

Summary

Sunday, March 20, 2022 7:43 AM

The Flatwoods monster (also known as the Braxton County monster, phantom of Flatwoods, or "Braxy"), in [West Virginia folklore](#), is an entity reported to have been sighted in the town of [Flatwoods](#) in [Braxton County, West Virginia](#), United States, on September 12, 1952, after a bright object crossed the night sky. Over 50 years later, investigators concluded that the light was a [meteor](#) and the creature was a [barn owl](#) perched in a tree, with shadows making it appear to be a large [humanoid](#)

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flatwoods_monster>

- Occurred Sept 12, 1952
- Witnessed by 7 people
- Check out by Project: Bluebook
- Meteor hit
- Foul smell
- Weird Screeching
- Skid marks
- Odd Gummy Deposit
- Illness among witnesses
- Suspected to be an Barn Owl

Braxton Co. Residents Faint, Become Ill After Run-In With Weird 10-Foot Monster

Seven Braxton County residents Saturday reporting seeing a 10-foot Frankenstein-like monster in the hills above Flatwood.

They said they saw the monster Friday night when they climbed a wooded hill to investigate reports that a flying saucer had landed.

Mrs. Kathryn May, Flatwood, said she and six boys, including a 15-year-old member of the National Guard, started to search for a bright object which her two small sons said they had seen come down.

However, State Police laughed the reports off as hysteria. They said the so-called monster had grown from seven to 17 feet in 24 hours.

The National Guard member, Gene Lemon, was leading the group when he said he saw what appeared to be a pair of bright eyes in a tree. At first he thought it was an opossum or a raccoon but when he shone his flashlight on it, he said, he saw a 10-foot monster with a blood-red face and a green body that seemed to glow.

Mrs. May said Lemon let out a terrified scream and fell over backward. She said the monster started toward them with a bounding motion.

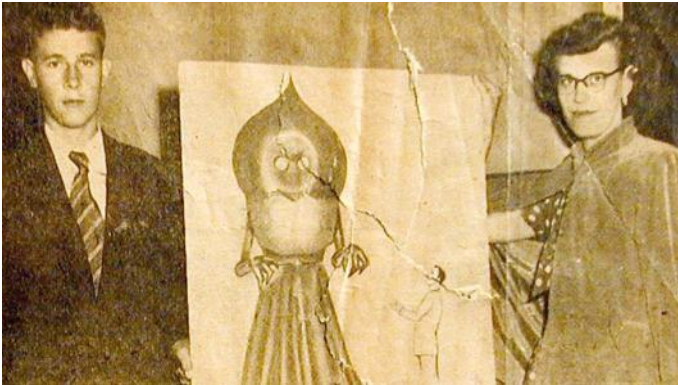
All of the party agreed that there was an overpowering smell that burned the nostrils and made them sick. Several of the party fainted and vomited for several hours after returning to town.

A. Lee Stewart, co-publisher of the Braxton County Democrat, said he and several men armed with shotguns returned with Lemon about a half-hour to an hour later, and reported a sickening odor still present. He said there were also slight heat waves in the air.

"Those people were the most scared people I've ever seen," Stewart said. "People don't make up that kind of story that quickly."

Both Mrs. May and Lemon described the thing as having the shape of a man, blood-red face, bright green body, protruding eyes, and hand extended forward and appeared to give off an eerie light. They said it had a black shield affix in the shape of an axe of spades behind it and wore what looked like a pleated metallic shirt.

"It looked worse than Frankenstein," Mrs. May said.



The Encounter

Friday, April 1, 2022 8:28 PM

What they witnessed

It was dusk when they saw it. The May brothers Ed, 13, and Freddie, 12, had been playing in their schoolyard with their 10-year-old friend Tommy Hyer. After noticing a pulsing red light streak across the sky and crash on a nearby farm, the three youngsters ran to grab the Mays boys' mother, then high-tailed it up that hill to check out where the light had landed. A few other boys, one with a dog, showed up too.

They ran back down—in sheer and credible terror.

"Seven Braxton County residents on Saturday reported seeing a 10-foot Frankenstein-like monster in the hills above Flatwoods," a local newspaper reported afterward. "A National Guard member, [17-year-old] Gene Lemon, was leading the group when he saw what appeared to be a pair of bright eyes in a tree."

Lemon screamed and fell backward, the news account said, "when he saw a 10-foot monster with a blood-red body and a green face that seemed to glow." It may have had claws for hands. It was hard to tell because of the dense mist.

The story made the local news, then got picked up by national radio and big papers all over the country, said Andrew Smith, who runs the [Flatwoods Monster Museum](#) and the Braxton County Convention Visitors Bureau. "Mrs. May and the National Guard kid ended up going to New York to talk to CBS," Gibson said.

Believers, doubters and cashers-in

"Those people were the most scared people I've ever seen," said local newspaper publisher A. Lee Stewart, in that 1952 news story. Stewart himself had marched up that hill with a shotgun after witnesses told what they saw. "People don't make up that kind of story that quickly," Stewart said then.

Others doubted.

"State police laughed off the reports as hysteria," the newspaper story said. "They said the so-called Monster had grown from seven to 17 feet in just 24 hours."

From <https://www.history.com/news/flatwoods-monster-west-virginia>

The Flatwoods Monster



It was almost fully dark on the evening of September 12th, 1952. Edward May, Freddie May, Neil Nunley, and Tommy Hyer, all young residents of the town of Flatwoods, were playing on the lawn of the Flatwoods Elementary School. Suddenly, a bright light streaked across the sky overhead and appeared to crash into a hillside on G. Bailey Fisher's farm. The boys ran to see what it was they saw in the sky. The May's home was on their way so they stopped to tell their mother, Kathleen May, what they had seen. Kathleen called on National Guardsman Eugene Lemon and the family dog, Richie, to accompany her and the boys to the crash site.

Upon reaching the site of the crash, the group saw a pulsing red light. Lemon shined his flashlight up the hill, and the group witnessed a terrifying sight—a ten-foot-tall creature, with a head shaped like a spade and what appeared to be a dark, metal "dress". The creature's hands were twisted and clawed, and what seemed to be its eyes glowed an eerie orange color. It appeared to levitate off the ground. A strange, sickening mist hung in the air. The creature hissed and glided quickly toward the witnesses, the group then turned and fled in terror.

Some of the members of the group suffered from throat irritation, vomiting, and nausea, which persisted for days. These symptoms were passed off as side effects of hysteria, but it is worth noting that these are also tell-tale signs of exposure to mustard gas.

May and Lemon reported the incident to local authorities, who searched the area that night and claimed to find nothing.

Mothman originated in Point Pleasant in 1966. Years earlier, another such "monster" story had its origins in Flatwoods, a small town in West Virginia's Braxton County. The creature has become known in popular culture as the [Flatwoods Monster](#), described by those who saw it as an [ominous, towering apparition with glowing eyes, claws, and a terrible, high-pitched, hissing squeal](#). The creature, they believed, came from a UFO that had crashed nearby.

But after visiting the site and interviewing original witnesses, Nickell came to the conclusion that what had petrified people was not an extraterrestrial or cryptid, but a [female barn owl protecting her chicks, and the light in the sky wasn't a UFO, but a meteor](#).

The story began in the hills of central West Virginia, on the [evening of Sept. 12, 1952, at about 7:15 p.m.](#), which was just before dark. Local children who were playing on the field of Flatwoods Elementary School saw a bright light streaking across the sky, which then [appeared to crash into a hillside farm](#).

The group of boys was comprised of brothers Edward and Freddie May, Neil Nunley, and Tommy Hyer. They decided to investigate what they saw, stopping along the way at the May brothers' home. The May brothers' mother, Kathleen May, accompanied them on the excursion, calling on 17-year-old Eugene Lemon to assist, bringing with them the May family dog, Richie.

Here's how Braxton County [described](#) the scene that unfolded at what has since often been described by the legend's true believers as a UFO crash site:

Upon reaching the site of the crash, the group saw a pulsing red light. Lemon shined his flashlight up the hill, and the group witnessed a terrifying sight—a ten-foot-tall creature, with a head shaped like a spade and what appeared to be a dark, metal "dress". The creature's hands were twisted and clawed, and what seemed to be its eyes glowed an eerie orange color. It appeared to levitate off the ground. A strange, sickening mist hung in the air. The creature hissed and glided quickly toward the witnesses, the group then turned and fled in terror.

Nickell's report includes the detail that when the creature approached, Lemon, ["responded by screaming and dropping his flashlight," at which point everyone fled](#). Afterwards, members of the excursion party reported symptoms like [throat irritation, nausea and vomiting](#), while a local newspaper reporter the next day announced he had found "skid marks" near the site and an "odd, gummy deposit," adding to the crashed UFO narrative.

Nickell in 2000 spoke to an elderly Flatwoods resident who saw the group later on the night of the sighting at the sheriff's station.

"He told me Eugene Lemon was so scared that he was throwing up,"

Nickell said. That detail gave him pause, because Nickell said it pointed to the extreme level of fear the group had experienced in the moment.

From <https://www.snopes.com/articles/383097/flatwoods-monster-mothman-owl/>

THE ENCOUNTER

On 12 September 1952, at around 7 p.m., a group of boys were playing in the local schoolyard in Flatwoods, West Virginia. Ed May (13), Freddie May (12), and Tommy Hyer (10) saw a strange pulsing light flash across the sky and land on a nearby farmstead. The boys decided to go investigate but first stopped by the May brothers' home to grab a flashlight. After hearing their story, Ed and Freddie's mother, Kathleen May, accompanied them. Others also joined the group — Neil Nunley (14), Ronnie Shaver (10), Gene Lemon (17), and even Lemon's dog.

There are numerous (and somewhat contradictory) accounts of what happened when they arrived at the "landing" site. However, UFO author Gray Barker was quick to arrive on the scene and, a week after the event, began interviewing witnesses. (This was, in fact, Barker's first foray into writing about "high strangeness." He was a former Braxton County resident and hearing about the incident prompted him to return home to investigate, which in turn launched his career in the paranormal.)

Barker found that Neil Nunley's account was the most dispassionate and considered it to be the most reliable. It was Nunley's version of events that Barker published in an article for *Fate Magazine*, and later in his 1956 book, *They Knew Too Much About Flying Saucers*.

According to Nunley, he and Gene Lemon were at the head of the group that headed up the hill to where the light seemed to have

landed. Approaching the site, they came across a strange mist that

are also tell-tale signs of exposure to mustard gas.

May and Lemon reported the incident to local authorities, who searched the area that night and claimed to find nothing.

From <<https://braxtonwv.org/the-flatwoods-monster/>>

in the 1950s, they have been identified as such.

According to Nunley, he and Gene Lemon were at the head of the group that headed up the hill to where the light seemed to have landed. Approaching the site, they came across a strange mist that smelled faintly of gas or burning metal.

When they crested the hill, the first thing they saw was a "huge globular mass" (Barker, 1956), just down the other side of the hill, about 50 feet away from them. Nunley described it as being like a ball of fire and said that its light pulsed at regular intervals.

Although Nunley said that he didn't hear anything, the other witnesses claim that there was a low beating or thumping noise. They said there was a sort of hissing sound as well, similar to a jet plane.

It was at this point that Lemon, thinking that he saw animal eyes in a tree, swung his flashlight around and illuminated the creature that would be known as the Flatwoods Monster (also the Braxton County Monster or Phantom of Flatwoods).

The witnesses described it as being a somewhat humanoid-shaped figure, around 15 feet tall, with a round, blood-red face. They saw no nose or mouth, only eyes or eye-like openings. Some claimed that "greenish-orange" light beamed out from them. Around its face was a hood-like shape, reaching upwards to a point.

They only saw the upper half of its body, from head to waist. One of the children later drew a picture where the figure was outlined in fire. Mrs. May claimed that it appeared to have some sort of internal light source. She also said that there were cloth-like folds on the body and it had clawed hands. No one seemed to be certain if the creature actually stood on the ground or if it was floating.

They only got to look at the creature for a brief moment before it moved towards them, making a hissing noise. While some of the witnesses describe the thing's movement as bobbing up and down, as if jumping at them, Nunley was adamant that this was not so. He said that it moved in an arc, moving towards them but circling at the same time. "It just moved. It didn't walk. It moved evenly; it didn't jump" (Barker, 1956).

The group fled in terror, no doubt regretting their curiosity. Apparently, even the dog had been scared witless, as it was later found cowering and whining under a porch.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>

Other Sightings

Sunday, April 3, 2022 6:56 AM

Another sighting of a creature, similar in description to the Flatwoods Monster, was reported by Mrs. Audra Harper not long before the infamous sighting on Fisher's farm. Harper claims to have seen the Monster while walking through the woods near her home near the town of Heaters. Heaters is about five miles north of Flatwoods. Harper and her friend were walking to a near-by store. The road leading out of their property was implacable and rutted so they were taking a short-cut through the forest instead of walking the road which would have increased their trip significantly. About a half mile into their trip they noticed a ball of fire on one of the hills they were passing. Harper dismissed it, assuming that one of her neighbors was "fox chasing". When she glanced back, she saw something unbelievable—the fire had vanished, and in its place stood the tall, dark silhouette of a man-shaped figure. Terrified, Harper and her friend ran, escaping among the rocks and boulders strewn around the hillside. The day after the September 12th incident in Flatwoods, another strange sighting occurred near Strange Creek about twenty miles south of Flatwoods. Reportedly, George and Edith Snitowsky and their 18-month-old son were driving through the rural area between Clay and Braxton County on route 4 when their car suddenly died. Mr. Snitowsky attempted to restart the car to no avail. It was night time and the road was deserted. While the Snitowsky's were trying to decide what to do, a foul, sulfurous smell filled the air and their baby began to cry. A strange bright light filled the darkness and the couple witnessed a ten-foot-tall creature hovering in front of their car. The description is similar to that of the original sighting, except the Monster was not wearing, what is presumed to be, its spade-shaped hood. Instead, its head was reportedly reptilian and bony. The creature dragged its lizard-like hand across the hood of the car before drifting away into the woods. As soon as the Monster was out of sight, the car restarted and the couple sped away. Snitowsky would later give his account for *Male Magazine* in the 1955.

From <<https://braxtonwv.org/the-flatwoods-monster/>>

The Monster Made A Second Appearance Hours After The First Recorded Encounter

A few hours after the May brothers and their friends ran into the creature in the woods, another group had the unlucky distinction of meeting the Flatwoods Monster. Allegedly, a couple and their infant were driving down the highway when their car mysteriously broke down. The husband got out of the car and immediately knew something was off. He later claimed to feel a low level jolt of electricity move through his body and that's when he smelled the noxious smell that surrounded the Monster. The husband and wife claim that they saw a large "reptilian" creature [floating across the highway](#) and that it paid them little to no attention. It's telling that the monster didn't seem to be malicious in this instance. It's almost like it the Monster acts like a wild animal and only attacks when it feels threatened.

From <<https://www.ranker.com/list/flatwoods-monster-facts/jacob-shelton>>

USAF Report

Sunday, April 3, 2022 6:39 AM

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD			
1. LOCATION Flatwoods, West Virginia		12. COMMENTS	
2. DATE 12-03-50		13. CONCLUSIONS	
3. TIME 7:00 P.M.		14. COMMENTS	
4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION a. Ground - Visual b. Ground - Radar c. Aerial - Visual d. Aerial - Radar		15. COMMENTS	
5. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 1		16. COMMENTS	
6. COURSE		17. COMMENTS	
7. DURATION OF OBSERVATION 1		18. COMMENTS	
8. DRAFT SUMMARY OF SIGHTING		19. COMMENTS	
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ATTC FORM 329 (REV 24 SEP 52)

TYPICAL NOTE (FIREBALL) PLX

12 Sep

FLATWOODS - SEPTEMBER 12, 1942 - FLATWOODS, W. VA.

Direction: From about 30° north of east to 30° south of west.

Angle of Flight: About 30° from the horizontal.

Duration: 5 - 6 seconds

Size: About twice the diameter of the moon at zenith, but believes the object looked larger than it actually was because it was so near the horizon.

Time: Approximately 7:00 P.M. E.S.T.

Color: Brilliant greenish white.

Shape: Egg-shaped with smaller radius in front. Bluish green at rear.

Distance: Assuming that it passed over Cumberland, Md. in the flight to Flatwoods, West Virginia, it passed within 160 miles of Akron.

Arc: Was observed while passing through an arc of approximately 45°.

Length of Visible Flight: Based on a distance of 160 miles from Akron and an arc of 45°, the flight was observed for approximately 175 miles.

Altitude: When first observed, the object was about 65 miles above the surface of the earth.

Ground Velocity: 21 miles per second.

Actual Velocity: 21 miles per second.

Observed by a number of places between Cumberland and Point 160 E. of Akron, Ohio.

(All computations tally with speed, direction, trajectory and other characteristics of a fireball)

7-3719-10

Project BLUE BOOK - Unidentified Flying Objects

- [General Information](#)
- [Reference Report relating to Project BLUE BOOK](#)
- [U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet on UFO'S and Project BLUE BOOK](#)
- [Reference Report relating to Majestic 12 \(MJ-12\)](#)
- [Information of the "Roswell Incident"](#)

General Information

The United States Air Force retired to the custody of the National Archives its records on Project BLUE BOOK relating to the investigations of unidentified flying objects. Project BLUE BOOK has been declassified and the records are available for examination in our research room. The project closed in 1969 and we have no information on sightings after that date.

The National Archives has received numerous inquiries concerning documents identified as "MJ12" and "Briefing Document: Operation Majestic 12." We have made extensive searches among the records in our custody of the U.S. Air Force and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to identify these documents. The Truman and Eisenhower Libraries have also searched their holdings for any references to, or copies of, the documents. In addition, the records of the National Security Council (NSC) for the Truman and Eisenhower Administrations are in the custody of the National Archives. Searches were made of the indexes to the NSC's Policy Paper and Meeting Minute files under the subjects MJ-12, majestic, unidentified flying objects, UFO, flying saucers, extraterrestrial biological entities and Aquarius. These searches were all negative with the exception of a "Memorandum for General Twining, from Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to the President, Subject: "NCS/MJ-12 Special Studies Project" dated July 14, 1954. The memorandum, one page, refers to a briefing to take place on July 16. The memorandum does not identify MJ-12 or the purpose of the briefing.

Project BLUE BOOK Reference Report

Textual records of Project BLUE BOOK (the documentation relating to investigations of unidentified flying objects), excluding names of people involved in the sightings, are now available for research in the National Archives Building. The records include approximately 2 cubic feet of unarranged project or administrative files, 37 cubic feet of case files in which individual sightings are arranged chronologically, and 3 cubic feet of records relating to the Office of Special Investigations (OSI), portions of which are arranged chronologically, by OSI district, and by overseas command. A cubic foot of records comprises about 2,000 pages. Finding aids for these records include a file list for the project files and an index to individual sightings, entered by date and location.

Access to BLUE BOOK textual records is by means of 94 rolls of 35mm microfilm (T-1206) in the National Archives Microfilm Reading Room. The first microfilm roll includes a list of contents for all of the rolls and the finding aids. Photographs scattered among the textual records have also been filmed separately on the last two rolls.

Motion picture film, sound recordings, and some still pictures are maintained by the Motion Picture & Sound & Video Branch (NNSM) and the Still Picture Branch (NNSP).

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet Concerning UFO's and Project BLUE BOOK

The following is a copy of the US Air Force Fact Sheet distributed by Wright-Patterson AFB in January 1985.

United States Air Force

Public Affairs Division,

Wright-Patterson AFB,

Ohio 45433

UFOs & PROJECT BLUE BOOK

On December 17, 1969, the Secretary of the Air Force announced the termination of Project BLUE BOOK, the Air Force program for the investigation of UFOS.

From 1947 to 1969, a total of 12, 618 sightings were reported to Project BLUE BOOK. Of these 701 remain "Unidentified." The project was headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, whose personnel no longer receive, document or investigate UFO reports.

The decision to discontinue UFO investigations was based on an evaluation of a report prepared by the University of Colorado entitled, "Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects;" a review of the University of Colorado's report by the National Academy of Sciences; past UFO studies and Air Force experience investigating UFO reports during the 40s, '50s, and '60s.

As a result of these investigations and studies and experience gained from investigating UFO reports since 1948, the conclusions of Project BLUE BOOK are:(1) no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security;(2) there has been no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings categorized as "unidentified" represent technological developments or principles beyond the range of present-day scientific knowledge; and(3) there has been no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as "unidentified" are extraterrestrial vehicles.

With the termination of Project BLUE BOOK, the Air Force regulations establishing and controlling the program for investigating and analyzing UFOs were rescinded. Documentation regarding the former BLUE BOOK investigation has been permanently transferred to the Military Reference Branch, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, and is available for public review and analysis.

Since Project BLUE BOOK was closed, nothing has happened to indicate that the Air Force ought to resume investigating UFOS. Because of the considerable cost to the Air Force in the past, and the tight funding of Air Force needs today, there is no likelihood the Air Force will become involved with UFO investigation again.

There are a number of universities and professional scientific organizations, such as the American Association for the Advancement of Science, which have considered UFO phenomena during periodic meetings and seminars. In addition, a list of private organizations interested in aerial phenomena may be found in Gayle's Encyclopedia of Associations (edition 8, vol.- 1, pp. 432-433). Such timely review of the situation by private groups ensures that sound evidence will not be overlooked by the scientific community.

A person calling the base to report a UFO is advised to contact a private or professional organization (as mentioned above) or to contact a local law enforcement agency if the caller feels his or public safety is endangered.

Periodically, it is erroneously stated that the remains of extraterrestrial visitors are or have been stored at Wright-Patterson AFB. There are not now nor ever have been, any extraterrestrial visitors or equipment on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

Majestic 12 or "MJ-12" Reference Report

The National Archives has received many requests for documentation and information about "Project MJ-12." Many of the inquiries concern a memorandum from Robert Cutler to Gen. Nathan Twining, dated July 14, 1954. This particular document poses problems for the following reasons:

1. The document was located in Record Group 341, entry 267. The series is filed by a Top Secret register number. This document does not bear such a number.
2. The document is filed in the folder T4-1846. There are no other documents in the folder regarding "NSC/MJ-12."
3. Researchers on the staff of the National Archives have searched in the records of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, and in other related files. No further information has been found on this subject.

Project Blue Book was the code name for the systematic study of [unidentified flying objects](#) by the [United States Air Force](#) from March 1952 to its termination on December 17, 1969. The project, headquartered at [Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio](#), was initially directed by Captain [Edward J. Ruppelt](#), and followed projects of a similar nature such as [Project Sign](#) established in 1947, and [Project Grudge](#) in 1948. Project Blue Book had two goals, namely, to determine if UFOs were a threat to [national security](#), and to [scientifically analyze](#) UFO-related data.

Thousands of UFO reports were collected, analyzed, and filed. As a result of the [Condon Report](#), which concluded that the study of UFOs was unlikely to yield major scientific discoveries, and a review of the report by the [National Academy of Sciences](#), Project Blue Book was terminated in 1969. The Air Force supplies the following summary of its investigations:

1. No UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force was ever an indication of threat to our national security;
 2. There was no evidence submitted to or discovered by the Air Force that sightings categorized as "unidentified" represented technological developments or principles beyond the range of modern scientific knowledge; and
 3. There was no evidence indicating that sightings categorized as "unidentified" were extraterrestrial vehicles.^[u]
- By the time Project Blue Book ended, it had collected 12,618 UFO reports, and concluded that most of them were misidentifications of natural [phenomena](#) ([clouds](#), [stars](#), etc.) or conventional aircraft. According to the [National Reconnaissance Office](#) a number of the reports could be explained by flights of the formerly secret reconnaissance planes [U-2](#) and [A-12](#).^[u] 701 reports were classified as unexplained, even after stringent analysis.^[u] The UFO reports were archived and are available under the [Freedom of Information Act](#), but names and other personal information of all witnesses have been [redacted](#).

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Blue_Book



Public USAF UFO studies were first initiated under [Project Sign](#) at the end of 1947, following many widely publicized UFO reports (see [Kenneth Arnold](#)). Project Sign was initiated specifically at the request of General [Nathan Twining](#), chief of the [Air Force Materiel Command](#) at [Wright-Patterson Air Force Base](#). Wright-Patterson was also to be the home of Project Sign and all subsequent official USAF public investigations.

Project Sign was officially inconclusive regarding the cause of the sightings. However, according to US Air Force Captain [Edward J. Ruppelt](#) (the first director of Project Blue Book), Sign's initial intelligence estimate (the so-called [Estimate of the Situation](#)) written in the late summer of 1948, concluded that the flying saucers were real craft, were not made by either the [Soviet Union](#) or [United States](#), and were likely [extraterrestrial](#) in origin. (See also [extraterrestrial hypothesis](#).) This was subsequently rejected by Gen. [Hoyt Vandenberg](#), USAF Chief of Staff, citing a lack of physical proof. Vandenberg subsequently dismantled Project Sign.^[u] Project Sign was succeeded at the end of 1948 by [Project Grudge](#), which was criticized as having a [debunking](#) mandate. Ruppelt referred to the era of Project Grudge as the "dark ages" of early USAF UFO investigation. Grudge concluded that all UFOs were natural phenomena or other misinterpretations, although it also stated that 23 percent of the reports could not be explained.

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project_Blue_Book

4. Inquiries to the U.S. Air Force, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the National Security Council failed to produce further information.
5. The Freedom of Information Office of the National Security Council informed the National Archives that "Top Secret Restricted Information" is a marking which did not come into use at the National Security Council until the Nixon Administration. The Eisenhower Presidential Library also confirm that this particular marking was not used during the Eisenhower Administration.
6. The document in question does not bear an official government letterhead or watermark. The NARA conservation specialist examined the paper and determined it was a ribbon copy prepared on "diction onionskin." The Eisenhower Library has examined a representative sample of the documents in its collection of the Cutler papers. All documents in the sample created by Mr. Cutler while he served on the NSC staff have an eagle watermark in the bond paper. The onionskin carbon copies have either an eagle watermark or no watermark at all. Most documents sent out by the NSC were prepared on White House letterhead paper. For the brief period when Mr. Cutler left the NSC, his carbon copies were prepared on "prestige onionskin."
7. The National Archives searched the Official Meeting Minute Files of the National Security Council and found no record of a NSC meeting on July 16, 1954. A search of all NSC Meeting Minutes for July 1954 found no mention of MJ-12 nor Majestic.
8. The Judicial, Fiscal and Social Branch searched the indices of the NSC records and found no listing for: MJ-12, Majestic, unidentified flying objects, UFO, flying saucers, or flying discs.
9. NAJA found a memo in a folder titled "Special Meeting July 16, 1956" which indicated that NSC members would be called to a civil defense exercise on July 16, 1956.

10. The Eisenhower Library states, in a letter to the Military Reference Branch, dated July 16, 1987: "president Eisenhower's Appointment Books contain no entry for a special meeting on July 16, 1954 which might have included a briefing on MJ-12. Even when the President had 'off the record' meetings, the Appointment Books contain entries indicating the time of the meeting and the participants ..."

"The Declassification office of the National Security Council has informed us that it has no record of any declassification action having been taken on this memorandum or any other documents on this alleged project ..."

Robert Cutler, at the direction of President Eisenhower, was visiting overseas military installations on the day he supposedly issued this memorandum--- July 14, 1954. The Administration Series in Eisenhower's Papers as President contains Cutler's memorandum and report to the President upon his return from the trip. The memorandum is dated July 20, 1954 and refers to Cutler's visits to installations in Europe and North Africa between July 3 and 15. Also, within the NSC Staff Papers is a memorandum dated July 3, 1954, from Cutler to his two subordinates, James S. Ia and J. Patrick Cone, explaining how they should handle NSC administrative matters during his absence; one would assume that if the memorandum to Twining were genuine, Lay or Cone would have signed it."

When certifying a document under the seal of the National Archives we attest that the reproduction is a true copy of a document in our custody. We do not authenticate documents or the information contained in a document.

The "Roswell Incident"

The National Archives has been unable to locate any documentation among the Project BLUE BOOK records which discuss the 1947 incident in Roswell, New Mexico.

On September 8, 1994, the Secretary of the Air Force, Sheila E. Widnall, announced that the United States Air Force had completed its study to locate records that relate to the alleged 1947 UFO incident near Roswell, New Mexico. Pro-UFO researchers claim that an extraterrestrial spacecraft and its alien occupants were recovered near Roswell in July of 1947, and that this fact was kept from the public.

At the request of Congressman Steven H. Schiff (R-NM), the General Accounting Office (GAO) initiated an audit in February of 1994, to locate all records relating to the "Roswell Incident" and to determine if such records were properly handled. The GAO audit was completed and the results published by the Headquarters, U.S. Air Force in 1995. The publication is entitled "The Roswell Report: Fact vs. Fiction in the New Mexico Desert." This publication may be obtained from most U.S. Government Depository Library. The call number is **ISBN 0-16-048023-X**.

The General Accounting Office audit involved a number of government agencies but focused on the Air Force. To support this audit, the Air Force initiated a systematic search of current Air Force offices as well as numerous archives and records centers which might help explain the incident. Air Force officials also interviewed a number of persons who may have had knowledge of the events. Prior to the interviews, Secretary Widnall released those persons from any previous security obligations that may have restricted their statements.

The Air Force research did not locate or develop any information that the "Roswell Incident" was a UFO event nor was there any indication of a "cover-up" by the Government. Information obtained through exhaustive records searches and interviews indicated that the materials recovered near Roswell was consistent with a balloon devise of the type used in a then classified project. No records indicated or even hinted that the recovery of "alien" bodies or extraterrestrial materials.

All documentation related to this case are now declassified and the information in the public domain. Documentation has been turned over to the office of the Air Force Historian.

From <<https://www.archives.gov/research/military/air-force/ufos>>

Explanation

Sunday, April 3, 2022 6:10 AM

The Government Tried To Cover Up The Monster

People with an interest in the Flatwoods Monster can argue themselves to sleep about what the Monster actually is. Is it an alien? A cryptid? An interdimensional traveler? All three? No one is ever going to come up with a definitive answer, but the one thing that's undeniable is that the government is absolutely aware about what happened in West Virginia in 1952. The entire town saw something fly across the sky on the night of the sighting of the Monster and there are different theories about what it was. Most people believe it was a meteor, but there are a few folks that think the UFO was actually a military craft that landed in the hillside. Before his death, [Major Keyhoe](#), a former Marine Corps naval aviator, claimed that the Air Force sent two military investigators to Flatwoods under the guise as journalists to research the UFO. They

determined that the UFO was actually a meteor that only gave the impression of landing.

From <<https://www.ranker.com/list/flatwoods-monster-facts/jacob-shelton>>

Keyhoe (1953) claimed that Air Force Intelligence had sent two investigators disguised as civilians to Flatwoods. Their investigation determined that the object was a meteor as well. It had "merely appeared to be landing when it disappeared over the hill." As mentioned before, declassified Project Blue Book documents would seem to back up this claim.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>

Symptoms

Sunday, April 3, 2022 5:44 AM

Some of the members of the group suffered from throat irritation, vomiting, and nausea, which persisted for days. These symptoms were passed off as side effects of hysteria, but it is worth noting that these are also tell-tale signs of exposure to mustard gas.

From <<https://braxtonwv.org/the-flatwoods-monster/>>

Being In The Presence Of The Flatwoods Monster Causes Nausea And Convulsing

Everyone who's had the poor luck to run into the Flatwoods Monster has experienced the same physical symptoms to varying degrees. Some of them deal with throat and nose irritation, while other people who were in the vicinity began vomiting and convulsing. Weeks after the event, one of the boys in the group, Gene Lemon, was still unable to swallow liquids because of the irritation. A doctor who examined the group said that their ailments were similar to those suffered by soldiers who encountered mustard gas. A doctor also noted that the effects are the same as people who were suffering from "hysteria," but that claim somehow sounds even more ridiculous than a group of people seeing a horrific owl creature in the woods. Many [alien abductees](#) have had similar symptoms to the people who saw the Flatwoods Monster, which points towards the creature being from another planet or dimension.

From <<https://www.ranker.com/list/flatwoods-monster-facts/jacob-shelton>>

Nickell also pointed to the level of terror the group had experienced when explaining why they felt ill.

From <<https://www.snopes.com/articles/383097/flatwoods-monster-mothman-owl/>>

It was reported that the boys suffered from irritated noses and throats immediately following the incident and suffered from nausea and convulsions for weeks after. These symptoms have been attributed to exposure to the mysterious gas.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>

Haupt explains nausea reported by some of the witnesses as symptoms "consistent with hysteria and over-exertion."

From <<https://hyaenagallery.tumblr.com/post/175341168189/the-flatwoods-monster-part-3-according-to-skeptic>>

What to Know About Overexertion

Reviewed by [Dan Brennan, MD](#) on November 27, 2021

IN THIS ARTICLE

- [How Overexertion Happens](#)
- [The Impact of Overexertion on Your Health](#)
- [Signs of Overexertion](#)
- [Preventing Overexertion](#)

Overexertion can occur when you push yourself too hard physically. It is the third most common cause of accidental injuries in the United States.

It can cause [inflammation](#), leading to pain and discomfort. If it is not addressed, overexertion can lead to tearing or overstretching in muscles, tendons, and ligaments.

The most common types of overexertion injuries are in the shoulders, back, and knees. However, you can also get them in other parts of the body.

How Overexertion Happens

There are a few different ways you can overexert your muscles. Overexertion can happen at home or at work. Any time you are lifting something or doing an unusual physical activity, you should pay attention to how you are moving your body.

The most common industries for overexertion injuries are the service industry and trade industries, along with transportation and utilities. However, the events and activities that may cause overexertion are different for everyone. You must listen to your body and know your limits.

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[Improper posture](#). If you are doing a physical task or lifting something with bad posture, you may be more at risk for injury.

Working in an improper space. If you do not have enough room to move properly for the task at hand, you can injure yourself.

Carrying too much weight. Be mindful if you're not used to carrying heavy loads. When you carry something that is over your capacity, you are at risk of overexertion.

Using worn-out tools. When tools become worn out, you may have to hold them improperly or use more force.

Repetitive motion. Doing the same movement over and over without enough break time puts you at a higher risk of overexertion.

The Impact of Overexertion on Your Health

The most common overexertion injuries affect the neck and back, often contributing to chronic pain in the upper and lower back. If you get an overexertion injury, you can be at a higher risk for re-injury, even after you have healed. This can affect both your personal and professional life in the following ways:

- You may need to take time off work to allow for healing.
- While working a physical job, you may need to perform a different job function while you are healing.
- You must practice safe form while playing sports and working out.

Using proper lifting and work techniques can keep you healthy so you can enjoy physical activity in all areas of life.

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Signs of Overexertion

You may be nearing overexertion while performing a task if you:

- Feel dizzy
- Feel sore
- Feel too hot
- Get too sweaty
- Have a high pulse rate
- Have abdominal pain
- Experience fluttering heart
- Have chest pain

If you experience the feeling of a fluttering heart for more than 30 minutes, or chest pain, call 911 right away.

Preventing Overexertion

There are many things you can do both at home, at play, and at work to prevent overexertion.

Warm up. Before doing physical activity, stretch and move your body to warm up your muscles.

Take small breaks. When doing repetitive motion or a lot of lifting, take a lot of small breaks. Even a break of 20 seconds to stretch the muscles you are using can be helpful.

Lift properly. When lifting anything, it is important to have proper posture and form. Follow these steps to avoid overexertion:

- Stand close to what you are lifting.
- Place your feet wide apart to give yourself a solid base.
- Bend your knees instead of your hips and back.
- Tighten your core muscles to help you lift the object.
- Use your leg muscles to lift, not your back.
- Don't twist your body while holding something heavy. Turn your whole body, including your feet. Your nose and toes should always be pointing in the same direction while lifting.
- When putting down a heavy object, bend with your knees so you squat to put it down instead of hinging at the hips.

Ask for help. When dealing with a bulky or heavy item, ask someone to help you. Or, if no one is available, try to take multiple trips to carry heavy items instead of trying to carry them all at once.

Raise work tables to waist height. If your work table is too low, you may put yourself at risk of over-exertion from bending over too much. Raise your work table to the proper height to avoid this.

Maintain your tools or get new ones. Use tools in good condition to avoid overexerting yourself.

Use available equipment to move heavy objects. If available, use tools meant for lifting assistance. This could be anything from a lifting belt

that gives you more core support, to machinery that lifts items for you and carries them where they need to go.

Avoid carrying things that are too heavy. Everyone's limit for how much they can carry is different. If you do not regularly carry heavy objects or work out, what you can safely carry may be less than someone else. Listen to your body, and ask for help when needed.

From <<https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/what-to-know-about-overexertion>>

Mustard Gas

Sunday, April 3, 2022 7:11 AM

Facts About Sulfur Mustard

Related Pages

- [Facts About Sulfur Mustard](#)
- [Case Definition: Vesicant \(Mustards, Dimethyl Sulfate, and Lewisite\)](#)
- [Toxic Syndrome Description: Vesicant/Blister Agent Poisoning](#)

What sulfur mustard is

- Sulfur mustard is a type of chemical warfare agent. These kinds of agents cause blistering of the skin and mucous membranes on contact. They are called vesicants or blistering agents.
- Sulfur mustard is also known as "mustard gas or mustard agent," or by the military designations H, HD, and HT.
- Sulfur mustard sometimes smells like garlic, onions, or mustard and sometimes has no odor. It can be a vapor (the gaseous form of a liquid), an oily-textured liquid, or a solid.
- Sulfur mustard can be clear to yellow or brown when it is in liquid or solid form.

Where sulfur mustard is found and how it is used

- Sulfur mustard is not found naturally in the environment.
- Sulfur mustard was introduced in World War I as a chemical warfare agent. Historically it was available for use in the treatment of a skin condition called psoriasis. Today it has no medical use.

How people can be exposed to sulfur mustard

- If sulfur mustard is released into the air as a vapor, people can be exposed through skin contact, eye contact, or breathing. Sulfur mustard vapor can be carried long distances by wind.
- If sulfur mustard is released into water, people can be exposed by drinking the contaminated water or getting it on their skin.
- People can be exposed to liquid sulfur mustard by eating it or getting it on their skin.
- Sulfur mustard can last from 1 to 2 days in the environment under average weather conditions and from weeks to months under very cold conditions.
- Sulfur mustard breaks down slowly in the body, so repeated exposure may have a cumulative effect (that is, it can build up in the body).

How sulfur mustard works

- Adverse health effects caused by sulfur mustard depend on how much people are exposed to, how they were exposed (the route of exposure), and the length of time that people are exposed.
- Sulfur mustard is a powerful irritant and blistering agent that damages the skin, eyes, and respiratory (breathing) tract.
- Sulfur mustard damages DNA, a vital component of cells in the body, especially in the bone marrow. This causes decreased formation of blood cells (aplastic anemia) or decreased red or white blood cells and platelets (pancytopenia).
- Sulfur mustard vapor is heavier than air, so it will settle in low-lying areas.

Immediate signs and symptoms of sulfur mustard exposure

- Exposure to sulfur mustard usually is **not** fatal. When sulfur mustard was used during World War I, it killed fewer than 5% of the people who were exposed and got medical care.
- People may not know right away that they have been exposed, because sulfur mustard may not have a smell or have a smell that might not cause alarm.
- Typically, signs and symptoms do not occur immediately. Depending on the severity of the exposure, symptoms may not occur for up to 24 hours. Some people are more sensitive to sulfur mustard than are other people, and may have signs and symptoms sooner.
- Sulfur mustard can have the following effects on specific parts of the body:
 - *Skin*: redness and itching of the skin may occur 2 to 48 hours after exposure and may eventually change to yellow blistering of the skin.
 - *Eyes*: irritation, pain, swelling, and tearing may occur within 3 to 12 hours of a mild to moderate exposure. A severe exposure may cause signs and symptoms within 1 to 2 hours and may include the symptoms of a mild or moderate exposure plus light sensitivity, severe pain, or blindness lasting up to 10 days.
 - *Respiratory tract*: runny nose, sneezing, hoarseness, bloody nose, sinus pain, shortness of breath, and cough within 12 to 24 hours of a mild exposure and within 2 to 4 hours of a severe exposure.
 - *Digestive tract*: abdominal pain, diarrhea, fever, nausea, and vomiting.
 - *Bone marrow*: decreased formation of blood cells (aplastic anemia) or decreased red or white blood cells and platelets (pancytopenia) leading to weakness, bleeding and infections.
- Showing these signs and symptoms does not necessarily mean that a person has been exposed to sulfur mustard.

What the long-term health effects may be

- Exposure to sulfur mustard liquid is more likely to produce second- and third- degree burns and later scarring than is exposure to sulfur mustard vapor. Extensive skin burning can be fatal.
- Extensive breathing in of the vapors can cause chronic respiratory disease, repeated respiratory infections, or death.
- Extensive eye exposure can cause permanent blindness.
- Exposure to sulfur mustard may increase a person's risk for lung and respiratory cancer.

How people can protect themselves and what they should do if they are exposed to sulfur mustard

- Because no antidote exists for sulfur mustard exposure, the best thing to do is avoid it. Immediately leave the area where the sulfur mustard was released. Try to find higher ground, because sulfur mustard is heavier than air and will settle in low-lying areas.
- If avoiding sulfur mustard exposure is not possible, rapidly remove the sulfur mustard from the body. Getting the sulfur mustard off as soon as possible after exposure is the only effective way to prevent or decrease tissue damage to the body.
- Quickly remove any clothing that has liquid sulfur mustard on it. If possible, seal the clothing in a plastic bag, and then seal that bag inside a second plastic bag.
- Immediately wash any exposed part of the body (eyes, skin, etc.) thoroughly with plain, clean water. Eyes need to be flushed with water for 5 to 10 minutes. Do NOT cover eyes with bandages, but do protect them with dark glasses or goggles.
- If someone has ingested sulfur mustard, do NOT induce vomiting. Give the person some water or milk to drink, if they can swallow.
- Seek medical attention right away.

How sulfur mustard exposure is treated

The most important factor is removing sulfur mustard from the body. Exposure to sulfur mustard is treated by giving the victim supportive medical care to minimize the effects of the exposure. Though no antidote exists for sulfur mustard, exposure is usually not fatal.

From <<https://emergency.cdc.gov/agent/sulfurmustard/basics/facts.asp>>

Mass Psychogenic Illness

Monday, September 20, 2021 8:45 PM

Mass psychogenic illness involves the spread of illness symptoms through a population where there is no infectious agent responsible for contagion.^[1] MPI is distinct from other types of collective [delusions](#) by involving physical symptoms.^[2] According to Balaratnasingam and Janca, "Mass hysteria is to date a poorly understood condition. Little certainty exists regarding its etiology."^[3] Qualities of MPI outbreaks often include:^[4]


- symptoms that have no plausible organic basis;
 - symptoms that are transient and benign;
 - symptoms with rapid onset and recovery;
 - occurrence in a segregated group;
 - the presence of extraordinary anxiety;
 - symptoms that are spread via sight, sound or oral communication;
 - a spread that moves down the age scale, beginning with older or higher-status people;
 - a preponderance of female participants.
- British psychiatrist Simon Wessely distinguishes between two forms of MPI:^[5]
- *Mass anxiety hysteria* "consists of episodes of acute anxiety, occurring mainly in schoolchildren. Prior tension is absent and the rapid spread is by visual contact."^[6]
 - *Mass motor hysteria* "consists of abnormalities in motor behaviour. It occurs in any age group and prior tension is present. Initial cases can be identified and the spread is gradual. ... [T]he outbreak may be prolonged."^[7]
- While his definition is sometimes adhered to,^[8] others such as Ali-Gombe et al. of the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria contest Wessely's definition and describe outbreaks with qualities of both mass motor hysteria and mass anxiety hysteria.^[9] The [DSM-IV-TR](#) does not have specific diagnosis for this condition but the text describing [conversion disorder](#) states that "In 'epidemic hysteria', shared symptoms develop in a circumscribed group of people following 'exposure' to a common precipitant."

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_psychogenic_illness>

Contagious' stress

Robert W Baloh, a Professor of Neurology at UCLA, has long studied unexplained health symptoms. When he saw the Havana syndro me reports, he concluded they were a mass psychogenic condition. He compares this to the way people feel sick when they are told they have eaten tainted food even if there was nothing wrong wit h it - the reverse of the placebo effect. "When you see mass psychogenic illness, there's usually some stressful underlying situation," he says. "In the case of Cuba and the mass of the embassy employees - particularly the CIA agents who first were affected - they certainly were in a stressful situation." In his view, every-day symptoms like brain fog and dizziness are reframed - by sufferers, media and health professionals - as the syndrome. "The symptoms are as real as any other symptoms," he says, arguing that individuals became hyper-aware and fearful as reports spread, especially within a closed community. This, he believes, then became contagious among other US officials serving abroad.

From <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-58396698>>

Mass psychogenic illness	
Other names	Mass hysteria, epidemic hysteria, mass sociogenic illness, mass psychogenic disorder
	
Dancing plagues of the Middle Ages are thought to have been caused by mass hysteria	
Specialty	Psychiatry , Clinical Psychology
Symptoms	Headache, dizziness, nausea, abdominal pain, cough, fatigue, sore throat
Risk factors	Childhood or adolescence, intense media coverage.
Differential diagnosis	Actual diseases, mass delusions, somatic symptom disorder

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mass_psychogenic_illness>

Skid marks and Gummy Deposit

Sunday, April 3, 2022 7:29 AM

Skid marks and Odd Gummy Deposit

The “skid marks” and “odd, gummy deposit” were easily explained. Nickell spoke to a local man named Max Lockard made the marks with his 1942 Chevy pickup truck, and the “deposit” was simply oil leaking from the truck.

From <<https://www.snopes.com/articles/383097/flatwoods-monster-mothman-owl/>>

According to Barker's account, the next day, A. Lee Stewart Jr. of the *Braxton Democrat* claimed to have discovered "skid marks" in the field and an "odd, gummy deposit"^[14] which were subsequently attributed by UFO enthusiast groups as evidence of a "saucer" landing.¹

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flatwoods_monster>



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The supposed “landing traces” that were found the next morning by Stewart — skid marks and a gummy oil-like deposit — also have a fairly mundane source. A local man named Max Lockhart explained that they were from his '42 Chevrolet pickup truck. The night of the incident, he drove to the site to look around. He left the dirt road and circled through the field but saw nothing — no monster, no landing traces in the grass.

Barker has tried to counter this by claiming that Lockhart had not been in the exact spot that the alleged traces were found. He entirely dismissed the possibility that the traces were left by a truck, tractor, or other vehicle.

However, Barker never actually saw the traces for himself. It had rained in the span of time between the incident and Barker's arrival a week later. Once he arrived, he found no traces of oil. He reported that he found “marks and a huge area of grass trampled down” but came to the conclusion that these were caused by the large groups of curiosity seekers that had since visited the location. So, it's likely that Barker did not know exactly where the traces were found and so could not say for certain whether Lockhart's truck had been in the same spot.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>

Smell

Sunday, April 3, 2022 7:27 AM

The Smell

As to the "strange sickening mist," Nickell ascribed it to a type of pungent-smelling grass that grows all over the area, and the mist, Nickell noted, was explained by the sheriff's deputies who investigated the scene and observed a fog settling over the hillside. Nickell also pointed to the level of terror the group had experienced when explaining why they felt ill.

From <<https://www.snopes.com/articles/383097/flatwoods-monster-mothman-owl/>>

The group said they had smelled a "pungent mist" and some later said they were nauseated. The local sheriff and a deputy had been investigating reports of a crashed aircraft in the area. They searched the site of the reported monster but "saw, heard and smelled nothing".

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flatwoods_monster>

An explanation for the strange chemical smell can possibly be found in the local flora. Most investigators on the scene noticed no smell, with the exception of Stewart and Sanderson. Sanderson (1967) recognized it as coming from a type of grass that is common in the area, stating: "We found this grass growing all over the county and it always smelt the same, though not perhaps as strongly." This would explain why Stewart only detected the odor once he got close to the ground.

An alternate explanation can be found in the area's geology. Ryan Haupt (2014), on an episode of *Skeptoid* podcast, pointed out that West Virginia has numerous natural sulphur springs. He theorized that a nearby, but previously unidentified, sulphur spring could have been the source of the strange smell.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>

There Is An Ominous Mist That Follows The Creature

Stories of the Flatwoods Monster note that a fire ball or meteor-like object preceded its appearance, but what happens after the creature begins stalking through the woods? In its first reported appearance, the boys who saw the creature noted that a foul odor and a heavy mist seemed to emanate from the Monster. Two of the boys were allegedly [sprayed in the face](#) by the smoke that seemed to come from within the folds on the Monster's body.

As the night went on, the mist grew into a heavy fog that settled across the countryside. After the boys who were sprayed with the mist made it home, they noticed that their faces were covered with an oily residue. Their throats swelled up so much that they couldn't drink liquids for two weeks.

From <<https://www.ranker.com/list/flatwoods-monster-facts/jacob-shelton>>

The Shape

Sunday, April 3, 2022 7:28 AM

The Shape

Nickell concluded that the shape, movement, and sounds reported by witnesses were also consistent with the silhouette, flight pattern, and call of a startled barn owl perched on a tree limb, leading researchers to conclude that foliage beneath the owl may have created the illusion of the lower portions of the creature (described as being a pleated green skirt). Researchers also concluded that the witnesses' inability to agree on whether the creature had arms, combined with May's report of it having "small, claw-like hands" which "extended in front of it", also matched the description of a barn owl with its talons gripping a tree branch.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flatwoods_monster>

But what about the creature itself? If it was nothing more than a barn owl, why did members of the group describe something taller than a human, with glowing eyes, claws, wearing a dark metal draped garment? "They shine a light at it and see it has kind of a heart-shaped face, and all of the sudden, just as quick as a wink, that creature came right at them," Nickell said. "And Mrs. May would remember these terrible claws. They were very vague about the bottom of the creature. There wasn't one, it was on a branch." Nickell's research lead him to the explanation that the reason the owl behaved aggressively was because it was a mother owl protecting a nest of young. And as for the glowing eyes, that is explained by the fact that nocturnal animals like owls have [reflective elements](#) in their eyes that help them see in the dark, which make the eyes appear to glow. Barn owls have [white faces](#) roughly in the shape of an upside-down spade, and as birds of prey, also have claws. And they do have an [eerie-sounding](#), hissing screech.

From <<https://www.snopes.com/articles/383097/flatwoods-monster-mothman-owl/>>

The Creature May Have Been A Barn Owl

As cool as it would be to have an alien, robot, cryptid thing invading West Virginia, the truth of the matter is that the Flatwoods Monster may have just been a figment of the imaginations of a bunch of freaked out kids. The wet blankets over at CSI Corp deduced that the kids saw an alien because that's what they wanted, or what they assumed they should see. The May brothers followed a UFO into the woods, smelled something horrible, and saw a bunch of smoke, so it tracks that they would see an alien. However it's most likely that they disturbed a barn owl that shrieked at them and flew off into the night. From there the children's story spread and served as the basis for the myth of the Flatwoods Monster.

The Monster May Be A Result Of False Memories

Many alien abductees and witnesses of UFO phenomena like the Flatwoods Monster have a similar detail in many of their stories. Either they [see an owl](#) shortly before or after their alien interaction, or the creature they meet looks strangely like an owl. This experience is known to the paranormal community as "screen memory," a false image implanted in the imagination of someone interacting with an extra terrestrial to keep them calm. These screen memories are similar to the way that our brains [build false memories](#) based on random pieces of information that we soak up. The variations on the appearance of the Flatwoods Monster could come from the people in the group that saw the group interpreting the false memory differently, which just adds to the unbelievability of their story.

From <<https://www.ranker.com/list/flatwoods-monster-facts/jacob-shelton>>

According to Keyhoe (1953), the Air Force investigation concluded that the monster was most likely "a large owl perched on a limb." Underbrush beneath the limb probably gave the impression of a large figure and the witnesses' imaginations filled in the details. Barker (1953) reported that the witnesses could only vaguely describe the lower portion of the "creature" and most said that they could not see that part at all. This would be consistent with the Air Force's conclusion.



The American Barn Owl. (Kathy Munsel/Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, CC BY-SA 2.0)

Nickel (2000) also believed that this conclusion was correct, but specified that it was an owl from the Tytonidae family, the barn owls. He stated: "Several elements in the witnesses' description help identify the Flatwoods creature specifically as *Tyto alba*, the common barn owl, known almost worldwide." Descriptions of the creature's face — round, two eye-like openings, surrounded by a hood-like shape — are consistent with the appearance of an owl. Barn owls have large heads with rounded, heart-shaped faces. Their white faces are surrounded by darker colored feathers, giving the bird the appearance of wearing a hood.

The creature's cry was described as "something between a hiss and a high-pitched squeal" (Barker, 1953). This is also consistent with a barn owl, whose cry is described as "a long, harsh scream that lasts about 2 seconds." When intruders disturb a barn owl's nest, it will make a "loud, 3–4 second hiss" (The Cornell Lab, n.d.).

You can hear a barn owl's noises [here](#). (The call recorded in New York on 5 Oct. 1960 in particular almost perfectly matches the descriptions of the Flatwoods Monster's cry.)

The witnesses have given various descriptions of the creature's movements. Some said that it bobbed up and down as if jumping. Nunley, the calmest witness, however, described it as moving evenly and gliding toward them in an arc, as if circling. This strongly suggests a bird's flight.

Mrs. May insisted that the creature had "terrible claws" and Sanderson (1967) reported that the witnesses described "small, claw-like hands that extended in front of it." This would match with a predatory bird trying to intimidate intruders who have disturbed its nest.

The creature's red coloring could be explained by the fact that female barn owls can have a darker, tawny coloration. It's also possible that the owl's white face reflected the red light of the nearby airplane beacons, giving it the impression of having a bright red face.

Nickell (2000) posited that this coloration identifies the Flatwoods monster as a female barn owl. He further speculated that "it may not have been too late in the year for a female to have been brooding young." This would do much to explain its behavior. Instead of flying away at the first sign of intruders, she stood her ground. When the intruders did not retreat, instead shining a light in her direction, she swooped toward them while hissing in an attempt to scare them off.

Even the location where the event took place backs up the owl theory. The monster appeared near a large oak tree on a partially wooded hilltop that overlooked a nearby farm. As anybody who has lived in rural farmland can attest, it's pretty common to find barn owls in these areas like these, nesting in

a hollow tree.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>

Barn Owl

Friday, April 1, 2022 8:29 PM




The **barn owl** (*Tyto alba*) is the most [widely distributed](#) species of [owl](#) in the world and one of the most widespread of all species of birds, being found almost everywhere in the world except for the [polar](#) and [desert](#) regions, Asia north of the [Himalayas](#), most of [Indonesia](#), and some [Pacific Islands](#). It is also known as the **common barn owl**, to distinguish it from the other species in its [family](#), [Tytonidae](#), which forms one of the two main lineages of living owls, the other being the [typical owls](#) (*Strigidae*).

There are at least three major lineages of barn owl: the [western barn owl](#) of [Europe](#), western [Asia](#), and [Africa](#); the [eastern barn owl](#) of southeastern Asia and Australasia; and the [American barn owl](#) of the Americas. Some taxonomic authorities classify barn owls differently, recognising up to five separate species; and further research needs to be done to resolve the disparate taxonomies. There is considerable variation of size and colour among the approximately 28 subspecies, but most are between 33 and 39 cm (13 and 15 in) in length, with wingspans ranging from 80 to 95 cm (31 to 37 in). The plumage on the head and back is a mottled shade of grey or brown; that on the underparts varies from white to brown and is sometimes speckled with dark markings. The face is characteristically heart-shaped and is white in most subspecies. This owl does not hoot, but utters an eerie, drawn-out screech.

The barn owl is nocturnal over most of its range; but in Great Britain and some Pacific Islands, it also hunts by day. Barn owls specialise in hunting animals on the ground and nearly all of their food consists of small mammals, which they locate by sound, their hearing being very acute. The owls usually mate for life unless one of the pair is killed, whereupon a new pair bond may be formed. Breeding takes place at varying times of the year, according to the locality, with a clutch of eggs, averaging about four in number, being laid in a nest in a hollow tree, old building, or fissure in a cliff. The female does all the incubation, and she and the young chicks are reliant on the male for food. When large numbers of small prey are readily available, barn owl populations can expand rapidly; and globally the bird is considered to be of [least conservation concern](#). Some subspecies with restricted ranges are more threatened.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barn_owl>



Barn owl	
	
Barn owl at the British Wildlife Centre , England	
Barn Owl screeches recorded in Ceredigion, Wales	 Barn_Owl_(Tyto_alba...
Conservation status	
<div><div>Extinct</div><div>Threatened</div><div>Least Concern</div></div> <div><div>EX</div><div>EW</div><div>CR</div><div>EN</div><div>VU</div><div>NT</div><div>LC</div></div> <div>Least Concern <small>(IUCN 3.1)</small>^[1]</div>	
Scientific classification	
Kingdom:	Animalia
Phylum:	Chordata
Class:	Aves
Order:	Strigiformes
Family:	Tytonidae
Genus:	Tyto
Species:	<i>T. alba</i>
Binomial name	
<i>Tyto alba</i> (Scopoli , 1769)	
	
Global range in green	
Synonyms ^[2]	
<i>Strix alba</i> Scopoli, 1769 <i>Strix pratincola</i> Bonaparte , 1838 <i>Tyto delicatula</i> Gould , 1837	

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barn_owl>

The UFO

Sunday, April 3, 2022 7:28 AM

The UFO

But Nickell's investigation showed that the bright light was without doubt a meteor, a phenomenon viewed by people in at least three states.

"It was widely seen," Nickell stated.

As to why the boys believed they saw it crash into a hillside, Nickell explained that is a known illusion associated with meteors.

"Time and time again, it's said to have landed on yon hill. Why is that? It's the most natural thing in the world," Nickell said. "They are very far from you, but they're so bright that you almost duck. You think they're just coming right over head, and they go out of sight beyond the hill. It creates the illusion that it landed up there."

From <<https://www.snopes.com/articles/383097/flatwoods-monster-mothman-owl/>>

The night of the September 12 sighting, a meteor had been observed across three states — Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. According to Nickell, three flashing red aircraft beacons were also visible from the area of the sightings, which could account for descriptions of a pulsating red light and red tint on the face of the supposed monster.

From <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flatwoods_monster>

The first element of the story he took a look at was the supposed UFO itself. Although calling it a "UFO" would be a misnomer, since it was fairly quickly identified. According to the locals that Nickell interviewed, it was obvious to most who witnessed its flight across the sky that it was a meteor. The Maryland Academy of Science reported a meteor passing over Baltimore at 7 p.m. on 12 September on a trajectory towards West Virginia. Local newspapers also reported the meteor, stating that it was seen traveling on a relatively horizontal trajectory across the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>



An era of bomb scares and demagogues

But rattled eyewitnesses weren't the only reason the story took off.

Americans were truly frightened in 1952, made anxious by atomic bombs and what seemed like a new world made by mad scientists. Even *LIFE* magazine, probably the most popular publication in the nation at the time, had, just a few months earlier, published a seemingly credible trend story about flying saucers.

Spook stories sprout best when the seed lands in a bed fertile with anxiety, and that was 1952 [Cold War](#) America—a hothouse of anger, disillusionment and anxieties, made to order for conspiracy theorists, political demagogues and tellers of suspenseful tales.

The May brothers' monster story hit just three years after the [Soviet Union](#) successfully tested an atomic bomb in 1949. The Air Force was scanning for bombers over our skies.

[Julius and Ethel Rosenberg](#) were awaiting execution for sending American [nuclear-weapons](#) designs to the Soviets—selling hellfire to our mortal enemies.

A political demagogue, Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin, had spent the previous two years stoking fears that communists had infiltrated not only the U.S. Department of State, but almost every industry and corner of the nation.

And communists had killed thousands of American soldiers in Korea by 1952, including four youngsters 21 or younger from Braxton County, West Virginia, who died just months before the Monster landed. One of those killed in action, U.S. Marine PFC Lantry R. Frame, age 20, had grown up in Sutton, only six miles from the May boys in Flatwoods.

From <<https://www.history.com/news/flatwoods-monster-west-virginia>>

The Flatwoods Monster story is emblematic of the time. In the early 1950s, the U.S. was undergoing some UFO hysteria. Even aside from well-known incidents like the crash at Roswell and the Flatwoods Monster, people were seeing lights in the sky and taking seriously for the first time the idea that we might not be alone. One explanation posits that the obsession was [a manifestation of the general anxiety of the Cold War](#); whatever the impetus, the fascination with the extraterrestrial wing of the paranormal became widespread. We'd had flying saucer stories forever, going back to Ezekiel's wheel through the Martian invasion in HG Wells' *War Of The Worlds*, but the 50s brought a high pitch of paranoia about the little green men in the pilot's seat of the UFOs — or, in the case of Braxton County, one very large one. The story of that night in Braxton County may have faded over time (and the depiction of the actual monster, constructed from witnesses' descriptions, is not a little bit comical), but it fueled the imaginations of the generation of scientists and researchers (and sometimes, yes, kooks) that went on to define the field, for better or worse. [Ivan Sanderson](#) and [John Keel](#) both personally investigated the Flatwoods Monster — Sanderson going on to become an eminent cryptozoologist and Keel eventually popularizing the term "men in black" as a prominent UFOlogist.

From <<https://www.theawl.com/2017/10/the-fantastic-outer-space-tale-of-the-flatwoods-monster/>>

It would be natural to question why a group of people who presumably grew up in rural farmlands would fail to recognize an owl. The short answer is that they saw something extraordinary because they were expecting something extraordinary.

The Roswell Incident had happened only five years previously, bringing the idea of UFOs and flying saucers into the public eye and making it a part of pop culture like never before. In fact, earlier that very year, *LIFE Magazine* published an article — "[Have We Visitors from Space?](#)" — which claimed that there was "scientific evidence that there is a real case for interplanetary saucers."

Seeing a light streak across the sky and appear to land, then following it to find a pulsing red light and strange smell, would surely have made them think of flying saucers. So, of course, when they encountered a creature in the dark, acting aggressively and making terrifying noises, all their worst suspicions would have been confirmed. They panicked and fled, bringing back with them a tale that would capture the public imagination and create an enduring a legend.

From <<https://medium.com/the-mysterious-miscellany/https-medium-com-the-mysterious-miscellany-close-encounters-of-the-feathered-kind-the-flatwoods-monster-e519e1b9ce6b>>

About the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry

The mission of the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry is to promote scientific inquiry, critical investigation, and the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims. To carry out these objectives the Committee:

1. Maintains a network of people interested in critically examining paranormal, fringe science, and other claims, and in contributing to consumer education
2. Prepares bibliographies of published materials that carefully examine such claims
3. Encourages research by objective and impartial inquiry in areas where it is needed
4. Convenes conferences and meetings
5. Publishes articles that examine claims of the paranormal
6. Does not reject claims on a priori grounds, antecedent to inquiry, but examines them objectively and carefully

The Committee is a program of the Center for Inquiry, a nonprofit educational organization. The Committee was launched in 1976. The *Skeptical Inquirer* is its official journal.

Some of the founding members of CSI include scientists, academics, and science writers such as Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, Philip Klass, Paul Kurtz, Ray Hyman, James Randi, Martin Gardner, Sidney Hook, and others. A list of [CSI fellows](#) is published in every issue of [Skeptical Inquirer](#) magazine.

CSI encourages careful, rational, critical examination of unusual claims. One of the best guides is a short piece by Ray Hyman, a professor of psychology at the University of Oregon, titled ["Proper Criticism"](#).

Contacting CSI

You can [contact CSI](#) for more information.

Name Change

In 2006, CSICOP changed its name to CSI. Read editor [Kendrick Frazier's comments](#) on the change.

From <https://skepticalinquirer.org/about/>



The **Committee for Skeptical Inquiry (CSI)**, formerly known as the **Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP)**, is a program within the transnational American non-profit educational organization [Center for Inquiry \(CFI\)](#), which seeks to "promote scientific inquiry, critical investigation, and the use of reason in examining controversial and extraordinary claims."¹ [Paul Kurtz](#) proposed the establishment of CSICOP in 1976 as an independent non-profit organization (before merging with CFI as one of its programs in 2015²), to counter what he regarded as an uncritical acceptance of, and support for, [paranormal](#) claims by both the media and society in general.³ Its philosophical position is one of [scientific skepticism](#). CSI's fellows have included notable scientists, [Nobel laureates](#), philosophers, [psychologists](#), educators and authors.⁴ It is headquartered in [Amherst, New York](#).

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Committee_for_Skeptical_Inquiry

Joe Nickell

Sunday, April 3, 2022 5:46 AM

Joe Nickell (born December 1, 1944) is an American [skeptic](#) and investigator of the [paranormal](#). Nickell is senior research fellow for the [Committee for Skeptical Inquiry](#) and writes regularly for their journal, the [Skeptical Inquirer](#). He is also an associate [dean](#) of the [Center for Inquiry](#) Institute. He is the author or editor of over 30 books. Among his career highlights, Nickell helped expose the [James Maybrick "Jack the Ripper Diary"](#) as a hoax. In 2002, Nickell was one of a number of experts asked by scholar [Henry Louis Gates, Jr.](#) to evaluate the authenticity of the manuscript of [Hannah Crafts' *The Bondwoman's Narrative*](#) (1853–1860), possibly the first novel by an [African-American](#) woman.^[u] At the request of document dealer and historian, Seth Keller, Nickell analyzed documentation in the dispute over the authorship of "[The Night Before Christmas](#)", ultimately supporting the [Clement Clarke Moore](#) claim.

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Nickell>



"Triptych" Photo ©2005 Andrew A. Skolnick
I have been called "the modern Sherlock Holmes," the "real-life Scully" (from the *X-Files*), and other appellations. I am well into my fourth decade as an investigator of historical, paranormal, and forensic mysteries, myths and hoaxes. In contrast to mystery -mongers on the one hand and so-called debunkers on the other, I believe that mysteries should actually be **investigated** with a view toward solving them. Apparently, I am the world's only full-time professional paranormal investigator -- the "Investigative Files" writer for *Skeptical Inquirer* science magazine who travels around the world investigating strange mysteries at the very fringes of science (see [Paranormal Investigator](#)). The role utilizes my varied background: former stage magician (Resident Magician at the Houdini Hall of Fame), private investigator (f or a world-famous detective agency), and academic (Ph.D in English, focusing on literary investigation and folklore, and author of some two doz en books -- see [Books](#) page).
A major role is examiner of questioned rare documents. I have exposed many forgeries, including the notorious "Jack the Rippe r Diary," and I have authenticated many treasures. My books on the subject include *Pen, Ink, and Evidence* and *Detecting Forgery*. (See "[Historical Documents Consultant](#).")
And those are only some of my roles. Like everyone, I have done many different things, but I have pushed the envelope. I have made something of a career out of careers-- blackjack dealer, riverboat manager, poet, sign painter.... (Scores are listed on this site under "[Personas](#)..") Even in this regard I have been a detective, for it's my way of investigating life.

From <http://www.ioenickell.com/>>

Joe Nickell	
 <div>Nickell in 2018</div>	
Born	December 1, 1944 (age 77) <div>West Liberty, Kentucky, U.S.</div>
Education	University of Kentucky (PhD)
Occupation	<div><ul style="list-style-type: none">Skepticinvestigatorauthoreditor</div>
Known for	CSICOP
Spouse(s)	<div><div>Diana G. Harris</div><div> </div><div>(m. 2006)</div></div>
Children	1
Website	http://www.ioenickell.com/

From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Nickell>

Flatwoods

Sunday, April 3, 2022 5:38 AM

Flatwoods, West Virginia

Share



A summer storm rumbles over Flatwoods, [West Virginia](#), in [Braxton County](#), near the very center of the Mountain State.

The **Town of Flatwoods, WV** (West Virginia), a community in rural Braxton County, was incorporated in 1902 and named for the level uplands at the heads of Granny Creek, Salt Lick Creek, and Flatwoods Run. The population was 277 as of the [2010 census](#).

As a result of its situation on the Interstate 79 expressway near the center of West Virginia, the community is a popular rendezvous site for state conferences. Its proximity to Sutton and Burnsville lakes draws many anglers, hunters, and campers to the town.

Perhaps the town is, however, best known as the home of the Braxton County Monster. The monster legend attracts thousands of visitors to the area annually.

The Flatwoods Monster



U.S. 19 near the unpublished location of the 1952 sighting

Flatwoods is popularly known as the home of the legend of the [Flatwoods Monster](#), which is also known as the Braxton County Monster, the Green Monster, and *Braxxie*. According to the tale, an alleged extraterrestrial being crash-landed its flying vehicle on a hill above the town in 1952. The event was witnessed by a handful of locals.

Their story made the papers and was circulated across the globe. The monster was more recently recreated as one of the chief villains in the [Fallout 76](#) computer game.

In nearby Sutton, the [Flatwoods Monster Museum](#) is managed by the Braxton County Convention and Visitors Bureau and includes a shop and displays of memorabilia associated with the legend and its aftermath.

History



Sutton Cemetery near Flatwoods, WV

The level upland around Flatwoods was likely the site of Native American villages for many years before the arrival of Europeans in the area in the late 1700s. As early as 1830, a community at what would become the town included a church established by pastor John Clark, according to historian John Sutton.

Flatwoods appears on maps as early as 1873, though the town was not incorporated until 1902. Located nearly midway between the valleys of the Elk and Little Kanawha rivers, the town was a regionally important stop on the West Virginia and Pittsburgh Railroad, which extended a line to the town from near Sutton in the late 1800s.

The line was later acquired by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and Flatwoods was notably at the halfway point on its Clarksburg-to-Richwood branch.

The completion of I-79 in the late 1970s dramatically changed the region. Developer John Skidmore acquired a large area of level land at the head of Granny Run and established a commercial center there that benefits from its location near the center of the state. Many meetings and conventions are held there, a drive of an hour or two from most principal West Virginia cities.

From <<https://wvexplorer.com/communities/cities-towns/flatwoods-west-virginia/>>