

# The George Rogers Park Close Encounter

## An Oregon MUFON Case Study

by

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### Abstract

**Keywords:** Close encounter—River—Multiple witnesses—Telepathy—Multiple lights

<b>Description</b>	Mark Gorman and his girlfriend (later his wife) were standing on Old River Road Bridge looking out over Oswego Creek and the Willamette River when they both noticed a "satellite." However, the "satellite" soon became bigger and moved closer to them while following the river. The object, clearly identifiable as something anomalous, moved to within about 700 feet of them, still over the river. The object then moved over the park and hovered near the old iron smelter, a prominent feature of the park. Mark stood in front of Sharon about 15 feet and had telepathic "conversations" with the object. He mentally refused to "take a ride on the saucer" whereupon the object moved away and "melted" into thin air back out over the river.
<b>Witnesses</b>	Mark Gorman and wife Sharon (pseudonyms).
<b>Date and Time</b>	February 17, 1977 around 10 PM PDT.
<b>Place</b>	George Rogers Park in Lake Oswego, Oregon.
<b>Weather</b>	Clear and cool at about 40° with no rain or appreciable wind.
<b>Duration</b>	About 30 minutes total duration.

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# INTRODUCTION

This case is a classic close encounter with a flying saucer experienced by two witnesses. The scenario described here fits quite well a typical narrative in which a person(s) is approached by a flying saucer which then ultimately abducts and then returns the abductee(s). However, both witnesses in this case are pretty certain at this time that neither of them was actually abducted because the witness, who experienced telepathic contact, in effect, refused to “go along for a ride.” There is always the possibility, however, that an actual abduction did take place and that the witnesses are simply unaware of this at this time. Perhaps further time will reveal the more standard narrative of an approach and subsequent abduction and return.

## SIGHTING NARRATIVE

At George Rogers Park in Lake Oswego on February 17, 1977, 21-year-old Mark Gorman and his girlfriend, 17-year-old Sharon, experienced a close encounter with an anomalous object. Here is their story. See *Appendix A, Mark Gorman’s UFO Event Map*.

### Enjoying the Evening

Mark and Sharon were enjoying the cool evening air standing on Old River Road Bridge looking out over Oswego Creek and the Willamette River—about 400 feet away to the southeast. At George Rogers Park, the river turns from flowing northwest to flowing north. From their vantage point on and near the bridge, they could see upstream about a mile looking in the southeast direction (upriver). See *Figure 5, Aerial View of George Rogers Park* and *Figure 7, Mark Gorman’s UFO Event Map*.

It was about 10 PM and after closing time in the park. It was also about fifteen minutes after the last cars had left the parking lot. They were essentially alone in the park.

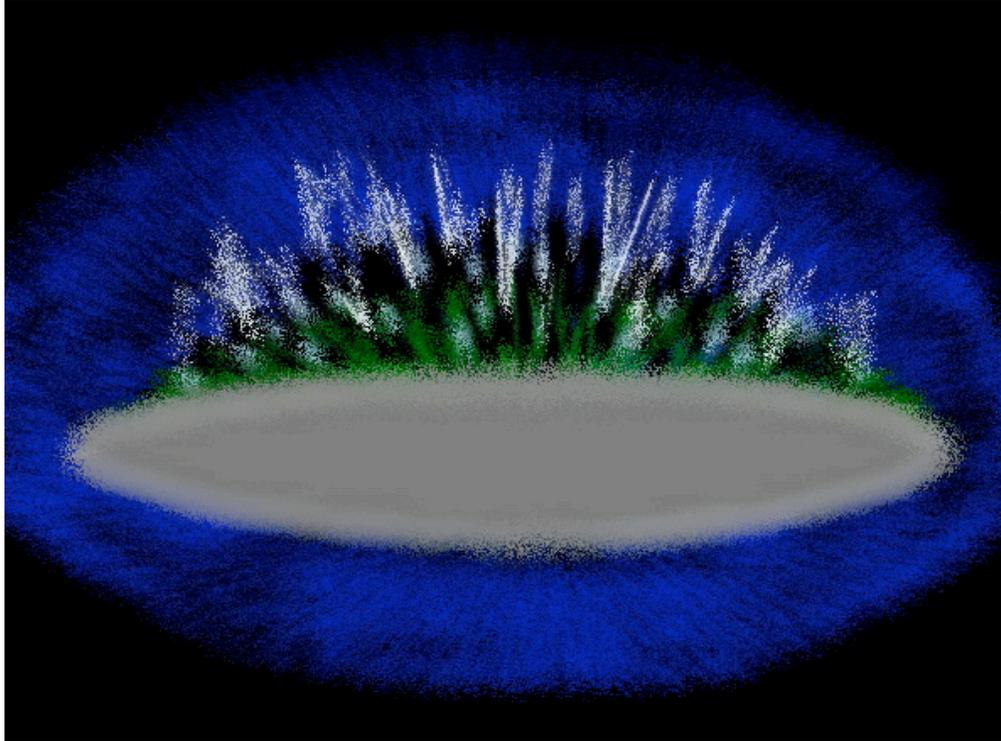
### Observing a “Satellite”

On this cloudless night, they were looking at the stars when they noticed a slightly brighter than usual “star” that was not as bright as Venus but was brighter than a normal star. The trouble was, the “star” was moving. Mark said to Sharon that it might be a satellite and not a star. She saw the movement and agreed. They first saw the “satellite” about 60° above the horizon. They watched it for about a minute as it got lower and lower and closer and closer to them. Mark and Sharon both agreed now that it was not a satellite since it was obviously “flying” down much lower. It was moving along downstream over the Willamette River toward them.

### Watching the “Satellite” Approach

Still on the bridge at this point, they watched the object slow way down and move slowly over the river past an old logging hoist built into the riverbank about 1500 feet away. It continued moving and passed by Oswego Creek that flowed under the bridge. They walked north off the bridge now to watch the object as it moved directly opposite the park over the Willamette River. It appeared to be as large as a small plane or car. But it obviously was not a plane (or car!).

Mark says in his MUFON CMS report description, “The object appeared round on the underside and had a slight metallic [sheen]. It emitted a slightly greenish/blue light around it, but you couldn’t tell where it was coming from.” See *Figure 1, Mark’s Rendition of the UFO*.



Source: Mark Gorman

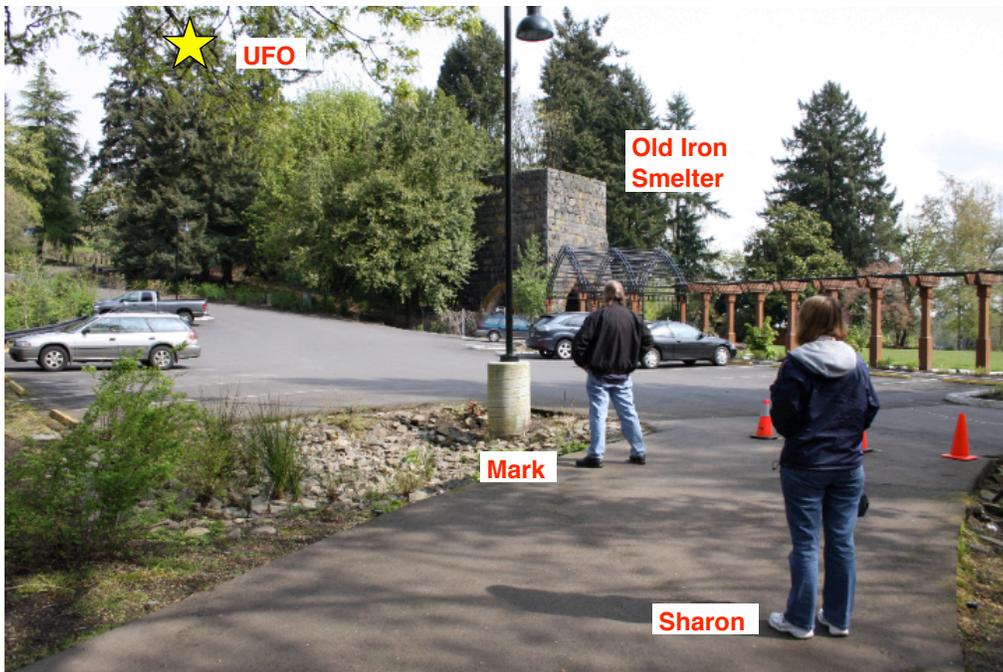
**Figure 1. Mark's Rendition of the UFO**

*This is Mark's rendition of the UFO at the time that it was hovering about 250 feet away and shortly before when they started really seeing the blue glow around the object.*

## **Observing the UFO Change Shape**

Mark and Sharon were now aware of a "low frequency hum" as the object maneuvered over the park itself to eventually hover near the old iron smelter. But it was not very loud. They could more feel the sound than they could hear it. As it slowed further, Mark began to hear "high frequency sounds that varied up and down (almost like a song)." Mark thought maybe the sound was faintly like "angel-type singing."

Mark says that at this point the object seemed to change shape at the top and "it appeared to take on the shape of a dark greenish angel (like maybe the angel Gabriel), but when [he] looked directly at the head of this angel, it turned into an 'ugly gargoyle-type' face [and it] then changed back to the disc shape again." This made Mark think there was "maybe something sinister about [the object]." As if in response to this thought/feeling of Mark's, the high frequency sounds ceased and the angle/gargoyle disappeared, and Mark was aware of the basic shape of the object again.



Source: Keith Rowell

**Figure 2. Mark and Sharon Looking at UFO Position**

*Mark (farther away) and Sharon are standing here in the approximate positions they did when they saw the UFO hovering (yellow star) over to the left of the old iron smelter in the center of the photo. The park has undergone extensive renovation and improvements in the last year. However, the parking lot, Old River Road Bridge (not visible and in the opposite direction from the photo viewpoint), and the old iron smelter are in the same positions as they were on February 17, 1977. The light pole in the middle of the photo and the trellis/lattice work entrance and walkway were not there in 1977. (The photo was taken April 25, 2008.)*

The object now assumed a classic saucer shape—there was no doubt now what they were seeing—and began to approach them very slowly hovering around 20 feet above the old iron smelter stone structure. The structure is about 25 to 30 feet high. The object was hovering essentially motionless just to the west of the iron smelter about 50 feet above the ground and below the tree tops. See *Figure 2, Mark and Sharon Looking at UFO Position*.

## Observing the UFO Hovering

Mark and Sharon were now standing about 20 feet just to the north of the Old River Road Bridge. Sharon ended up about 15 feet behind Mark and thus could see him, the parking lot, the iron smelter, and the object hovering up about 50 in the air just to the left (west) of the smelter. The object was about 200 feet away from them.

The object now took on a “brighter bluish color” that “seemed to not come from it, but [from] around it.”

They both stood transfixed and “stupefied” (which means to not be able to think or feel properly). Mark says, “I instantly knew that ‘they’ (whatever ‘they’ were) knew we were watching.”

The object now engulfed them in a bluish light and Mark says that he felt “warm all over.” However, Sharon says she did not feel this. Sharon now became sort of frozen in place and did not move till the blue light was turned off. Mark was similarly affected. However, Mark felt he went into some sort of trance when the blue light engulfed him. Sharon thinks that she was mostly just observing things. But she does have a vague feeling/memory of a possible telepathic contact telling her to “just stay there.” She also has a vague feeling/memory that Mark disappeared for barely a second or so and “returned”

displaced four feet or so. She does, however, definitely remember telling herself that “[Mark] shouldn’t be standing up there.”

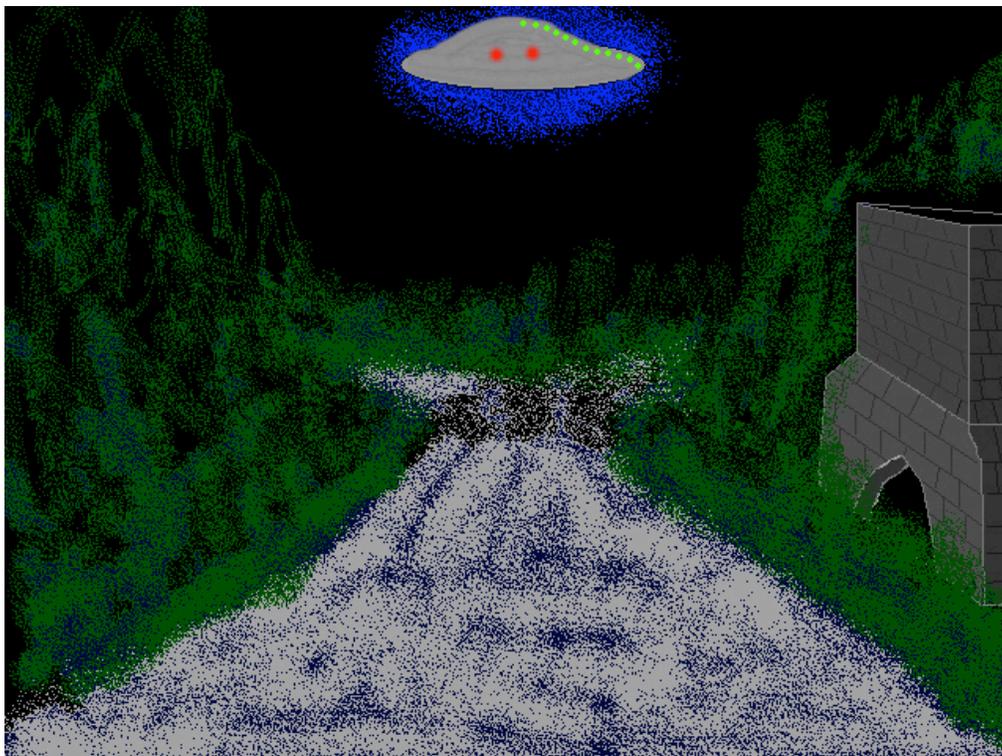
## Conversing with the UFO

Mark now started some telepathic communications with the object. “I could not hear an actual voice in my head, but [it was] more like the feeling of an instant memory.”

The first communication was initiated by the object and it was “We know that you are watching us.” Mark then asked mentally “Why are you here?” The object answered with “We are here to test (or examine) the atmosphere in this area.” Mark then further clarified, “Why are you here on Earth?” The reply was “To witness the second coming of Christ.”

After this communication, Mark started to doubt the reality of the entire experience. But, seemingly in response to Mark’s disbelief, the voice from the object said “here is a signal to you, so that you will know we were really here.”

The object’s appearance began to change. A series of small green lights, starting at the bottom, began to come on and stay on as they made a path up to the top. “Then two larger red lights in the center of the object came on and flashed a few times.” See *Figure 3, UFO with Lights Display*.



Source: Mark Gorman

**Figure 3. UFO with Lights Display**

*Mark created this computer drawing of the UFO to illustrate how the strange display of small green lights and the larger red lights appeared at the end of the display sequence. The small green lights started at the bottom and appeared one-by-one, traveling up to the top of the UFO. Then the red lights came on. When they went away, the lights reversed their sequence.*

## Refusing to “Go For a Ride”

The communication started again and said, “We are going to come down to you into the parking lot and take you up with us.” Mark became terrified at the thought of this and mentally communicated back to them, “If you do that, I will go insane!” Instantly at this thought, the surrounding blue light engulfing Mark and Sharon turned off. Mark says he got instantly cooler. The red lights extinguished and the green lights went out in the opposite sequence, one by one.

## Watching It Disappear

The object began to move now and shook back and forth erratically as if it were under stress and then moved extremely fast down and to the right, which was back toward the Willamette River. (The low pitched hum sounded as if it was “distressed,” too, according to Mark.) Mark and Sharon thought the object was going to crash, and they ran quickly out into the parking lot to see where it moved to behind a tree. They then saw it “melt way” in a heat wave-like effect. The object had completely vanished.

Mark and Sharon tried to collect themselves as they began walking back home after their approximately 30 minute experience. But before they left the park, they encountered a car—driving slowly—full of men all wearing business suits. The car was on Ladd Street about to turn onto Furnace Street, adjacent to the park.

Mark said to Sharon, “I wonder if they saw it?” The car moved slowly “along side of us and a passenger window was rolled almost all the way down. [Mark] looked directly into the face of the passenger and he calmly looked [Mark] directly in the eyes for ‘what seemed like an odd amount of time.’ He said nothing and [Mark] said nothing and [Mark] had no intention of saying anything unless [the man] did first. Then [the man] looked away . . .” The car then turned north on Furnace Street away from George Rogers Park.

## Telling Friends

Mark and Sharon continued to walk home and arrived about a half hour later. They both lived in Lake Oswego’s First Addition residential neighborhood at the time. This is about a mile north of George Rogers Park. Mark told some friends that night about their UFO experience, but their friends were skeptical.

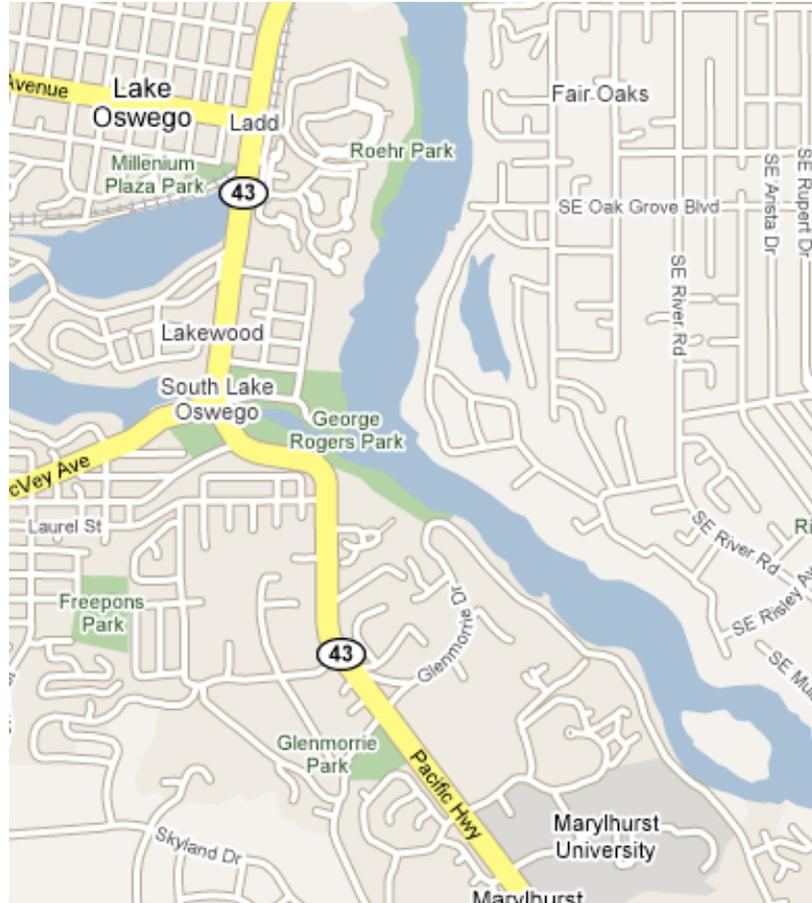
The next day Mark, who is red haired and burns easily in the sun, developed a medium “sunburn” on his face. Mark showed one of his skeptical friends and remembers the friend being much more convinced that Mark’s UFO story might have something to it. Sharon says that she did not develop a sunburn from the experience.

## ENVIRONMENT

This UFO sighting took place in George Rogers Park, which is surrounded by residential neighborhoods and small commercial businesses and the Willamette River. Traffic along Highway 43 (Pacific Highway) is moderate at 10 PM on a weekday and would have been similar in February 1977. The Willamette River plays a prominent part in this sighting since the initial sighting and subsequent path of the UFO followed the river downstream toward the park starting around a mile or so to the southeast. See *Figure 4, Lake Oswego with George Rogers Park* and *Figure 7, Mark Gorman’s UFO Event Map*.

## Weather

On February 17, 1977, around 10 to 10:30 PM, it was cold at about 40° F and clear with visibility of 20 miles. There was wind about about 6 mph with the highest gust that day of 10 mph. (See *Appendix B, PDX Weather Data (Feb. 17, 1977)*.) February is usually rainy in western Oregon, but it is not particularly unusual to have a few clear days in February as the night of February 17, 1977 was.



Source: Google Maps

**Figure 4. Lake Oswego with George Rogers Park**

*George Rogers Park and environs consists of small commercial businesses and residential neighborhoods. The Willamette River flows more or less north through this region on through Portland, Oregon, immediately to the north.*

## Sighting Location

*Figure 5, Aerial View of George Rogers Park, shows the immediate sighting location with the positions of Mark and Sharon and the UFO. Note that their approximate sighting distance to the UFO is around 250 feet.*



Source: Google Earth

**Figure 5. Aerial View of George Rogers Park**

*The layout of the south part of George Rogers Park is shown here. The Willamette River is just visible on the right (east). The location of the hovering UFO was at the yellow star next to the Old Iron Smelter. Mark and Sharon stood about where the yellow octagon shape is near the Old River Road Bridge.*

## EVIDENCE

The UFO evidence in this case consists solely of the following:

- Witness Mark Gorman's testimony.
- Witness Sharon Gorman's testimony.
- Some photos by Keith Rowell of a hovering helicopter during the interview with the witnesses in George Rogers Park.

## Testimony

On Friday, April 25, 2008, I (Keith Rowell) traveled to George Rogers Park to interview Mark and Sharon Gorman. They arrived shortly after the appointed time and after a brief get-acquainted period, we got down to business. I questioned them about their experience as we re-enacted the events of the night of February 17, 1977.

I found both Mark and Sharon to be low key and down-to-earth individuals who answered all my questions patiently and forthrightly. I find no reason to doubt any of their testimony. Mark has gone out of his way to produce a fine map of the event (see Appendix A, *Witness Mark Gorman's UFO Event Map*) and answer further questions in email. I find his written descriptions clear and to the point.

Mark's girlfriend at the time (Sharon) became his wife in due time and they've had a productive, married life together rearing their children since the time of the incident. Mark is an electronics manufacturing specialist and Sharon is a certified medication aide by profession. Sharon is currently working towards a degree in nursing.

Mark and Sharon have not spent much time thinking about this event in the years since. But they have certainly never forgotten it. They simply put it on the "back burner" like so many UFO witnesses do.

One of the brief telepathic communications involved the odd pronouncement that the UFO beings were "on Earth to witness the second coming of Christ." Mark was not a Christian before the encounter, but a few years afterwards he did increase his interest in Christianity and began to study the Bible somewhat more and became a Christian at that time. Today, he believes in God and Christ's divinity, but does not attend church regularly.

At the time of our interview in George Rogers Park, Mark developed a sudden, very severe headache, which is unusual for him, he has said in a recent email. Also, in the email he said, "I felt like I was under some [kind of] psychic attack. Coincidence? Who knows."

## **Helicopter Surveillance**

At the time of the George Rogers Park interview (April 25, 2008), we experienced a small white Robinson 22 helicopter pass over us and circle back directly over us to hover momentarily about 800 feet above. This was a bit odd since it is very rare that I have experienced an obvious surveillance maneuver—the helicopter circling back to hover over us briefly. See *Figure 6, White Robinson 22 Surveillance Helicopter* and *Figure 7, Overall Shot of Robinson 22 Surveillance Helicopter*. None of us thought that the helicopter was anything other than an ordinary helicopter. But, in fact, the Robinson 22 is mentioned in Montgomery and Foster's *A Field Guide to Airplanes of North America* as especially favored by police departments for its low cost.

We all observed it and thought it a little odd. I include this bit of information for completeness since the UFO literature does include both ordinary military or government helicopter surveillance along with apparently UFO-like, "mysterious helicopter" "surveillance."



Source: Keith Rowell

**Figure 6. White Robinson 22 Surveillance Helicopter**

*This white Robinson 22 helicopter moved over Mark and Sharon Gorman and investigator Keith Rowell during the interview and re-enactment of their February 17, 1977 close encounter. The helicopter circled back to briefly hover over us and then move on.*



Source: Keith Rowell

**Figure 7. Overall Shot of Robinson 22 Surveillance Helicopter**

*This photo shows the helicopter moving away after hovering briefly nearly overhead.*

# ANALYSIS

No technical analysis of the UFO event was attempted due to the absence of sufficiently accurate measurable quantities.

As a side note: the altitude of the Robinson 22 surveillance helicopter described earlier was calculated by knowing the 30 foot length of the Robinson 22 and then doing a ratio and proportion to get the angle ( $2^\circ$ ) that the helicopter subtended in *Figure 6, White Robinson 22 Surveillance Helicopter*. Using the tangent of  $2^\circ$  and the helicopter's 30 foot length gives us the approximate 800 foot altitude the helicopter was maneuvering and hovering at.

## Switched Off?

As mentioned in the *Introduction*, the basic scenario described here by the witnesses fits pretty well the typical abduction scenario where one person is abducted and the other is "switched off." This "switched off" state seems to be a state of some sort of suspended animation till an abduction is completed and the abductee is returned. However, as noted above, Sharon seems to have been conscious throughout the entire course of events described in this case study. And, thus, was not classically "switched off."

During the course of writing this report, I wrote:

I specifically asked a couple of times if Sharon was sure she was conscious throughout the entire sequence of events, and she answered both times that she is as sure as she can be that she was indeed always conscious throughout the events. She stated that she was just too "petrified" to move during the close encounter with the UFO.

However, Sharon now believes at this writing that she may have had some brief telepathic contact with the object in the sense that she received communication ("you stay there"), but no mental sending back to the object on her part. She also believes that she may have been aware of Mark disappearing for a brief second or two.

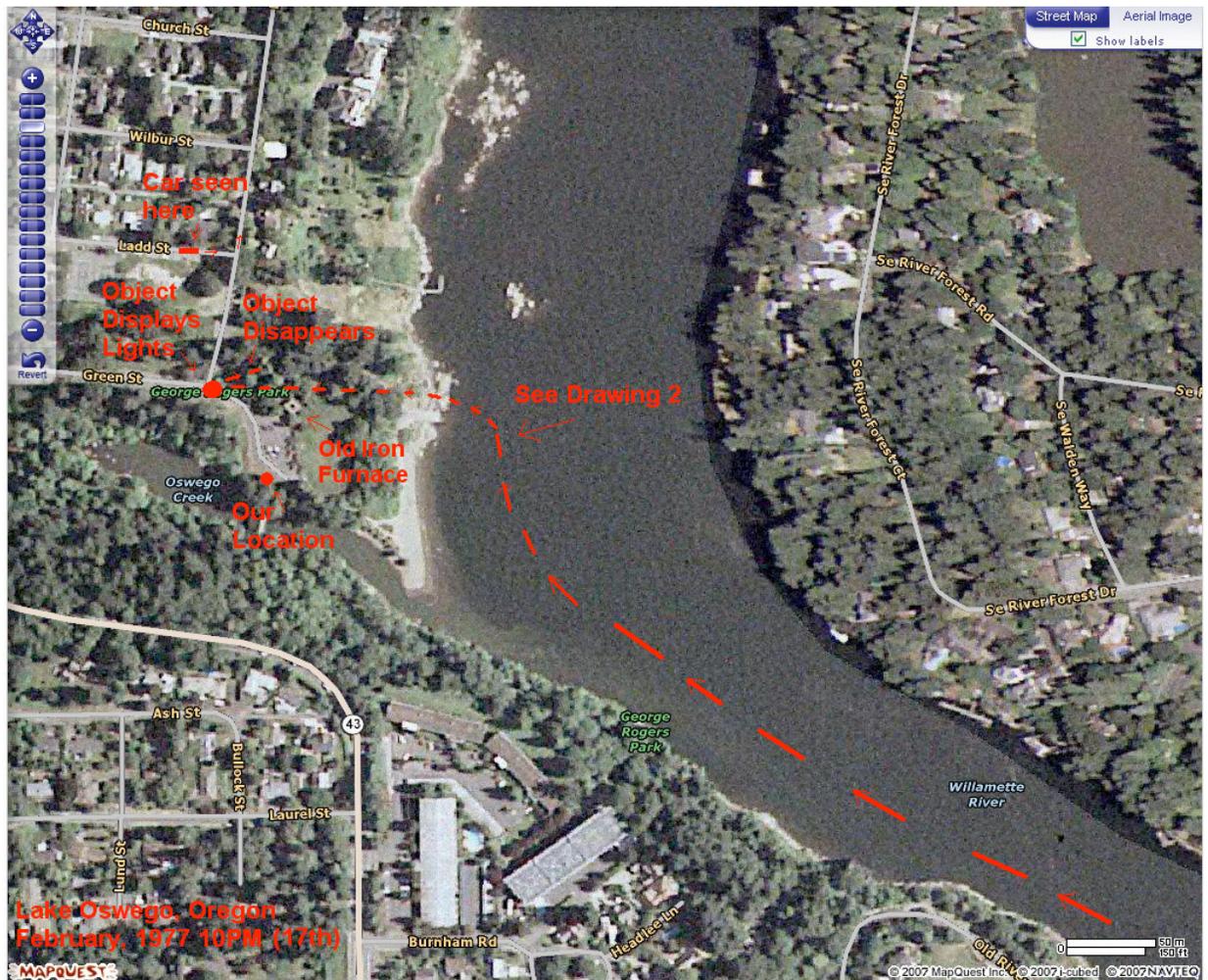
Beginning to remember more and more as you think about close encounter experiences is, of course, a frequent occurrence among UFO experiencers. Perhaps more memories will emerge as time goes by.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since the witnesses have been forthright and cooperative and seem completely sincere along with all pertinent, verifiable facts checking out, I believe that Mark and Sharon Gorman have witnessed a genuine MUFON "Unknown - UAV" with a Vallée classification of CE1, which means a UFO witnessed within 500 feet.

# APPENDIX A: Mark Gorman's UFO Event Map

Witness Mark Gorman has taken the time to draw an excellent map of the UFO's path along the path of the Willamette River and over George Rogers Park. He has noted various landmarks such as the old iron smelter.



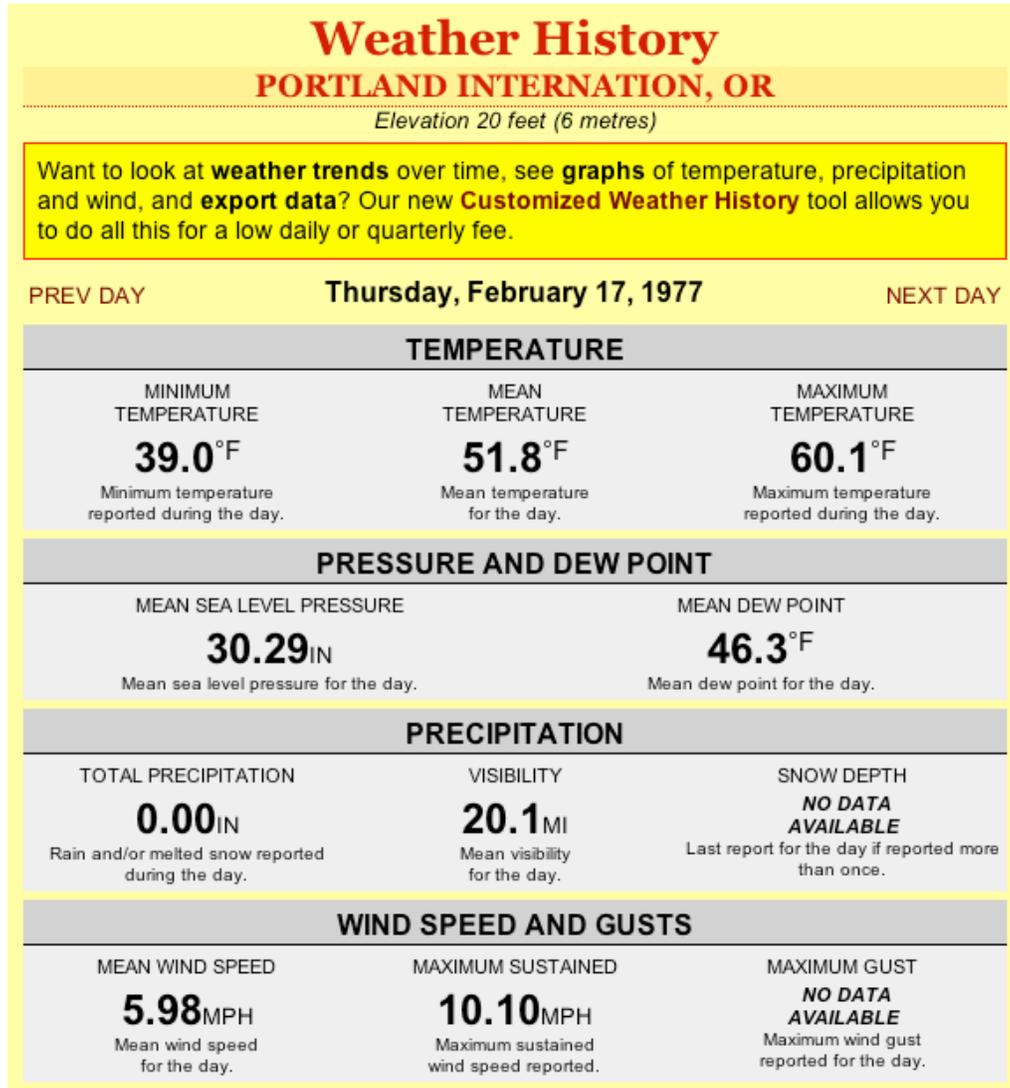
Source: Mark Gorman

**Figure 7. Mark Gorman's UFO Event Map**

This is Mark's understanding of the path of the UFO during the approximately 30 minute experience. The distance from their sighting position in George Rogers Park (near "Oswego Creek") to where the UFO path extends to the lower left of the illustration is about one mile. "See Drawing 2" refers to Figure 1, Mark's Rendition of the UFO.

## APPENDIX B: PDX Weather Data (Feb. 17, 1977)

Mark Gorman discovered this source of historical weather data and brought this to my attention—thanks, Mark. This is from the Old Farmer’s Almanac website ([www.almanac.com](http://www.almanac.com)).



Source: [almanac.com](http://almanac.com)

**Figure 8. Portland Weather on February 17, 1977**

Visibility that day was essentially unlimited and the measurable precipitation was zero, which corroborates the remembered details of the Mark and Sharon’s story. Note that there was mild wind that day.