The 1868 ‘UFO Vision’ of Frederick William Birmingham—Important New Evidence—‘To London in Four Days!’](#)” TheOzFiles, December 12, 2023; Bill Chalker, “[The Birmingham ‘UFO Vision’ Manuscript via Herbert Rumsey Has Been Found and Viewed](#),” TheOzFiles, August 19, 2024; Clark IV 84–89)

1869

- 1869** — French poet and inventor [Charles Cros](#) is convinced that pinpoints of light observed on Mars and Venus are the lights of large cities on those planets. He spends years petitioning the French government to build a giant mirror to communicate with the Martians and Venusians by burning giant lines on the deserts of those planets. (Alissa Walker, “[A French Inventor Once Proposed a Giant Mirror to Burn a Message on Mars](#),” Gizmodo, October 16, 2014)
- 1869**, August 7 — 12:00 noon. Four or five witnesses watch a luminous object land in a vacant lot about 200 yards north of the village of Adamstown, Pennsylvania. It is originally square-shaped but shoots up into a column about 3–4 feet high and 2 feet thick. The object glitters like a “column of burnished silver.” It gradually fades away and disappears after 10 minutes. No unusual traces are found on the lot. (“[Singular Phenomenon](#),” *Lancaster (Pa.) Daily Evening Express*, August 10, 1869, pp. 2–3)
- 1869**, August 7 — About 4:45 p.m. During a total solar eclipse, four amateur observers in St. Paul Junction [now Le Mars], Iowa, both with and without instruments, independently notice a bright object below the lunar disc and just outside the solar corona. There are no visible stars in that position in the sky. (“[Was It the Intra-Mercurial Planet?](#)” *Astronomical Register* 7 (1869): 227–228; John Russell Hind, “[Stellar Objects Seen during the Eclipse of 1869](#),” *Nature* 18 (1878): 663–664)

1870

- 1870**, March 22 — 6:30 p.m. Capt. Frederick William Banner, master of the barque *Lady of the Lake*, is sailing in the North Atlantic 400 miles north of the Equator and 860 miles from the coast of West Africa when he sees a “curious-shaped” light-gray cloud in the south-southeast. It is circular, with four rays or arms extending from the center to the edge, and a curved tail. It is visible for about 50 minutes until it is too dark to see. (Frederick William Banner, “[Extract from Log of Barque ‘Lady of the Lake](#),” *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society* 1 (1873): 157; Clark III 1158; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 89–109; Clark IV 1332; Dolan, USO1, 67–68)
- 1870**, September 26 — A luminous object with a tail is seen in the constellation Lyra by [Reginald Brabazon, 12th Earl of Meath](#), second secretary of the British legation to the North German Confederation, in Berlin, Germany. Possibly a light pillar reflection caused by a bright arc-light source at a military installation on Eiswerder island. (Brabazon, “[A Meteor](#),” *London Times*, September 30, 1870, p. 9; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 111–116)

1871

- 1871** — English astronomer [Richard A. Proctor](#) writes *Other Worlds Than Ours*, in which he discusses the question of the plurality of worlds in the light of new facts. He suspects that Venus is likely the “abode of living creatures not unlike the inhabitants of earth.” (Richard A. Proctor, [Other Worlds Than Ours](#), Appleton, 1871)
- 1871**, August 1 — 10:43 p.m. Astronomer [Jérôme Eugène Coggia](#) at Marseille Observatory, France, watches a slow, blood-red fireball move across the sky and change course twice before falling to the earth. He sees it for 20 minutes and 20 seconds. Possible earth-grazing meteor or a candle balloon. (Jérôme Eugène Coggia, “[Observation d’un bolide, faite à Observatoire de Marseille le 1^{er} août](#),” *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de*

l'Académie des Sciences 73 (1871): 397–399; Clark III 1158; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 117–119; Clark IV 1332)

1871, August 29 — Around 12:00 noon. French astronomer [Étienne Léopold Trouvelot](#) is observing the Sun through a 4-inch telescope at the Meudon Observatory outside of Paris, France, when he sees several hundred black objects passing across the solar disk. They move irregularly, some slowly, others faster. The bodies appear in tightly knit groups that mostly move east to west, though some are moving in different directions. Most of the objects are circular, though some are triangular and others are of indefinite shape. One of them seems to fall vertically, oscillating from side to side. (“[Passage d’un essaim de corpuscles noirs devant le Soleil](#),” *L’Année scientifique et industrielle* 29 (1886): 8–10)

1873

1873 — English-American geologist and psychometrist [William Denton](#) of Wellesley, Massachusetts, publishes volume 3 of *The Soul of Things*, in which he describes his astral visit to Mars along with his sister Anna Cridge, his wife Elizabeth, and his son Sherman. He finds it harbors a thriving civilization with a technology based on aluminum. He reports that they soar above traffic on their individual fly-cycles and seem particularly fond of air travel, with as many as 30 Martians occupying some of the large flying conveyances. Sherman says the Martians have blond hair and blue eyes like cats’ eyes; Anna adds that they have long arms and large hands and feet, and there is another group of short, hairy, black people. (William Denton, *Soul of Things*, Wellesley, Mass.: Elizabeth M. F. Denton, 1873, vol. 3, pp. 171–267; Chris Aubeck, *Alien Artifacts, Volume 1: From Antiquity to 1880*, The author, 2022, pp. 238–248; Clark IV 205)

1873, Late March — Evening. Thomas Inman and his son are traveling home from the village of Taylorsville [now Philo], Ohio, and are possibly in Bristol Township when they see a bright light descending swiftly with a roaring noise. It lands a short distance in the road [probably Lawrence Road] ahead of them, flickers and flares, then fades. A man dressed in a suit of black carrying a lantern emerges from the object. He walks a few paces and steps into a buggy, which Inman has not noticed before. The buggy begins to move silently and quickly, even though there is no horse attached to it, until it reaches a deep gully, into which it plunges and disappears. Historian [William Alexander Taylor](#), who supplies the story to the *New York Herald*, vouches for the witnesses. (“[Very Like a Whale](#),” *New York Herald*, April 8, 1873, p. 7; Clark III 1123–1124; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 175–191; Clark IV 1252–1253)

1874

1874 — Baroness [Adelma Vay](#), a spirit medium in Hungary, publishes a book about her conversations with the spirit of [Alexander von Humboldt](#), who has traveled to the moon, Mercury, and Mars, the latter populated by hairy dwarves with brains the size of a hazelnut. (Adelma Vay, *Studien über die Geisterwelt*, Mutze, 1874; Clark IV 205)

1874, April 24 — 3:30 p.m. Chemist and astronomer [Vojtěch Šafařík](#) of Prague [now in the Czech Republic] sees “an object of so peculiar a character that I do not know what to make of it.” It is a dazzling white object slowly crossing the moon. He first sees it in front of the moon, then watches it against the “deep blue sky like Sirius or Vega in daylight.” (Vojtěch Šafařík, “[Telescopic Meteors](#),” *Astronomical Register* 23 (1885): 205–211)

1874, August 13 — 11:00 p.m. A large, “luminous electric cloud” flies over the western edge of Pascagoula, Mississippi, from the northwest to the southeast. It illuminates the ground and emits heat so intense that some witnesses think their houses are about to ignite. When last seen over the Gulf of Mexico, it renders the spars and rigging of a ship “distinctly visible.” (“[Singular Phenomenon](#),” *Pascagoula (Miss.) Star*, August 22, 1874, p. 2; “[Singular Phenomenon](#),” *Vicksburg (Miss.) Herald*, August 26, 1874, p. 1; Clark III 1158; Clark IV 1332)

1875

1875, mid-February — Observers in Pwllheli, Wales, see eight lights moving over a distance of 8 miles along the coast. They move in different directions, horizontally, vertically, and in a zig-zag fashion. Sometimes they are light blue, at other times a bright white, then they disappear abruptly before reappearing dimly. (A. R., "[Strange Lights in Wales](#)," *Notes and Queries*, ser. 5, 3 (April 17, 1875): 306)

1875, April — Night. The gunboat [HMS Bulldog](#) is lying becalmed in the Gulf of Mexico north of Veracruz, Mexico. Naval surgeon [Edward Lawton Moss](#) sees a line of light along the northern horizon. It sweeps past the ship in a "series of swift luminous pulsations." (Edward L. Moss, "[Report of an Unusual Phenomenon Observed at Sea](#)," *Nature* 20 (1879): 428; Dolan, USO1, 69)

1876

1876 — [William Baker Fahnestock](#), a physician, hypnotist, and spiritualist of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, publishes *Worlds Within Worlds*, an illustrated volume that describes the inhabitants of other planets and the sun, based on the clairvoyant experiences of his patients. (William Baker Fahnestock, *Worlds Within Worlds: Or, New and Wonderful Discoveries in Astronomy*, Barclay, 1876; Clark IV 205)

1876, December 21 — 8:30–8:45 p.m. A bright bolide that explodes and breaks up into a group of 20–100 smaller balls is seen over a wide swath of the US from Topeka, Kansas, to western Pennsylvania. Over Columbus, Ohio, it is described as "a cluster or flock of meteors seemingly huddled together, like a flock of wild geese, and moving with the same velocity and grace of regularity. The color of their light was a yellowish red, like red rocket-balls." A stony chondrite falls 3 miles northwest of Rochester, Indiana, at the same time. (James Glaisher, et al., "Report on Observations of Luminous Meteors during the Year 1876–77," *Report of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* 47 (1877): 98, [149–152](#); Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 144–145)

1877

1877, October — Astronomer [Giovanni Schiaparelli](#) reports seeing *canali* on the Martian surface from Brera Observatory in Milan, Italy, during the Great Opposition. While the term "canals" indicates an artificial construction, its proper translation as "channels" implies that the observed features are natural configurations of the planetary surface. From the incorrect translation into the term "canals," various assumptions are made about life on Mars; as these assumptions are popularized, the canals become famous, giving rise to waves of hypotheses, speculation, and fiction about the possibility of intelligent life on Mars—the Martians. Later, thanks to the observations of the Italian astronomer [Vincenzo Cerulli](#), scientists come to the conclusion that the famous channels are actually mere optical illusions. (Wikipedia, "[Martian canals](#)")

1878

1878, January 22 — John Martin is out hunting near his ranch 6 miles north of Dallas, Texas, when he notices a dark object high in the southern sky. It is so bright it hurts his eyes as it moves with great speed to directly over his head. The object is "about the size of a large saucer" and looks like a large balloon. It speeds away rapidly. ("[A Strange Phenomena](#)," *Dallas (Tex.) Daily Herald*, January 23, 1878, p. 4; Patrick Gross, "[The First Publicized Flying 'Saucer' Report?](#)"; "[Dallas 1878](#)," Texas UFO Museum and Research Library, February 5, 2014; Clark III 375, 1158; Clark IV 419, 1332)

1878, July 29 — About 12:30 p.m. Astronomers [James Craig Watson](#), director of the Ann Arbor (Mich.) Observatory, and [Lewis Swift](#), an amateur from Rochester, New York, both claim to see planet-like objects close to the Sun during the total solar eclipse. Watson, observing from Separation Point, Wyoming, places the "ruddy star" about 2.5° southwest of the Sun and estimates its magnitude at 4.5. Watson says it has a definite disc, unlike stars, which appear as shimmering pinpoints of light. He also notes another object further to the west. Swift, observing from a location near Denver, Colorado, also sees what he takes to be an intra-mercurial planet ("a round red disk and being free from twinkling") about 3° southwest of the Sun. He estimates its brightness to be the same as that

of Theta Cancri, a fifth-magnitude star which is also visible during totality, about six or seven minutes from the object. Swift also notes a second equally bright object. Both Watson and Swift describe at least one of their objects as red in color. The idea that four objects are observed during the eclipse generates controversy in scientific journals and mockery from German-American astronomer [Christian Heinrich Friedrich Peters](#). Peters considers Swift's measurements as ambiguous and notes that the margin of error in the pencil-and-cardboard recording device Watson had used was large enough to plausibly include a bright known star. (James C. Watson, "[On the Discovery of an Intra-Mercurial Planet](#)," *American Journal of Science*, ser. 3, 16 (1878): 230–233; James C. Watson, "[On the Intra Mercurial Planets](#)," *American Journal of Science*, ser. 3, 16 (1878): 310–313; Lewis Swift, "[Letter from Mr. Lewis Swift, Relating to the Discovery of Intra-Mercurial Planets](#)," *American Journal of Science*, ser. 3, 16 (1878): 313–315; C. H. F. Peters, "[Some Critical Remarks on So-Called Intra-Mercurial Planet Observations](#)," *Astronomische Nachrichten* 94 (1879): 321–340; Richard Baum and William Sheehan, *In Search of Planet Vulcan: The Ghost in Newton's Clockwork Universe*, Plenum, 1997, pp. 185–223)

1879

1879, April 12 — 8:30 p.m. Amateur astronomer [Henry Harrison](#) in Jersey City, New Jersey, is searching for Brorsen's Comet (5D/Brorsen) when he observes a "planetary nebula" between the Pleiades and the variable star Algol in Perseus. It is moving from northwest to southeast, maintaining its luminosity. He watches it for 3.5 hours, then takes a nap, but finds it again at 2:10 a.m. in the zenith, brighter than before. At 11:00 p.m., J. Spencer Devoe in Manhattanville, New York City, observes a bell-shaped object about 10° west of the zenith moving to the east, in a different direction than the motion of the stars. He watches it for a period of more than 6 hours. (Henry Harrison, "[A Curious Phenomenon](#)," *New York Tribune*, April 17, 1879, p. 2; J. Spencer Devoe, "[Was It a Nebula?](#)" *New York Tribune*, April 26, 1879, p. 2)

1879, May 15 — 9:40 p.m. The gunboat [HMS Vulture](#) is in the Persian Gulf about 25 miles south of the island of Levan, Iran, when the crew notices "luminous waves or pulsations" in the water that pass swiftly under the ship from the south-southwest. The appearance is like two revolving wheels of light, one to the east and another to the west that is moving in the opposite direction. The effect persists for 35 minutes. Commander [John Eliot Pringle](#) estimates that the shafts of light are about 25 feet wide. (J. Eliot Pringle, "[Report of an Unusual Phenomenon Observed at Sea](#)," *Nature* 20 (1879): 291; Dolan, USO1, 70–71)

1880

1880, March 22 — About 6:00 a.m. A large number of brilliantly luminous bodies are seen to rise from the horizon and pass from east to west at Kattenau, East Prussia [now Furmanovka, Kaliningrad Oblast, Russia]. They move through space "like a string of beads." Possible meteor procession. ("[A Remarkable Phenomenon](#)," *Nature* 22 (May 20, 1880): 64; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 169–170)

1880, March 26 — Night. The train depot operator and a few friends are walking at Galisteo Junction [now Lamy], New Mexico, when they hear loud voices and laughter coming from a "large balloon" shaped like a fish approaching from the west. A flower is dropped from the car of the balloon to which is attached a slip of silk-like paper on which Chinese characters are written. The next morning, searchers find a cup of peculiar workmanship, but both artifacts are purchased by a "wealthy young Chinaman" and a "collector of curiosities" who visits town on March 28, although this part of the tale seems facetious and racist. The yarn is typical of sensational newspaper hoaxes that have no basis in reality. ("[Galisteo's Apparition](#)," *Santa Fe Weekly New Mexican*, March 29, 1880, p. 3; "[Solved at Last](#)," *Santa Fe Weekly New Mexican*, April 5, 1880, p. 4; Patrick Gross, [URECAT](#), December 3, 2007; Clark III 69–70, 592; Clark IV 93–94, 652)

1880, May — 11:30 p.m. The British India Steam Navigation Company steamer [SS Patna](#) is in the Persian Gulf when two enormous wheels of light with spokes 600–900 feet long appear on each side of the ship. Each wheel contains 16 spokes and makes a revolution in about 12 seconds. The phosphorescent phenomenon is observed by Captain Avern, Third Officer Manning, and J. W. Robertson. (Lee Fore Brace [J. W. Robertson], "[Strange Phenomenon](#)," *Knowledge* 4 (1883): 396; A. McD., "[Strange Phenomenon](#)," *Knowledge* 5 (1884): 30; J. W. Robertson, "[Strange Phenomenon](#)," *Knowledge* 5 (1884): 60; Dolan, USO1, 72–73)

- 1880**, June? — David Muckle and W. R. McKay of East Kent [now Chatham-Kent], Ontario, are in a field on Muckle's farm when they hear a loud explosion and see a cloud of stones flying upward. They go to the spot and find a circular area, 16 feet across, that has been swept clean of vegetation. ("[A Curious Phenomenon](#)," *Rock Hill (S.C.) Herald*, July 7, 1880, p. 4)
- 1880**, June 5 — 10:00 p.m. Commander R. E. Harris of the Asiatic Steam Navigation Company's steamship *Shahjehan* encounters waves of light from a rotating wheel on the surface of the Arabian Sea off the southwest coast of India. The phenomenon lasts for one hour before fading out. ("[A Strange Phenomenon](#)," *Nature* 21 (1880): 409–410; Dolan, USO1, 73–74)
- 1880**, Early July — A train is running on the Chattanooga Railroad near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, in a thunderstorm when the engineer sees a large ball of fire rushing down the rails to the engine. As it passes under the locomotive, he feels a shock that jars the entire train. There is a loud explosion "opposite the ladies' car" and a telegraph pole is splintered from top to bottom. ("[Passengers Shocked by Lightning](#)," *Memphis (Tenn.) Public Ledger*, July 15, 1880, p. 2; Mark Rodeghier, "[UFO/Vehicle Very Close Encounters](#)," *IUR* 27, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 5)
- 1880**, July 28 — 6:00–7:00 p.m. C. A. Youngman and Ben Flexner are looking out a drugstore window at 2nd and Chestnut streets in Louisville, Kentucky, when they see something in the air coming from the direction of the Ohio River bridge. As it approaches them, it appears to be a man surrounded by machinery, which he is working with his hands and feet. The object is too high to make out the details of its construction. The man moves off to the south, pedaling constantly. Around 8:00 p.m., the Royster family of Madisonville, Kentucky, watches a circular flying object with a ball at each end moving above the train depot. ("[More Monkeying](#)," *Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal*, July 29, 1880, p. 4; "[The Flying Machine](#)," *Louisville (Ky.) Courier-Journal*, August 6, 1880, p. 4; Theo Paijmans, "The Topography of the Damned," *The Anomalist*, no. 14 (2010): 7–8; Clark III 70; Clark IV 94)
- 1880**, August 25 — Day. During a thunderstorm in Paris, French botanist [Auguste Trécul](#) sees a luminous, yellowish-white, cigar-shaped object emerge from a dark cloud. It drops some material that leaves behind a vertical luminous trail and splits into two without any sound. The object re-enters the cloud. (Auguste Trécul, "[Électricité atmosphérique: Cas remarquable de tonnerre en boule; éclairs diffus voisins de la surface du sol](#)," *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences* 92 (1881): 775–777; Auguste Trécul, "[Rappel de l'observation d'une matière incandescente, en fusion, tombée d'un nuage orangeux](#)," *Comptes rendus hebdomadaires des séances de l'Académie des Sciences* 103 (1886): 848–850; Camille Flammarion, *Thunder and Lightning*, Chatto and Windus, 1905, [p. 87](#); Clark III 1163; Clark IV 1337)
- 1880**, September 23 — David Lang of Gallatin, Tennessee, is said to disappear in full view of five witnesses and vanish without a trace. However, no such family lived in the area at the time, and the narrative bears some resemblance to a short horror story written by [Ambrose Bierce](#) titled "The Difficulty of Crossing a Field" in 1888. (Ambrose Bierce, "[Whither?](#)" *San Francisco (Calif.) Examiner*, October 14, 1888, p. 9; Ambrose Bierce, "The Difficulty of Crossing a Field," in *The Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce*, Neale, 1912, vol. 3, [pp. 415–418](#); Stuart Palmer, "[How Lost Was My Father?](#)" *Fate* 8, no. 7 (July 1953): 75–85; Morris K. Jessup, *The Case for the UFO*, Citadel, 1955, [pp. 143–144](#); Frank Edwards, *Stranger Than Science*, Lyle Stuart, 1959, [pp. 15–17](#); "Fortean Corrigenda," *Fortean Times* 8 (October 1976): 6–7; Robert Schadewald, "David Lang Vanishes...Forever," *Fate* 30, no. 12 (December 1977): 54–60; Clark III 598; Clark IV 657)
- 1880**, September 30 — 9:45 p.m. A brilliant object is seen crossing the sky in Columbus, Georgia, at a very low altitude. Coming from the south, it heads northeasterly in a horizontal line. It appears made of three perfectly developed balls of an equal size and equidistant from each other. The first ball emits a tail that envelops the two following and extends behind them. The tail is luminous except at the far end, where it is indistinct and nebulous. It is visible for a full 50 seconds and continues on its course without falling. ("[Wonders of a Meteor](#)," *Marion (Ohio) Star*, October 5, 1880, p. 3)

1881

- 1881**, Late October — An unusual fall of spider web occurs near the coast of Lake Michigan at Milwaukee, Green Bay, Fort Howard, Sheboygan, and Ozaukee County, Wisconsin. The webs seem to come from "over the lake" and fall

from a great height. The strands are from 2 feet to several yards long, strong in texture, and very white. No spiders are seen. ("[A Rain of Spider Webs](#)," *Scientific American* 45 (1881): 337; Clark III 123; Clark IV 151)

1882

1882, July 6 — 10:30 p.m. Amateur astronomer N. S. Drayton in Jersey City Heights, New Jersey, watches a red object without a trail move across the sky from the constellation of Ursa Minor to Capricorn in 45 seconds. (N. S. Drayton, "[A Supposed Meteor](#)," *Scientific American* 47 (July 22, 1882): 53)

1882, November 17 — 6:00 p.m. An auroral beam is observed from the Royal Observatory, Greenwich, London, by astronomer [Edward Walter Maunder](#) and by [John Rand Capron](#) from his private observatory on Hog's Back, Surrey, England, in association with a geomagnetic storm. The beam is described in detail in various ways, including as a "beam," "spindle," "definite body" with a Zeppelin-like shape and pale green color, passing from horizon to horizon above the moon. The phenomenon transits the sky in approximately 75 seconds. (Wikipedia, "[November 1882 geomagnetic storm](#)"; J. Rand Capron, "[The Auroral Beam of November 17, 1882](#)," *Philosophical Magazine*, ser. 5, 15 (1883): 318–339; Edward Walter Maunder, "[A Strange Celestial Visitor](#)," *The Observatory* 39 (May 1916): 213–215; Paul Fuller, "[The Life and Times of John Rand Capron \(1829–1888\)](#)," *The Antiquarian Astronomer* 8 (March 2014): 21–45)

1883

1883, February 5 — 6:45 p.m. A witness at Lake Glasfjorden, near Arvika, Sweden, spots a meteor-like object high on the horizon moving from southeast to northwest. It makes several minor course changes, varies its color from white to yellow, and emits some sparks. After 18 seconds, it changes its course to the southeast and is so low to the ground that its light is reflected in the lake. By this time, it has a distinct tail. Total duration is 50 seconds. ("[On February 5, at 6.45 p.m.](#)," *Nature* 27 (March 1, 1883): 423)

1883, August 12–13 — Astronomer [José Árbol y Bonilla](#), director of the El Cerro de la Bufa Meteorological Observatory in Zacatecas, Mexico, is observing the sun by eyepiece projection when he and an assistant see a large number of small bodies crossing the solar disc. Over the course of two days, they count a total of 447 dark objects. They seem bright as they approach the sun but are dark as they pass across its face. He takes several photographs and suspects that they are relatively near the earth. Mexican astronomers in 2011 suggested that a comet may have split into several pieces; these objects were estimated to have had a size of between 150 and 3,350 feet, and to have passed only 334 to 5,000 miles from the Earth; they thought a fragmented Comet 12P/Pons-Brooks was one possibility, in which case Earth barely avoided multiple Tunguska events or even a mass extinction; this was reported in the media and disputed in October 2011; but the source of these objects could also have been comet C/1883 D1 (Brooks-Swift) or even a third, unknown comet that year; the event also coincided with the annual Perseid meteor shower; even migrating birds cannot be ruled out. (José Á. y Bonilla, "[Passage sur le disque solaire d'un essaim de corpuscles](#)," *L'Astronomie* 4 (1885): 347–350; Hector Javier Durand Manterola, Maria de la Paz Ramos Lara, and Guadalupe Cordero, "[Interpretation of the Observations Made in 1883 in Zacatecas \(Mexico\): A Fragmented Comet That Nearly Hits the Earth](#)," *Earth and Planetary Astrophysics* (2011); "[Billion-Ton Comet May Have Missed Earth by a Few Hundred Kilometers in 1883](#)," MIT Technology Review, October 17, 2011; "[OT-1883 Zacatecas Observation of Objects before Sun Were Not 12P/Pons-Brooks Fragments](#)," October 17, 2011; Phil Plait, "[Did a Fragmenting Comet nearly Hit the Earth in 1883? Color Me Very Skeptical](#)," *Bad Astronomy*, October 17, 2011; "[Did a Massive Comet Almost Wipe Out Humans in 1883?](#)" *The Week*, January 8, 2015; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 1, Anomalist, 2019, pp. 189–207)

1884

1884, June 6 — 1:00 p.m. Rancher John W. Ellis and some of his ranch hands in south-central Dundy County, Nebraska, allegedly see a blazing object fall from the sky and crash into many pieces, burning the grass and fusing the sand. The light is so intense it blinds one of them. The newspaper suggests it is a "vessel belonging originally to some

other planet.” The remains of the object are said to have dissolved in a rainstorm. However, the tale is actually a fictional story written by a correspondent in Benkelman. (Wikipedia, “[Dundy County UFO Hoax](#)”; “[A Celestial Visitor](#),” *Lincoln (Nebr.) Daily State Journal*, June 8, 1884, p. 5; “[The Magical Meteor](#),” *Lincoln (Nebr.) Daily State Journal*, June 10, 1884, p. 4; Jerome Clark, “[Spaceship and Saltshaker](#),” *IUR* 11, no. 6 (Nov./Dec. 1986): 12, 21; Patricia C. Gaster, “[‘A Celestial Visitor’ Revisited: A Nebraska Newspaper Hoax from 1884](#),” *Nebraska History* 94 (2013): 90–99; Clark III 314–315, 593; Clark IV 388–389, 653)

1884, July 3 — 8:30 p.m. L. C. Yale of Norwood, New York, watches an object with a long tail move slowly from east to west. It has a “nucleus like a globe, as large as the moon, surrounded by a bright ring, two dark lines crossing the nucleus in vertical direction, the lines larger in the middle, straight on inside, curved on outside, tapering both ways to points.” The general appearance is of a “gigantic sword of fire, moving handle first.” (“[A Great Meteor](#),” *Illustrated Science Monthly* 2 (1884): 136)

1885

1885, February 16 — Night. During a severe snowstorm, a bright light suddenly flashes in the high rocks on the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware River some five miles northwest of Port Jervis, New York. The snow-covered hill glows like red-hot iron for several feet around, gleaming through the storm for several minutes, then growing dim and disappearing. (“[Mysterious Light](#),” *Wichita (Kan.) Beacon*, March 25, 1885, p. 1)

1885, February 24 or 25 — 5:00 a.m. Sailing in the North Pacific some 800 miles west of Victoria, British Columbia, Captain John Waters of the bark *Innerwick* and his mate see the sky turning fiery red. Suddenly a large fireball appears above the ship and falls hissing into the sea about 150 feet away from them, causing a wave of water to impact the ship. Electrical discharges run through the rigging and the masts. (“[Frightful Experience at Sea](#),” *Sacramento (Calif.) Record-Union*, March 3, 1885, p. 1; “[Globe Lightning: An Extraordinary Electrical Phenomenon at Sea](#),” *Buffalo (N.Y.) Commercial*, March 13, 1885, p. 2; “[Notes and News](#),” *Science* 5 (1885): 242–243; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 2, Anomalist, 2021, pp. 177–199)

1886

1886 — French novelist [Jules Verne](#) publishes *Robur the Conqueror*, which describes the appearance of mysterious objects and strange lights in the sky all over the world. It turns out that the sightings are of a flying machine, invented by the novel’s anti-hero Robur, who kidnaps people and takes them on board the airship. (Wikipedia, “[Robur the Conqueror](#)”)

1886, October 24 — Night. Nine persons who are sleeping in a hut some 10 miles from Maracaibo, Venezuela, are awakened by a loud humming noise and a dazzling light that illuminates the interior. The people begin to pray but they start vomiting as extensive swellings appear on the upper part of their bodies, especially around the face and lips. They feel no heat, although the light has a smoky appearance and a peculiar smell. The next morning, the swellings subside but leave black blotches. By November 2, the skin peels off and the blotches are round sores. Portions of their hair falls off. Trees around the hut show no damage until November 2, when they suddenly wither. The symptoms are similar to those of ionizing radiation syndrome. (Warner Cowgill, “[Curious Phenomenon in Venezuela](#),” letter, *Scientific American* 55 (December 18, 1886): 389; Clark III 949; Clark IV 1063; Patrick Gross, [UFO Reports from the Past](#))

1886, November 3 — Between 8:00 and 9:00 p.m. A bright white cloud appears above Hamar, Norway, flashing rays of light in various directions. Retaining the same shape, it drifts to the northeast and is lost to sight. (“[Between 8 and 9 o’clock](#),” *Nature* 35 (December 16, 1886): 159; Clark III 1158 Clark IV 1332)

1887

1887, March 19 — 5:00 p.m. Captain Cornelis Dirks Swart of the Dutch bark *J.P.A.* sees a “meteor in the shape of two balls” during a storm in the North Atlantic about 590 miles northeast of Bermuda. One ball is black and the other

is luminous and oblong. The luminous object descends with a roar and lights up the ship and surrounding water. The crew feels heat from the object even as solid lumps of ice fall on the deck and the rigging becomes iced. The side of the ship where it falls turns partially black and the copper plating is blistered. The wind increases to “hurricane force.” (“[Sea Captain’s Large Story](#),” *Boston (Mass.) Daily Globe*, May 8, 1887, p. 1; “[Meteors at Sea](#),” *Decatur (Ill.) Daily Republican*, May 9, 1887, p. 2; “[Quite a Notable Story](#),” *Boston (Mass.) Weekly Globe*, May 11, 1887, p. 1; “[Rare Electrical Phenomenon at Sea](#),” *American Meteorological Journal* 4 (July 1887): 98–99; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 205–217; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 2, Anomalist, 2021, pp. 201–210)

1887, October 24 — Sunset. A man in Fine, New York, is looking to the east when he sees a group of sparkling silver balls “tumbling and rushing through the air going towards the east” and finally disappearing in the clouds. The display is visible for about 4 minutes and is seen by others in town. (“[Fine](#),” *Gouverneur (N.Y.) Free Press*, December 7, 1887, p. 3; Jerome Clark, *Hidden Realms, Lost Civilizations, and Beings from Other Worlds*, Visible Ink, 2010, p. 262)

1887, November 12 — Midnight. Captain R. F. Moore of the English steamer [SS Siberian](#), sailing 10 nautical miles off Cape Race, Newfoundland, watches an enormous fireball rising from the sea to the height of 15 feet. It travels against the strong wind and comes close to the ship, then turns to the southeast and disappears. The object is seen for nearly 5 minutes. Moore says he has seen this phenomenon before and considers it a sign of stormy weather. (“[Globular Lightning](#),” *Science* 10 (1887): 324; Thomas Corwin Mendenhall, “[On Globular Lightning](#),” *American Meteorological Journal* 6 (February 1890): 437, 442–443; Theo Paijmans, “[Fiery Objects Rising from the Oceans](#),” Charles Fort Institute Blogs, July 6, 2007; Martin Shough and Wim van Utrecht, *Redemption of the Damned*, vol. 2, Anomalist, 2021, pp. 151–174; Dolan, USO1, 74–75)

1887, November 18 — 7:00 p.m. The crew of the British steamer *Flamborough* is off the coast of New Jersey when they see a brilliant object that leaves a bright trail. As it passes overhead, Capt. Fraser is temporarily blinded and experiences a “considerable pain in his head.” (Lore and Deneault, [p. 46](#))

1888

1888, Early September — 3:15 p.m. During a severe thunderstorm, after a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder, witnesses see a huge flame at Highland Lake, near Winsted, Connecticut. The water is parted for yards by a huge ball of fire at least 10 feet in diameter, and billows rise on either side to a height of 20 feet. The light moves toward the head of the lake with great velocity. When it is within 100 yards of the shore, another flash of lightning strikes, and the fireball disappears. The waters of the lake remain disturbed for hours. (“[A Ball of Fire on a Lake](#),” *Hagerstown (Ind.) Exponent*, September 12, 1888, p. 3)

1889

1889, February 7 — 6:00 p.m. A cylindrical luminous object passes over Oella, Maryland, at only several hundred feet altitude. It lights up the village “as brilliantly as if by a strong electric lamp.” It curves and appears to descend to the ground one mile away. It follows the course of the Patapsco River to the north for several seconds. (“[A Brilliant Meteor](#),” *Washington (D.C.) Evening Star*, February 9, 1889, p. 6)

1889, December 24 — 10:30 p.m. A young man named Oliver Lerch supposedly steps out of his family’s home in South Bend, Indiana, to fetch water from a well. Five minutes later, the people in the house hear Lerch screaming. When they run outside, they can hear his voice, apparently coming from 100 feet above their heads, but they cannot see him. He is screaming, “Help! Help! It’s got me!” Five minutes later, the voice has faded away, although it returns briefly again. Lerch’s tracks in the snow end suddenly about half way to the well, and he is never seen again. The name of the disappearing man, the date, and the location change over several retellings. No one named Oliver Lerch lived in South Bend in 1890 and no contemporary account or police record exist of such an occurrence. Joseph Rosenberger claimed in 1979 that his 1950 article was fiction (though posing as fact). However, the story, which Rosenberger set in 1890, has been in circulation since at least 1904 as taking place in 1889. (“[Indiana Mystery of the Man Who Disappeared Has Never Been Explained](#),” *Joplin (Mo.) Globe*, December 31, 1904, p. 4;

[“A Strange Disappearance,”](#) *Minneapolis Tribune*, December 26, 1906, p. 3; Joseph Rosenberger, “What Happened to Oliver Lerch?” *Fate* 4, no. 5 (September 1950): 28–31; Morris K. Jessup, *The Case for the UFO*, Citadel, 1955, pp. 136–139; Frank Edwards, *Strangest of All*, Ace, 1956, pp. 102–103; Brad Steiger, [Strangers from the Skies](#), Award, 1966; Kevin D. Randle, [“The Disappearance of Oliver Lerch,”](#) *APRO Bulletin* 25, no. 3 (September 1976): 1, 3–4; Joe Nickell, “The Oliver Lerch Disappearance: A Postmortem,” *Fate* 33, no. 3 (March 1980): 61–65; Clark III 597; Clark IV 657)

1890

1890, August 29 — The German ship *Doris* is in the North Atlantic some 340 miles off Jacksonville, Florida, when the crew sees an object about 5° above sea level. Captain Ohling watches it hover for one minute then slowly rise to 20° before it splits into two parts and disappears. (Lore and Deneault, [p. 43](#); Dolan, USO1, 75–76)

1891

1891, May 14 or August 14 — Sunset. May King and some others in Toponas, Colorado, see a large round object surrounded by light moving about in the sky during a rainstorm. It is revolving as it travels slowly toward the northeast, leaving a luminous trail. (Frances Melrose, [“Requests Fly in for UFO Information,”](#) Denver (Colo.) *Rocky Mountain News*, February 6, 1994, via *UFO Newsclipping Service*, no. 297 (April 1994): 10)

1891, June 13 — Day. An unnamed witness claims to see a “meteor” explode with a loud noise over the Wasson & Miller flour mill and cotton gin in Dublin, Texas. The object looks like “a bale of cotton suspended in the air after having been saturated in kerosene oil and ignited, except that it created a much brighter light” that dazzles people standing several hundred feet away. The object shatters into pieces before it hits the ground, the fragments setting the grass and weeds on fire. In addition to the fragments is a scrap of paper with writing in a strange language. ([“Meteoric Explosion,”](#) *Dublin (Tex.) Progress*, June 20, 1891, p. 5; [“Dublin 1891,”](#) Texas UFO Museum and Research Library, February 5, 2014)

1891, July 12 — 7:00 p.m. Residents of Theodore Street in Ottawa, Ontario, see over the rifle range a cigar-shaped balloon with a bright light on one end and a fan on the other traveling from south to north. (*MacLeod (Ont.) Gazette*, July 16, 1891; Clark III 70; Clark IV 94)

1891, September 2 — 8:00 p.m. [Alonzo M. Swan](#) and L. D. Dodson (an equestrian recovering from an illness) are camped in Coyote Springs, New Mexico [now within the bounds of Kirtland Air Force Base south of Albuquerque], to benefit from the mineral springs there when they see a brilliant light rise above a mountain to the south. As it moves closer against the wind, they see it has a series of “electric arc lights” around it and a “pole” or rudder that is similarly lit. The object is in view for nearly two hours. Another lighted object appears from the southwest and approaches the first object, but clouds prevent any further observation. Swan sees a lighted object again on September 4, although this time it could be a star. ([“Strange Mid Air Ships,”](#) *Albuquerque (N.Mex.) Weekly Citizen*, September 12, 1891, p. 3; Chris Aubeck and Martin Shough, *Return to Magonia: Investigating UFOs in History*, Anomalist, 2015, pp. 219–237)

1891, September 5 — 2:00 a.m. Two employees of an ice house in Crawfordsville, Indiana, Marshall McIntyre and Bill Gray, notice a white object about 300–400 feet in the air that is flying by means of several pairs of fins. It appears to be 18–20 feet long and 8 feet wide and has a single red glowing eye or light. When it begins circling a nearby residence on East Main Street, the two men take shelter in a barn. It moves away to the east but soon returns, whereupon the witnesses drive back to the ice house in their carriage. Rev. [George W. Switzer](#), a Methodist minister, reports a similar apparition above his church. Some locals are convinced that the object was either an illusion created by the town’s recently installed electric lights reflecting through the damp air and rain, or a flock of frightened killdeers. (“A Strange Phenomenon,” *Crawfordsville (Ind.) Daily Journal*, September 5, 1891, p. 1; [“Was It a Case of ‘Jag’?”](#) *Indianapolis Journal*, September 6, 1891, p. 1; “Mr. Switzer Saw the Spook,” *Crawfordsville (Ind.) Daily Journal*, September 7, 1891, p. 4; “The Spook Explained,” *Crawfordsville (Ind.) Daily Journal*, September 8, 1891, p. 9; [“Crawfordsville’s Airy Spook,”](#) *Indianapolis Journal*, September 9, 1891, p. 1; Vincent Gaddis, [“Indiana’s Sky Monster,”](#) *Doubt*, no. 14 (Spring 1946): 209–210; Chandler Lighty, [“The Crawfordsville Monster,”](#) *Hoosier State Chronicles*, October 26, 2015; Clark III 1076; Clark IV 1192)

1892

- 1892**, January? — [George W. Crusselle](#) and S. D. Cuthereil from the *USS Thetis* are wandering among the salt water lagoons on the west coast of Baja California near Punta Abreojos, Mexico, when they see a luminous object with smooth edges about 30 feet in diameter approaching from the ocean at an altitude of 50 feet. It changes shape from circular to an hourglass and moves swiftly to the surface of a lagoon, covering it with a “brilliant halo of light.” It rises moments later, changing its shape frequently, and moving swiftly in a zigzag fashion. After 15 minutes it disappears inland. (George W. Crusselle, “[The Coast Survey; How the Thetis Conducted a Hydroelectric Survey; A Peculiar Electrical Phenomenon](#),” *Atlanta (Ga.) Constitution*, April 10, 1892, p. 9; Dolan, USO1, 77–81)
- 1892**, March 23 — Evening–1:00 a.m. Residents of Warsaw, Poland, watch a balloon over the city that casts rays of light from an electrical apparatus. It remains stationary until 1:00 a.m., then it takes off to the west. Other supposed balloons are seen March 22 or earlier over Kaunas Fortress, Lithuania; and Modlin Fortress (in Nowy Dwór Mazowiecki), Sosnowiec, Dąbrowa Górnicza, and Dąbrowice, Poland. As they remain stationary for as long as 40 minutes, some assume they are piloted by German spies. (“[Spying by Balloon](#),” *New York Evening World*, March 25, 1892, p. 1; “[Espionage by Balloon](#),” *Manchester (UK) Guardian*, March 26, 1892, p. 8; “[Balloons As German Spies](#),” *New York Times*, March 26, 1892, p. 3; “[Steering Military Balloons](#),” *Birmingham Daily Post*, March 31, 1892, p. 8; “[The German Military Balloons](#),” *Manchester (UK) Guardian*, March 31, 1892, p. 8; “[German Army Balloons in Active Use](#),” *New York Tribune*, March 31, 1892, p. 1; Brett Holman, “[The Phantom Balloon Scare of 1892](#),” *Airminded*, July 11, 2009; Clark III 70; Clark IV 94)
- 1892**, April 16 — Witnesses at Przemyśl Fortress, Poland, see a bright point of light in the north that seems to be a sphere emitting searchlight beams above and below it. The object is hovering at an altitude of 2,100 feet and begins circling. (Poland 7–8)
- 1892**, June 1 — 11:30 p.m. A large balloon carrying a searchlight and four passengers passes over Newark, New Jersey, descending as low as 200 feet from the ground. (“[Mysterious Balloon Sighted](#),” *Middletown (N.Y.) Times-Press*, June 2, 1892, p. 5; Clark III 70; Clark IV 94)
- 1892**, June 19 — Night. J. L. Shaw of Conyers, Georgia, sees a mysterious light in the sky from which balls of fire fall to the ground near him. (“[Saw Balls of Fire](#),” *Atlanta (Ga.) Constitution*, June 21, 1892, p. 10)
- 1892**, August 5 — 11:00 p.m. Maud Dismore and Arthur Bull are sitting on a porch on Court Street in Visalia, California, when a reddish-blue light suddenly descends and hovers opposite the end of the porch. After a couple seconds it approaches them on the porch itself. It is about 6 feet high and 4 feet square, and its top seems to “wave back and forth.” The witnesses feel engulfed in electricity, and they say the light has an “unearthly color.” A small gate on the porch begins rattling, and it continues rattling even when Bull puts his hand on it. After a few seconds, the light blinks out and the rattling stops. (“[Ignis Fatuus](#),” *Visalia (Calif.) Daily Times*, August 12, 1892, p. 2)
- 1892**, August 30 — 11:00 p.m. Several people in Waxahachie, Texas, see a “kind of balloon” with colored lights passing over the northern part of the city after hearing a man shouting a greeting. (“[What Was It?](#)” *Galveston (Tex.) Daily News*, September 2, 1892, p. 6; Clark III 70; Clark IV 94)
- 1892**, September 20 — Large quantities of a white, thread-like substance fall from the sky during a rainstorm at Gainesville, Florida. Samples are sent to arachnologist [George Marx](#) of the US Department of Agriculture, who performs a chemical analysis that shows it to be from migrating spiders. (“[Spider Web from the Clouds](#),” *Scientific American* 67 (1892): 325; George Marx, “[On Spiders’ Web](#),” *Proceedings of the Entomological Society of Washington* 2 (1892): 385–388; “[An 1892 ‘Gossamer’ Fall: And What the Experts Said about It](#),” *CSI News Letter*, no. 22 (December 15, 1957): 22–23; Clark III 123–124; Clark IV 151)

1893

- 1893**, February 24–25 — 10:00 p.m. [Charles James Norcock](#), captain of the corvette *HMS Caroline*, is sailing about 16 miles south of Jeju Island, South Korea, in the Korea Strait when the officer of the watch observes some round