Roswell UFO incident

The Roswell UFO Incident was the alleged recovery of extra-terrestrial debris, including alien corpses, from an object that crashed near Roswell, New Mexico, on or about July eighth, nineteen forty-seven. Since the late nineteen seventies, the incident has been the subject of intense controversy and the subject of conspiracy theories as to the true nature of the object that crashed. The United States military maintains the debris recovered was from an experimental high-altitude surveillance balloon that belonged to a classified program named 'Mogul'. However, many UFO proponents maintain that, in fact, a crashed alien craft and bodies were recovered, and that the military then engaged in a cover-up. The incident has turned into a widely known pop culture phenomenon, making the name Roswell synonymous with UFOs. It ranks as one of the most publicized and controversial alleged UFO incidents. On July ninth, nineteen forty-seven, a press release that Roswell Army Air Field issued stated that personnel from the field's Bomb Group had recovered a crashed 'flying disc' from a ranch near Roswell, sparking intense media interest. Later the same day, the Commanding General of the Eighth Air Force stated that, in fact, a weather balloon had been recovered by the Roswell Army Air Field personnel, rather than a 'flying saucer'. A subsequent press conference was called, featuring debris from the crashed object that confirmed the weather balloon description. The case was quickly forgotten and almost completely ignored, even by UFO researchers, for more than thirty years. Then, in nineteen seventy-eight, nuclear physicist and author Stanton Friedman interviewed Jesse Marcel, the only person known to have accompanied the Roswell debris from where it was recovered to Fort Worth. Over the next few years, the accounts he and others gave elevated Roswell from a forgotten incident to perhaps the most famous UFO case of all time. By the early nineteen nineties, UFO researchers had interviewed several hundred people who had, or who claimed to have had, a connection with the events at Roswell in nineteen forty-seven. Additionally, hundreds of documents were obtained by Freedom of Information Act requests, as were some that insiders apparently leaked. Their conclusions were that at least one alien craft had crashed in the Roswell vicinity, that aliens, some possibly still alive, were recovered, and that a massive cover-up of any knowledge of the incident was put in place. Numerous books, articles, television specials and even a made-for-TV movie brought the nineteen forty-seven incident fame and notoriety, so that by the mid nineteen nineties, strong majorities in polls, such as a nineteen ninety-seven CNN Time poll, believed that aliens had visited earth and specifically that aliens had landed at Roswell and the government was covering up the fact. During the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties, a new narrative emerged which was at strong odds with what was reported in nineteen forty-seven. This narrative evolved over the years from the time the first book on Roswell was published in nineteen eighty, as many new witnesses and accounts emerged, drawn out in part by the publicity on the incident. Of the hundreds of witnesses that the various researchers interviewed, a seemingly impressive figure, a comparable few were true 'witnesses' who claimed to have actually seen debris or aliens. Most of these so-called witnesses were repeating the claims of others, and their testimony would be inadmissible hearsay in an American court. As for the several accounts from those who claimed to have seen aliens, critics identified a variety of problems with them. These problems ranged from the reliability of second-hand accounts, to serious credibility problems with witnesses making demonstrably false or internally-inconsistent claims, to dubious death-bed 'confessions' or accounts from elderly or easily confused witnesses. A basic problem with all the witness accounts, according to the critics, is that they all came a minimum of thirty-one years after the events in question, and in many cases were recounted more than forty years after the fact. Not only are memories this old of dubious reliability, they were also subject to contamination from other accounts the witnesses may have been exposed to. Though there had always been skeptics who had many objections to the plausibility of these accounts, it was not until the mid nineteen nineties that a strong counter-argument to the presence of aliens was widely publicized. The General Accounting Office launched an inquiry and directed the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force to conduct an internal investigation. The result was summarized in two reports. The first, released in nineteen ninety-five, concluded that the reported recovered material in nineteen forty-seven was likely debris from a secret government program called Project Mogul, which involved high altitude balloons meant to detect sound waves generated by Soviet atomic bomb tests and ballistic missiles. The second report, released two years later, in nineteen ninety-seven, concluded that reports of recovered alien bodies were likely a combination of innocently transformed memories of military accidents involving injured or killed personnel, innocently transformed memories of the recovery of anthropomorphic dummies in military programs US conducted in the nineteen fifties, and hoaxes that various witnesses and UFO proponents perpetrated. The psychological effects of time compression and confusion about when events occurred explained the discrepancy with the years in question. In January nineteen ninety-seven, Karl Pflock, one of the more prominent pro-UFO researchers, said, 'Based on my research and that of others, I'm as certain as it's possible to be without absolute proof, that no flying saucer or saucers crashed in the general vicinity of Roswell or on the Plains of San Agustin in nineteen forty-seven.' He then added, 'The debris found was the remains of something very earthly, all but certainly something from the Top Secret Project Mogul.' Although most now agree with this conclusion, each year, during July Fourth weekend, the City of Roswell hosts the Roswell UFO Festival celebrating all things UFO, featuring prominent UFOlogists and discussions.