

The Saucers That Time Forgot

The Murky and Quirky History of UFOs © Curt Collins and Claude Falkstrom

Friday, November 17, 2017

Flying Saucer Ambush: Brush Creek, CA, 1953:



Gail Sprague, illustration for The Saucerian #2, 1953

This case cannot truly be considered forgotten because Gray Barker devoted an entire chapter to it in the immortal *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*.

John Black and John Van Allen told authorities they had been mining "fissionable material" in the Marble Creek area near Brush Creek, California. On at least two occasions, they witnessed a flying saucer land and a small man get out, fill a pail with water, then fly away. There seemed to be a pattern to the visits, so the miners intended to be ready to shoot at the saucer when it returned. They consulted the local law enforcement asking for permission to fire at it. The Brush Creek incident raised some ethical and legal challenges. Can aliens be shot for trespassing? Captain Fred Preston of the County Sheriff's Department, said no.



Idaho State Journal June 25, 1953

WITH CAMERA, NOT GUNS

Sierra Folk Plan to Greet Wee Flying Saucer Pilots

BRUSH CREEK, CALIF.—(UP). They are planning to shoot some from Mars at the junction of Marble and Jordan Creeks near here today, but with cameras instead of guns.

If the out-of-this-world pilots stick to their schedule and land their flying saucers on the sandbars where the two creeks meet, they will be met by a host of cameras and cameramen.

Also on hand will be a group of police officers to catch their first glimpse of a real flying saucer and its space-line operators.

HONEST MINERS

A couple of Hawaiian miners, John G. Black and John Van Allen, will be seeking their third look at the space ship and its crew from Mars (or elsewhere) as well as verification of the saucer's two previous landings here.

Black and Van Allen started the search last month when they came to the office of Sheriff Captain Preston in Oroville and asked permission to shoot the specimen if they came back to the lonely Barren landing place.

The miners, who have a reputation for sobriety and frugality, told how a silver-colored flying saucer landed on the sandbar near their camp at 8:00 p. m. PDT on May 29 and again at 8:00 p. m. on June 20.

They said that on each occasion the metal saucer bore two retractable legs and a beak-shaped nose, four feet tall, climbed out.

By carrying an aluminum bucket to Marble Creek, scooped up some water and returned to the camp—Black and Van Allen said.

Then, they said Preston, he loaned the bucket up to someone else and climbed a rope ladder built into the saucer which took off like a jet.

CAMERA ACTION

The miners figured that the space ship and its unusual occupants would be back at 8:00 p. m. today—July 20—upon asked permission of the Butte County sheriff's office to shoot the specimen for evidence.

Preston refused permission to shoot with guns but said shooting the saucer and its pilot with a camera would violate no law.

After reports of the episode were circulated, the miners were named in their camp by George T. Weller, a Milwaukee businessman with a three-decade career and a great interest in the subject of flying saucers.

Weller moved back into the rugged Sierra country and has been working all his afternoons and evenings with Black and Van Allen.

He says he will not come back

to town until he has a picture of the flying saucer and/or the men aboard.

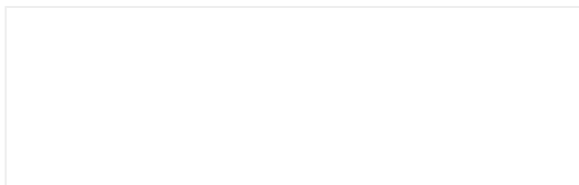
As for the two miners, they are positive the space ship will be back at 8:00 p. m. PDT today.

They have only one worry. They think maybe the crowd of watchers and photographers will scare the little men away.

OTHER FELLOW

By Ad Schuster

Those Brush Creek miners have been told not to shoot any guns at flying saucers which may arrive on their property with or without midgets. They may shoot, if they can get the hang of the newfangled contraptions, with cameras only. The significance of the Brush Creek story, we believe, has been generally overlooked. Do you note the midgets from Mars, or thereabouts, are interested in our miners and mining lands? If the planets are short of gold, or other minerals, it is possible these fellows, who so far have taken away from us no more than a bucket of water, may be prospectors in advance of a great army which will re-travel the trails of the Mother Lode.





Long Beach Independent, June 25, 1953



Gray Barker, author of *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*.

Gray Barker reported on the case in the first issue of *The Saucerian*, and followed up in the second issue, "*Report on the Brush Creek Saucer*," which was the basis for his coverage in *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*.

To me the story somehow smacked of truth, and I felt I should try to get to the bottom of it. Paul Spade, an amateur astronomer of California, who had volunteered his services to saucer investigation in his area, also volunteered to go to Brush Creek and look into the matter.

Spade provided the most detailed description of the saucer argument:

The little man wore green trousers, a jacket and a tie. His shoes were particularly strange in that they seem to be so remarkably flexible. Although they were distinctly recognizable shoes, they seemed almost to be a part of the man's feet. The outfit was topped off with a green cab over black hair. He seem like a normal person and except for his small stature and somewhat odd dress.

Brush Creek, California

The little man wore green trousers, a jacket and a tie. His shoes were particularly strange in that they seemed to be so remarkably flexible. Although they were distinctly recognizable as shoes, they seemed almost to be a part of the man's feet. The outfit was topped off with a green cap over black hair.

He looked like a normal person except for the small stature and somewhat odd dress. The walk was stiff, as if his muscles were cramped. He was broad-shouldered, appeared to be strong, and was rather good-looking—for a saucerman. He was very pale. As Black put it, "He looked like someone who had never been out in the sun much."

They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers

300 people were ready for the saucer's return, but apparently a much smaller number was ready at the alleged landing site.

"Little Men From Mars" Don't Show up for Awaiting Throng

BRUSH CREEK, Calif., July 21 (AP)—Miner John Q. Black said today he was "darn disappointed" that the little men from Mars didn't show up in their flying saucer with the retractable leg.

"I don't know why they didn't come," he said. "It's too deep for me. I'm just a miner."

Black and his partner, John Van Allen, had predicted the saucer would arrive at the junction of Marble and Jordan creeks at 8:30 p.m. yesterday.

Black claimed to have seen the saucer seven times before. He and his partner said they saw it appear on May 29 and June 28 at 8:30 p.m. They thought maybe it would reappear last night on a monthly schedule.

About 300 people, including newsmen and photographers scanned the skies all day yesterday in hopes of seeing the silver-colored saucer land on the sandspit in a remote mountain area near here.

Black and Van Allen said when they saw the "saucer" before, a little man about four feet tall in a forest green parka got out, scooped up water from the creek in a bucket and passed it to another occupant in the saucer. Then the saucer took off without a sound.

A small crowd of about 20 or 25 was on hand at the junction of the two creeks at the appointed hour.

Ooooooops!

You were right the first time. Walker's Appliance ARE giving forty dollars for old washers on the purchase of new General Electric Model WC450-KP wringer washers. Call 3165 and rid yourself of some washday worries. Adv.

Long Beach Independent July 20, 1953

The saucer did not return. Among the puzzles in this case is why the miners would have wanted to shoot their visitor. In the trespasses on their camp, the little man only took a bucket of water on each visit. That's hardly a crime worth punishing if it risks starting an interplanetary war.

We were unable to find much on John Q. Black, but the obituary for John J. Van Allen indicates that he was a veteran of World War I, and died ,June 3, 1957, at the age of 64.

This Brush Creek incident is not forgotten, and is cited in many UFO databases and prominent books like *Passport to Magonia* by Jacques Vallée. However, considering the absence of tangible evidence, it would seem to be fit only for a discussion of folklore. For further reading, see the entry by Patrick Gross at UFOs at Close Sight:

[MAY 20, JUNE 20, 1953, BRUSH CREEK, CALIFORNIA, USA, JOHN B. BLACK AND JOHN J. VAN ALLEN](#)

Project Blue Book Case does have a 12-page file: [20 May 1953, Brush Creek, California](#). The Air Force closed the case on the Brush Creek incident, and it was classified a hoax.

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Ray Palm November 18, 2017 at 3:11 PM

FTL technology and they're using a rope ladder? I don't think so.

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