



REPORT

ANSON GHOST LIGHT

INVESTIGATION



Anson
Texas
TX002

SOUTHWEST GHOST HUNTERS ASSOCIATION



SOLVED

1998
2000

COMPLETION
STANDARDS

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Forward

The word “investigation” is defined as
“a searching inquiry for ascertaining facts; detailed or careful examination.”

The key word here is “facts”. Do ghosts exist? No, it has not been proven.
Therefore are no facts to investigate.

What we do have is the testimony of the witnesses and this is where an investigational process will work. Investigations are often viewed as a skeptical activity because the main goal is trying to determine what the witness actually saw. Is it explainable or not? This is done through critical thinking and an event replication process developed by SGHA. This is an important concept because what defines a haunting or ghost sighting is “Multiple witnesses reporting unusual phenomena over a period of time”. If these phenomena can be explained, the witness reports are no longer validating paranormal activity as a cause and thus there is no ghost or haunting. Additionally historical research may be done in an attempt to validate facts.

It is important to understand that the goal of an investigation is not to find evidence of the paranormal but to attempt to identify any natural or manmade causes of the reported phenomena

Definition of Terms

Investigation Status: Unsolved investigations will have either an open or closed status. An investigation is given an “Open” status if:

The investigators were unable to replicate all of the witness events. Something significant remains that is still unsolved.

It is important to understand that an “open” investigation does not mean that the unsolved facts are paranormal in nature. It simply means that we have exhausted our resources and cannot solve the “open” items/events.

A “Closed” status indicates that there is insufficient data or confounding variables that prevents replication or identifying possible explanations. This often occurs when investigators do not have direct access to witnesses or some other environmental change have occurred that creates confounding variables.

Confidentiality Notice

Many of the witnesses interviewed have wished to remain anonymous in exchange for presenting their accounts of paranormal experiences. We honor that request and thus witnesses will often be identified by aliases. Any coincidence between aliases and actual persons is unintentional.

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Part 1: Location Information

Anson Lights, Anson Texas



Above: the crossroads from where the ghost lights are seen.

Part 2: Location History:

Eighteen miles southeast of Hamlin, at the junction of US-180, sits Anson, named in honor of Dr. Anson Jones, the last president of the Republic of Texas. Anson was also a stop on the legendary Butterfield Stage U.S. Mail route that

ran between St. Louis and San Francisco from 1858 to 1861, but these days it feels more like a stage set for The Last Picture Show, with handsome blocks of brick-fronted buildings forming a square around the stately Jones County Courthouse at the center of town. Anson is still a center for the local cotton industry, but its main claim to fame is the Cowboys' Christmas Ball, described in an 1890 poem by William Lawrence "Larry" Chittenden and recently re-awakened by the involvement of country-folk singer Michael Martin Murphey, who did a Christmas show there in 1995.

The story was covered by the television series Unsolved Mysteries several years ago. Many residents from Anson and the nearby town of Abilene have gone to witness these phenomenal lights. . The cemetery is located going towards the country. The lights are viewed by driving down the dirt farm road equivalent of about a half mile or more. As you drive closer to the cemetery towards the lights they disappear.

Previous ghost hunts or investigations at this location:

19 September 1998 (Ghost Hunt), 13 August 2000 (Investigation), 15 September 2000 (Investigation)

During the ghost hunt of the area the light phenomena was identified but a search of the area turned up nothing that seemed to be of paranormal origin. The site was then handed over to SGHA's Investigative team.

Part 3: Reported Phenomena (General)

As locals tell it, one night during the Depression a young mother ran frantically along the road searching for her missing child, slipping in icy ruts as she stumbled through the cold winter darkness. She never found her little one; the child had wandered away from the house and was presumed to have frozen to death. The mother's spirit still searches for her child, holding her lantern high to light her way in the dark night.

Yet another version of the story has the "son" much older and working for the railroad. The mother and son had a signaling system of sorts using a lantern. when he arrived back he would flash his lantern three times towards the house to let his mother know that he was on his way home.

Ghost hunters frequent Anson in search of the "Lights of Anson", a phenomenon that appears at the Mt. Hope Cemetery and is featured in the book Ghosts in the Graveyard by Olyve Hallmark Abbot and in Texas Monthly. It was also featured on the television show "Unsolved Mysteries".

Part 4: The Investigation

This was a investigation to determine if paranormal activity does indeed exist at the cemetery near Anson Texas. The conclusion of two previous investigations conducted at the location revealed a mysterious ghost light. The lights are viewed by driving down the dirt farm road to the cross roads, equivalent of



about a half mile or more. As you drive closer to the cemetery towards the lights they disappear. As for the actual story for this occurrence, is unsolved. Local myth says that this light is the ghost of a mother carrying a lantern looking for her missing child. The child had left the house on cold winter day and was lost and froze to death. The mother's spirit still searches for her child.

Other myths claim that the child or children were killed by a train. The cemetery is reached by driving east from Anson on Highway 180. We got to the dirt road turnoff and proceeded down to the cross roads, turned around, killed the headlights and engines of our car, and looked around for ANYTHING that could be construed as a "supernatural" light.

We didn't see anything, so we flashed our headlights three times and waited. After a few seconds, a light began to feebly glow down the road. It appeared to be orange, looking very similar to an arc-sodium street lamp or such viewed at a distance. After a bit of time, the color gradually changed to a bluish hue-similar to the xenon headlamps in some cars.

After a bit more time had passed, the light-which appeared to be anywhere from 200 yards to a half-mile away-slowly faded out. We wondered if we could bring it back if we flashed our lights at it again, and sure enough, when we did, it gradually reappeared. So we begin by seeing if the elements of the local myths could be somewhat accurate.

We started by confirming the existence of railroad tracks, which do exist, but they are located approximately half a mile to the south of the crossroads. It was from this vantage point that we noticed the layout of the surrounding terrain. The area where the crossroad is located is actually in a depression.

One of the biggest questions that arose occurred during our investigation of the area. One investigator was down on the road by the cemetery while the rest of the investigations team was at the crossroads observing the light. The investigator at the cemetery was not able to see the light itself or obtain any differences in temperature. The entire area also had normal background readings considering a power line parallel the road.

Later it was determined that the light only appeared on the left hand side of the road, as viewed from the crossroads but seemed to be completely invisible to someone standing down by the cemetery. The light also disappears as one tries to approach it from the crossroads.

We also noticed that the light also appeared on its own, without having to "flash" it with the car lights. Something seemed to be out of place.

Part 5: Site Photos



View from the cemetery, looking south towards the crossroads (viewing area). According to the myth and witnesses, the lights are supposedly located on the road near this point. Also note the proximity of the power lines which generate a sufficient EM field to trigger the EMF detectors of ghost hunters.



The junction of Co rd 387 and US 180. The cemetery is on the right. Notice the vegetation directly in the line of sight when on the road.



The deserted tracks, they follow a power line that parallels the road.

Part 6: Experimental Testing

Test 1 (August 5, 2000)

On this investigation we focused on trying to determine exactly where the light was located down on the cemetery (north) end of the dirt road. We accomplished this by sending a investigator with a flashlight up to the north end of the road while another investigator stayed at the crossroads.

Through radio communication the "crossroads investigator" was able to direct the "Cemetery Investigator" so that his flashlight was positioned directly over the ghost light. When the cemetery investigator looked to the north, he could clearly see the light next to the foliage on the other side of HWY 180.



It is definitely a light in the distance, although it is quite bright. By now, the "cemetery investigator" is standing down in the left ditch, far off of the dirt road itself. The foliage on the other side of HWY 180, conceals the light when someone is looking north from or near the road on the cemetery end.

The ghost light, when viewed through a video camera with the zoom on maximum, can also be easily identified as car lights. You can even make out other cars traveling behind it, which is not readily visible to the naked eye. If you look carefully you will sometimes make out multiple lights, all determined by how many cars are traveling on HWY 277 at that particular time. Another interesting effect can be obtained by having someone stand across HWY 180 and shine a flashlight down the road towards the crossroads. You would be surprised by how bright it appears and by the way that it looks exactly like the ghost light itself.

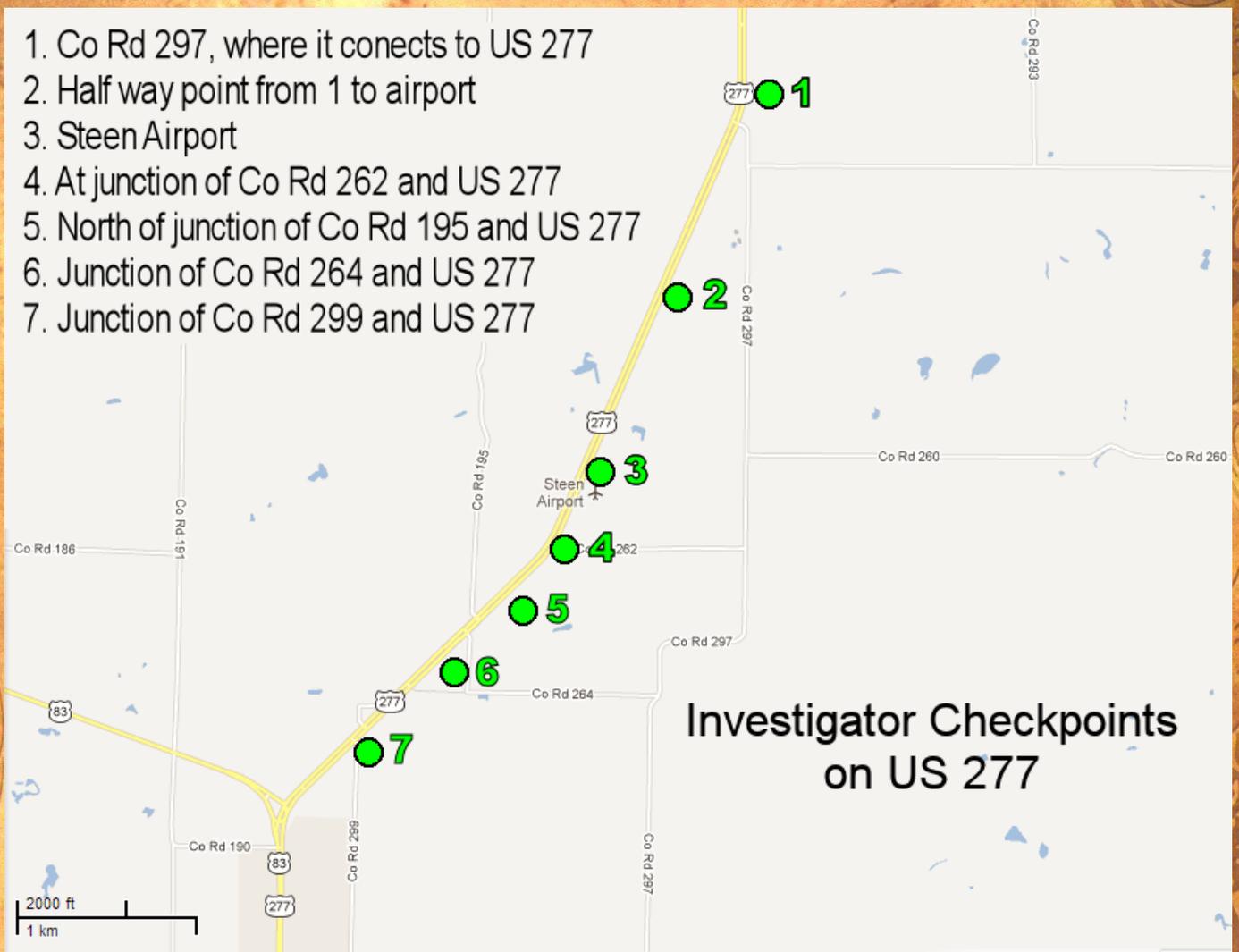
Test 2 (September 15, 2000)

While the observations from Test 1 clearly indicated that the ghost light was most probably the headlights of a car travelling southbound on US-277, we needed to track the light to definitely prove this and to address the criticism of believers who still were not convinced.

To accomplish this we stationed seven investigators along US 277 at various intervals. Each investigator had a two-way radio and a high intensity spot light. After dusk each investigator used the high intensity spot light to visually identify their location. These positions were noted from the crossroads.

Once at the checkpoints were recorded at car using a spotlight with a red filter over the lens would travel south along US-277. As the car passed a checkpoint, the spotlight would rapidly be turned on and off. The investigator at the checkpoint would also notify the observers at the crossroads that the test vehicle just passed them. This would enable us the track the vehicle (and the "ghost light") as it moved south down US-277.

1. Co Rd 297, where it connects to US 277
2. Half way point from 1 to airport
3. Steen Airport
4. At junction of Co Rd 262 and US 277
5. North of junction of Co Rd 195 and US 277
6. Junction of Co Rd 264 and US 277
7. Junction of Co Rd 299 and US 277



We also invited several people who believed that the light was a ghost light so we could replicate the test for them.

Test Results

North of checkpoint 1 the light appears as a steady light. The car headlights are viewed almost directly on center. The lights are brighter, often containing the lights of more than one vehicle. Believers do not interpret this as the ghost light yet.

At check point 1 the vehicle turns slightly to the Southwest. The vehicle lights now dim and start to flicker as they are not being viewed dead on. Believers are now calling this the ghost light.

The “ghost light” moves slowly but steadily towards the west from the viewing area at the crossroads. We are easily able to verify that it is actually our test vehicle through radio communications as it passes the checkpoints.

The movement of the light is slow through checkpoints 2 to 4. After passing checkpoint 4, the speed to the light (from the crossroads) increases dramatically.

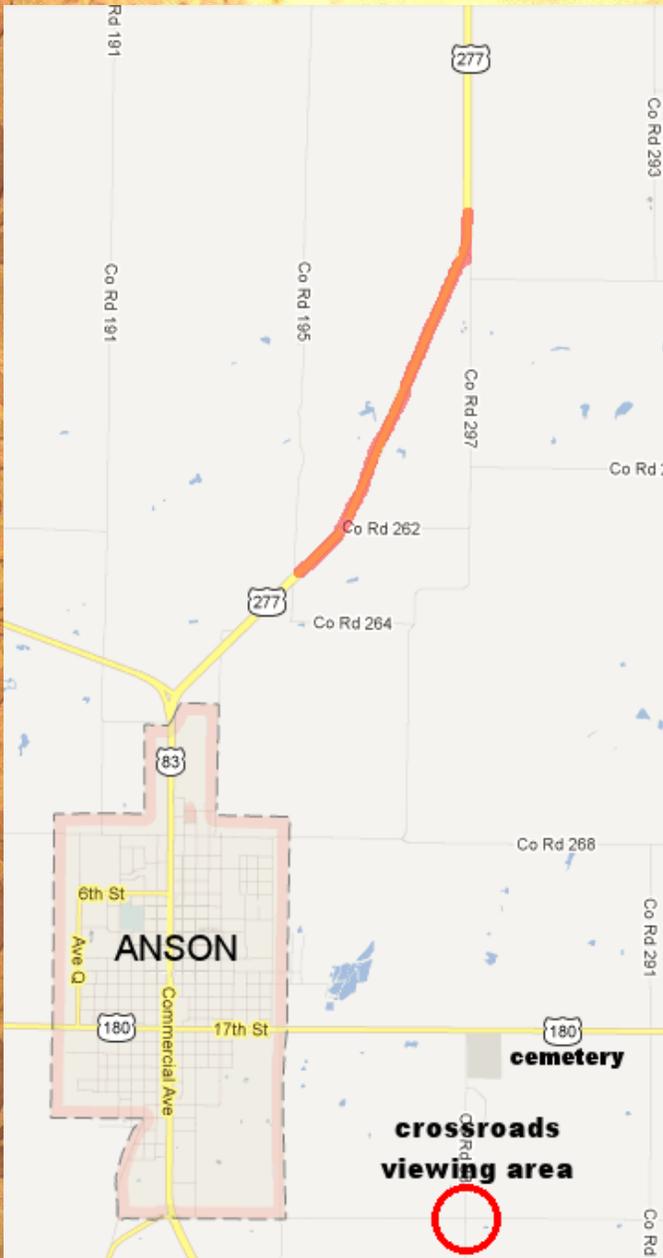
By checkpoint 5 the lights have dimmed are now barely visible. They have completely vanished by the time the test vehicle reaches checkpoint 7.

This test was repeated four more times with identical results.

Part 7: Conclusions

The Anson Light is the approaching car lights from southbound traffic on US-277. The section of the highway that is highlighted in red indicates where the phenomenon occurs.

Hardcore believers of the ghost light often cite several instances which they claim “proves” that the light is of a paranormal origin.



Here we will address these claims by using information obtained on all of the investigations of this area.

How does the ghost light "fade" in and out? Car headlights do not do that.

The primary fading effect occurs when the car turns to the southwest. The headlights move from a dead on viewing angle to an offset angle. This also creates the flicker effect of the light. Also, if you travel south on HWY 277 from Stamford to Anson, you will notice that several sections of the road go uphill. This also provides the illusion of the light "fading in".

Why does the ghost light disappear when it is approached from the crossroads?

To reach the cemetery from the crossroads, you must first go up a slight hill. This creates a blind spot that exists until you have climbed the hill, but by then the road has veered just enough to the northwest that the light is obscured by the vegetation on the other side of HWY 180, unless you drive down into the ditch on the left side of the road.

How does the ghost light "move about"? Many people have reported it.

There are several explanations that we have noted during the investigations here. The most common is that vehicles also move on Co Rd 297, which also lines up directly with the viewing area. Another explanation comes from the few points of reference available at the crossroads. The main one is a streetlight located at a private residence just south of the cemetery. The light can be partially obscured by trees and the wind moving the tree branches can cause an illusion that the light is moving. The actual car lights do actually move, although not much, as they travel down the highway. Others have reported that the light

actually moves down the dirt road towards them. Once again this is due to the varying degrees of brightness of the car headlights. A car with its lights dimmed can turn on its high beams, thus creating an effect that seems as if the light is moving closer.

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