

# The Bandera PROPHEET

April 19, 2023

Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas  
The Bandera Prophet

On this day in 1897, S. E. Haydon, a cotton buyer in the small Wise County community of Aurora, released a fictional "news" story in the Dallas Morning News describing the crash of a mysterious airship just outside of town.

Aurora was founded in the late 1850s and had grown considerably by the mid-1880s. But an outbreak of spotted fever began in 1888, and by 1889 fear of the epidemic had caused a mass exodus. Two years later, when the Burlington Northern Railroad abandoned its plan to lay tracks through Aurora, most of the few remaining inhabitants moved to Rhome, the site of a new railroad stop two miles to the southeast.

Hayden's story succeeded in causing a sensation because tales of UFOs near Fort Worth were already current. Aurora remained comatose, however. In 1901 postal service was discontinued.

The construction of State Highway 114 through the town in 1939 probably saved it from extinction. In the early 1970s Aurora underwent a rebirth as the town became a bedroom community of Fort Worth.