

Dracula Vampire Conjecture

Regarding this press release, I don't dispute this possibility for the origin of the Dracula myth in Transylvania, that it involved one or more observations of a large pterosaur standing on the ground at night. But it is speculation. Perhaps a closer examination is called for.

Tales of Dracula and Pterosaurs

The cryptozoology author Jonathan Whitcomb, of Long Beach, California, has written many press releases on the subject of modern pterosaurs. This is the latest, dated October 26, 2011. The full title is "Author Jonathan Whitcomb Asks if Tales of Dracula Come From an Animal." For the company contact information, I guess few people would know what "PSL" means. It stands for "Pterosaurs Still Living." But he does not use that URL on this press release contact box, instead using the "Live Pterosaur Media Center" home page.

The release has two sightings, both from Texas, the first from San Antonio:

We noticed something flying around across the road . . . the creature was flying just above the phone lines. It would go one direction, turn, and swoop back. The shape was wrong for any large bird of the area, and the size was much too large to be any bat I have ever seen . . . anywhere from 6-10 feet across.

The second sighting is from Brownsville, Texas, with an approximate date of 1995. Brownsville is in the most southerly portion of the state. The witness involved was a 12-year-old girl at the time.

"Next door, in the neighbor's backyard, was what she first thought was a tall man . . . He was 'draped in a long black

coat or cape,' facing away from her. 'Dracula' came to mind as GR tried to understand what she was looking at. The 'man' turned, and revealed a face that terrified the child: It was non-human.

The girl became confused when the thing turned its head and revealed a head like a "pterodactyl." To make the story short, she ran into the house as the thing glided towards her. In terms of cryptozoological credibility issues, I see nothing especially wrong with anything in either of these reports. Both eyewitnesses mentioned the word "Dracula" in their reports to Whitcomb. But there is something speculative with that.

The Dracula myth about a "vampire bat" transforming itself into a human form, and visa-versa, may be different in Transylvania than is known in Texas. This means there may not be much of a connection between those two sightings in Texas and the European myth.

On another subject is a new web site that ties together the ropen sighting of a Mr. Cottingham with the "Cheesman Lights" observed in the 1930's:

Cottingham Sighting

One night, near Lab Lab on the southeast coast of Umboi Island, he saw a flying light that lasted four or five seconds . . . The ropen light of Umboi Island has been compared with the flying lights observed by the British biologist Evelyn Cheesman in the 1930's, but her expedition was on the mainland of New Guinea, many miles to the west. According to what she wrote in her book *The Two Roads of Papua*, the flying lights she observed lasted about four or five seconds.

Now that is what I call a correlation.