

Object Sighted Near River's Inlet, BC

July 10, 1897

Victoria, B.C. Semi-Weekly Colonist. 19 July 1897.

in: Loren E. Gross: Charles Fort, the Fortean Society, & Unidentified Flying Objects. p. 17-18.

UFO*BC NOTE:

On the 16th of May, 1896, the Swedish Government informed Canada that they would be sending a balloon from Sweden heading to the North Pole in the early summer of 1896. This information was requested to be widely disseminated across Canada so that any sightings could be reported back to Sweden and any assistance could be given to the explorers if needed. However, due to poor weather, the departure was delayed until the following year. Eventually the balloon set sail on July 11, 1897, but crashed on the pack ice after only 2 days (nowhere near Canada). Strangely enough, many sightings that were assumed to be this balloon were reported in Canada and the USA in 1896 and early 1897 (including this one).

The report might have been dismissed as a star or a planet but for something that had happened on July 10th. On the forementioned date, a Mr. W. S. Fitzgerald and a friend were camped out at River's Inlet, just north of the entrance to Queen Charlotte Sound. Around 2:45 in the morning both men were still awake and they happened to notice a light in the heavens over a high mountain near the mouth of the inlet. At first it looked like a tree on fire, but the fiery looking light was too high in the air. Besides that, the point of light was moving. The sky was darker than usual because of an overcast and when the flying light was first seen it had just emerged from a rift in the clouds. Other than the strong light, they soon discerned a : ". . . pear- shaped body. . [which was] . . . rendered luminous by the reflection of the light attached to it." Fitzgerald testified:

"We determined to watch its progress and saw it pass through rift after rift in the clouds. It was evidently moving in a different atmosphere, or currents of air, than we felt below at this time, for whereas on the water there was a nasty, squally wind blowing, it seemed to glide majestically along without so much as a tremor." (40.)

Both Fitzgerald and his friend watched the object finally disappear behind a dark mass of clouds, the outline of the pear-shaped body growing dim until only a point of light was visible. It was noted that the object moved so slowly it took over an hour to pass overhead. Had it been a fire balloon? Perhaps, but sending fire balloons aloft in British Columbia over forested areas was a serious crime.

The editor of the Victoria Semi-Weekly Colonist dropped a tantalizing clue to what might be a fruitful area of research:

"Is this a second visit of the great bird with the eye of fire, which the Bella Coola [Indian] legends tell us sat upon the mountains before the great Winter came?" (41.)

Source: <https://ufobc.ca/Reports/MusgraveFiles/>