

Object Sighted Near River's Inlet 2, BC

July 10, 1897

William Retoff, "UFOs in History: The Great Canadian Starship Invasion,"

Ideal's UFO Magazine, No. 11, Aug. 1980, pp. 53-54.

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 summer swarm in Canada kicked off with a predawn incident over the jagged wilderness close to the Pacific, 250 miles northwest of Vancouver in British Columbia. "On the mornings of July 10, about 2:30 or 3 A.M., my fishing partner and I were drifting for salmon out at the mouth of Rivers Inlet," testified W.S. Fitzgerald in a letter to Portland's Oregonian. The newspaper called Mr. Fitzgerald "reliable" and "not open to suspicion." Continued the fisherman: "Being both wide awake and happening to look up toward the mouth of the inlet, we saw over a lofty mountain peak what at first appeared to be a fire, such as would be caused by the burning of a tall, dry cedar. Looking more closely, however, we saw that the light was at least a mile above the highest-peak and was soaring smoothly along in boundless space above the sea of mountains beneath. It could not be a fire, we knew, nor a star, nor yet the moon, and all at once the thought burst upon us that it was a balloon, and none other than Andree's."

There was no way it could be Saloman Andree's balloon. Andree and entourage were still earthbound in Norway, working out last-minute problems prior to the ascent. The explorer didn't lift off for the North Pole until the following afternoon.

Back in Vancouver, Fitzgerald and his buddy stared into the bleak, rustling night. "There seemed to be besides the powerful light," he reported, "a large pear-shaped body attached to it and rendered luminous by the reflection of that light. We determined to watch in its progress and saw it pass through rift after rift in the clouds. It was evidently moving in a different atmosphere, or current of air, than we felt below at the time, for whereas on the water there was a misty, squally wind blowing, the balloon seemed to glide majestically along without so much as a tremor!"

The luminous phenomenon remained overhead nearly an hour. "Then daylight dawned," remarked Fitzgerald, "and we discerned it plainly for another - hour, but only the naked, powerful light was now visible, until finally it disappeared behind a huge mass of dark clouds and we saw it no more." Fitzgerald noted the visage was traveling south and slightly east when it slipped from view in the general direction of Sidney, British Columbia.

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