

BOOK REVIEW

The UFO Encyclopedia: The Phenomena from the Beginning (3rd ed.), Vol. 1: A–M, Vol. 2: N–Z, by Jerome Clark. Omnigraphics, 2018. 1,520 pp. \$155 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-0780816596.

REVIEWED BY JOHN B. ALEXANDER

<https://doi.org/10.31275/2019/1717>

Copyright: Creative Commons CC-BY-NC

With more than 1500 pages, this is a massive undertaking by SSE Dinsdale Award winner Jerry Clark. A two-volume, 3rd edition, it is buttressed by his decades of research in the field of UFOs. For this encyclopedic effort, he is supported by several competent researchers with international reputations. Typically, reviewers of the written works by other SSE members tend to be quite favorable as we recognize the difficulty of getting our research into print. This work definitely left me conflicted in an attempt to be both fair to the authors and to the potential readers.

In general, the material that is included does provide considerable depth to the cases selected for presentation. As this is the third edition, much of that material has been previously published. Clark and his colleagues have in-depth knowledge of many of the earlier cases and these are well-represented. What I found most troubling were some glaring omissions that are hard to reconcile with an encyclopedia that suggests it is comprehensive in nature as opposed to a representation of cases as selected by the chief editor. Absent are the more recent incidences and evidence that have dramatically altered the entire field of UFOlogy. Given the rapid pace of advancement of knowledge, especially since December 2017, it would be nearly impossible for any print medium to keep pace. Here I am addressing the remarkable revelations by the U.S. Department of Defense concerning interactions between military aircraft and unknown objects. Internally these were so significant as to cause the U.S. Navy to publicly publish a policy

position acknowledging these events were occurring (frequently).

However, it is more than the events of just the past two years that are omitted or downplayed. As a prime example, Phil Corso is not mentioned. In 1997 U.S. Army Lt. Col. Corso's book, *The Day After Roswell*, became an international phenomenon. It dominated much of the conversation in the field. Whether one agrees with Corso or not is irrelevant. His book sold more than any other UFO publication by a great margin and he had significant impact on the field. Thus, both Corso and his book should deserve serious consideration.

The Bentwaters case (also known as Rendlesham Forest) is relegated to a single paragraph in a segment concerning radiation. It is my belief that this case, with more than 60 credible witnesses, many from the U.S. Air Force and in the Personnel Reliability Program (PRP), is one of the best on record. In addition to high-quality eyewitness reports, there was substantial physical evidence recovered including casts of the landing prints and radiation measurements well above background for that area. In addition, radar records have recently been found substantiating some of the claims made by Air Force personnel. Notably, while several incidents occurred near the Bentwaters base in December 1980, on one of those nights the Cash–Landrum exposure took place thousands of miles away in Texas. Appropriately, the Cash–Landrum case is covered in fair detail in the book but the USAF/RAF case is not. Interestingly, both cases involved exposure to radiation.

Also conspicuously missing is Steven Greer. While I totally abhor his work in the field and find his egocentric, while personally financially lucrative, efforts a significant detriment, nonetheless he has had a substantial impact. It should be noted that Clark did choose to take on a number of such negative enterprises, including the infamous Billie Meier episode. There are nearly 17 pages devoted to the topic of hoaxes. To his credit, many of them are called out.

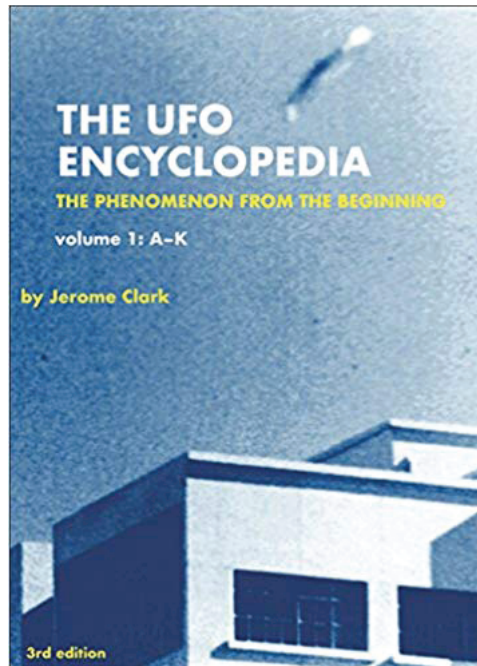
Surprisingly, the bibliography and index, though extensive (about 170 pages) are hit-and-miss. Some people who are annotated in a single reference are included. Others, including me, are in the text but not listed in the index. How people and topics were chosen to be included is unclear. As an example, there is an article about David Jacobs who is well-known for his abduction conspiracy theories and the alleged presence of evil aliens. In that segment there is a single reference

to Ron Westrum who is a highly respected researcher who has studied these topics for decades.

Other well-known researchers are either not mentioned or relegated to minor footnotes. As an example, Lee Spiegel has been associated with the field for decades. Of historic importance, it was Spiegel who organized the well-documented meeting that took place at the United Nations in July 1978. It was Allen Hynek who sent him to North Carolina where he had his own significant

experience while accompanied by local law enforcement. Not only was that case not covered, but Spiegel was the principal *Huffington Post* reporter covering the field for several years and was instrumental in dissemination of UFO information to a very large audience. Filmmaker James Fox who produced groundbreaking movies including *I Know What I Saw*, and *Out of the Blue* is neither mentioned nor referenced. The International UFO Congress, which for more than the past decade has hosted most of the largest UFO conferences in the United States, is missing, as is Alejandro Rojas, the current coordinator and owner. That, despite the fact that Rojas has been publishing UFO information online in *Open Minds* almost daily for the past decade.

Strangely, the very significant Phoenix Lights case is represented by Brazilian Thiago Luiz Ticchetti and American folklorist Thomas Bullard. Both are competent researchers; however, the main person who has reported on the case with both books and a movie, Lynne Kitei, M.D., is relegated to a single reference. Another missing topic is that of large, triangular UFOs which have been publicly addressed in many fora. Dave Marler, who wrote the definitive book on the topic, *Triangular*



UFOs: An Estimate of the Situation, is never mentioned. This, despite the fact that these reports have been acknowledged since before the flight at Kitty Hawk. He is also the go-to expert on the infamous 1942 “Battle for Los Angeles” UFO incident, which is not covered. Those omitted or snubbed could go on for a long list. On the other hand, there are many relatively obscure names included in the references.

Amazon has the set listed at a hefty \$155, which is far beyond most books in the field. True, it is an encyclopedia and they are known to be expensive. As a hardbound edition, it lacks the ability for rapid cross-reference searches that most researchers have become accustomed to making. Unfortunately, the medium is anachronistic, as both technology and the UFO field have moved on. At best, history buffs may want to make the investment, but understand they are getting a biased sample.