

JUNE, 1923 – MOUNT ERIE ILLINOIS

(From the Fall 1998 issue of the *Colorado MUFON News*)

In June 1923, when Norman Wilson Massie was 10 years old, he was leading his family's horses to the pasture at their farm in Mount Erie, Illinois (near Evansville, Indiana). "As I was closing the gate," related Massie, "I looked back down the field and there was an object with lights all around it." "... The machine was metallic and stood on three legs. The top was a dome with holes in it. The best way I could describe the top was it looked like melted glass."

When young Massie got within 50 feet of the thing, he noticed men milling around inside the ship, taking orders from a seated fellow they called 'The Commander'. "I didn't know what was going on until the end," said Massie. "Then, one of the crew members told the Commander that the repairs had been made." With that, the ship shot off the ground and zapped across the sky, disappearing forever. Massie estimates that the encounter couldn't have lasted more than five minutes.

Massie insisted that this UFO existed. He had seen it "with (his) own two eyes." But Massie's parents begged him not to talk about his UFO experience. 'Keep the metallic ship — and the Commander — to yourself', they told their son.

While the US Air Force's 'Project Bluebook' investigated

12,618 reported UFO sightings in the US during the Cold War between 1947 and 1969, and “solved” all but 700 of them, they made it clear that none of the sightings represented a threat to national security, and none of them had anything to do with aliens. So anyone claiming otherwise was labeled as “crazy”. This stigma has persisted until only recently.

Massie remained silent until 1990 when he told his story to his son, a former colonel in the Air Force. The story didn’t surprise his son at all. Massie’s son told him that Air Force files were ‘full of pictures of UFOs’. Massie’s son accepted his father’s story as the truth.

In 1998, Massie related his story to Len Wells, a writer for the Evansville Courier & Press. But Wells waited to publish a column about the sighting until after Massie died in 2004 at the age of 91. Wells knew that some people would accuse Massie of being crazy or a liar, or just some poor naïve man who had convinced himself that this ludicrous story from a childhood fantasy was real. But Wells says that Massie wasn’t that kind of guy. Massie worked in Wayne County schools as a teacher and basketball coach for almost 40 years. He also sold World Book Encyclopedias all over the Tri-State area. Massie’s son says that he heard Massie tell his UFO story many times, and “it was always the same. Never embellished from one time to the next.”

Another source:

A young boy by the name of Norman Massie was leading a team of horses into a pasture near his Mount Erie home, when he happened to look up and saw what he is convinced to this day was a spaceship.

"You can call me anything you want, but I know in my heart and in my mind what I saw that evening, and it was some kind of spaceship," Massie said.

Massie, 85, was ten years old when he encountered the object. The retired high school math teacher and coach says he kept quiet about the incident until 1990 because his father told him never to breathe a word about what he saw because "people would talk." Massie's UFO sighting happened in June 1923 on the family farm in northern Wayne County (east-central Indiana, near Richmond). (**) *see notation at the end*

"I opened the gate to let the horses into the pasture. I let them through, and as I was closing the gate I looked back down the field and there was an object with lights all around it," Massie said. "I kept walking closer to the object until I got about 50 feet away. I stood there and watched the five men who were on board."

Massie described the men as being about four feet tall with blond hair. "I got close enough that I could hear them talk," Massie said. "One guy sat in a chair and the others called him the commander. Four others made trips back and forth in the ship. I didn't know what was going on until the end."

Massie claims he heard one of the crew members tell his commander that "the repairs had been made."

"The machine was metallic and stood on three legs. The top was a dome with holes in it. The best way I could describe the top was it looked like melted glass," Massie said.

The encounter lasted only about five minutes, Massie said. "In a minute, it came to a hovering position. The tripod legs telescoped up into the belly of the thing, and it went straight up about 200 feet and whizzed off to the west like a bullet," he said. Startled by what he saw, Massie says he ran home and told his parents, Grover and Laura Massie, and his 8-year-old brother, Lyveere.

"Mom and Dad tried to convince me that I really hadn't seen anything, and was making up the whole thing," he said.

He says his dad announced he wanted no member of his family mentioning the incident to anyone because they might think Norman was "crazy in the head, or an idiot."

Massie broke his silence on the matter in 1990 when he told his son, Jerry, who was a colonel in the Air Force at the time:

When I got done telling him the whole story he told me there was nothing wrong with me, that the Air Force files are full of pictures of UFOs. He accepted my story as the truth.

Massie says he's convinced the object had to come from somewhere other than Earth. "It doesn't bother me one bit that people might think I'm a crazy old man. In my own mind and my own heart, it existed and I saw it with my own two eyes."

That same year, two college students in Greencastle spotted a strange revolving red object that passed quickly and silently overhead from the northeast to the southwest. The two young

men describe the object as round and glowing like a "red hot piece of molten metal."



*Clyde Clayton Massie, Norman Wilson's brother
(That's the only picture I tracked of the Massies', so if you're a friend or a family member, feel free to supply Norman's photo or new details)*

(**) Articles show two different sites; I cannot state if incident should be placed in Indiana or Illinois.

**Reliability evaluation:
medium
one witness only,
experimental craft with occupant cannot be excluded,
75 years between the event and witness's account**

