

Occult References

WHILE DISQUALIFYING REFERENCES ARE USEFUL IN exposing a hoax, the only way to confirm the authenticity of a communication is by “occult references.” This has nothing to do with the supernatural, it’s just a term for information

that is not accessible to the vast majority of contemporaries. It’s a classic and highly reliable method of assessing credibility, almost akin to the message containing a secret authentication code.

N.Y. N.Y.

So are there any occult references in Betty’s notebook? Certainly such notations as “KGMB” and “31.05” and references to “Howland” do not qualify. That information was widely available via the news media. However, if when Betty wrote “N.Y. N.Y.” she meant “New York City” (she thinks that’s a possibility but she can’t be sure), then it’s a very small step to “Norwich City” and a convincing occult reference – but there is just too much specula-

*darn
30
N.Y. or something that sounded
N.Y. like New York*

tion involved to hold that possibility up as proof of anything. Remember, this is how psychics work – they provide general information that the subject then modifies to fit the desired message. In this case there is no reason to think that there is any intention to defraud or mislead but the wishful thinking process is still just as powerful and dangerous.

The Suitcase In the Closet

The passage, “George-get the suitcase in my closet-California” has possibilities as a genuine occult reference. Without yet knowing whether the idea of something important being found in suitcase in a closet rings any bells in Earhart or Putnam family folklore (we’re checking), the very fact that the quote specifies “California” means that the speaker was aware that the Putnams at that time had more than one house and that one of the

*...you may hear from me
hear from me ready from me
George
get the suitcase in my closet
Calf.
are you
Movie News!*

houses was not in California. (They had homes in North Hollywood, CA and in Rye, NY.) That information was certainly not secret but neither was it widely publicized. The unlikelihood of the directive in the context of the rest of the message increases the probability that it is genuine occult information, but before or until we know whether there was anything in the suitcase in the closet we can’t say that it really means anything.

W4OK

77 71.8.

W4OK Howlandport
or WOJ Howlandport

Near the top of the first page of notes is the entry "W4OK Howland port or WOJ Howland port." The similarity of these letter/number combina-

tions to radio call signs prompted research that revealed that WOJ does not seem to have been in use in 1937, although by 1947 it was assigned to a commercial station in Hialeah, Florida. W4OK, on the other hand, turns out to have been the call sign of Francis G. Carroll, an amateur radio operator who was active in 1937 and who lived at that time in Palm Beach, Florida. Palm Beach just happens to be on the same great circle (radio propagation path) as Betty's home in St. Pete and Gardner Island. Unfortunately both Mr. Carroll and his wife passed away earlier this year, but their daughter's housemate recalls that several years ago – probably 1992 – while watching

a documentary about Amelia Earhart, Mr. Carroll remarked, "I talked to her; I always wondered what happened."

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2297, is now working with the family to try to locate any surviving logbook or documentation that would shed further light on this fascinating development. An occult reference? It sure looks that way. Just a coincidence? Perhaps, but the coincidence of Betty jotting down Carroll's call sign as a random, misunderstood sequence of letters and numbers is no less remarkable than the possibility that Earhart said them. We're presently investigating the possibility that Carroll had somehow managed some kind of two-way exchange with Earhart, however brief, and that Betty heard Amelia's attempt to re-establish contact with him.

The Midpoint Position

The notation in brackets on page 53, according to Betty, was made at the same time as the rest of the notes and is, in fact, the last entry she made before turning the page. She had the definite impression that Earhart had found something written down that she thought might be important information to transmit and was repeating it several times. Betty wrote down a more garbled version earlier on the page but wasn't sure she had it right. The entry in brackets was the last time she heard it and the one she was surest about, but she was still not entirely certain, hence the question mark. What she wrote down is quite obviously intended to be a latitude/longitude position and seems most logically interpreted as "South 3 degrees 09 minutes, 165 degrees East." That position turns out to be very close to the midpoint in the flight from Lae to Howland, but that does not make it occult

13 309° ?
165° E

information. Earhart's route was well publicized as was the fact that the USS *Ontario* was supposed to be

positioned near the halfway point to provide navigational assistance. For the coordinates in Betty's notebook to be truly occult they must have a unique connection to the flight that was unknown to the public.

Might they represent the exact midpoint of the flight? No, that point has been calculated to be $3^{\circ} 2' \text{ South}, 165^{\circ} 10' \text{ East}$. The position written in Betty's notebook is about 7 miles south and 10 miles west of there. (We've actually had various measurements of the midpoint from a number of equally competent navigators. None

match Betty's note.) In the official search report the captain of the USS *Lexington* described the midpoint where USS *Ontario* was stationed as 3° South, 165° East – a convenient rounding off of the numbers and, in fact, the point where the course to Howland Island crosses the 165th meridian, but the coordinates written in the notebook are more specific than that. Might they represent where the *Ontario* actually was during the flight? No, the ship's logs show that she did not take up a stationary position but during that day of July 2nd she steamed from 3° 9' South, 165° 11' East at 8 a.m. local time to 2° 59' South, 165° 20' East longitude at 8 p.m. local.

But where was *Ontario* really supposed to be? For that we have to go back to the official messages that passed back and forth prior to Earhart's first World Flight attempt. On March 14, 1937 *Ontario* was en route from Samoa to her assigned station for the first attempt when she reported:

ONTARIO CROSSED ONE HUNDRED
EIGHTEENTH [sic] MERIDIAN EN
ROUTE TO PLANE GUARD STATION
LATITUDE 03 05 SOUTH LONGITUDE
165 00 EAST FOR EARHART FLIGHT

This is the only time that *Ontario*'s assigned lat/long appears in any of the message traffic either before or after the disappearance. Earhart cracked up at Luke Field before *Ontario* actually reached her assigned station, but this message tells us specifically where she was headed. *Ontario* apparently had orders to proceed to that specific position and it seems safe to assume that the Earhart flight had also been informed as to exactly where they could expect *Ontario* to be.

When *Ontario* was ordered to do it all again for the second world flight attempt no new coordinates were assigned. She was just told to go to the previously assigned position. If Noonan, in preparing for the second attempt, made a notation of the lat/long where *Ontario* was supposed to be (a reasonable thing to do), that notation can be expected to have been 3 degrees 5 minutes South, 165 degrees East.

The position written in Betty's notebook seems to be 3 degrees 9 minutes South, 165 degrees East, with a question mark indicating that she's not sure she heard it right. The numbers "5" and "9" are the most easily misunderstood of all spoken numerals; that's why we now say "five" and "niner." If the 9 she heard was actually a 5, then it's an exact match to *Ontario*'s assigned plane guard position – a position that would logically be written down somewhere aboard the Electra.

The presence of that position in Betty's notebook is all the more remarkable because it does not make sense as something that would be said by a rational Earhart, or a rational hoaxter. Why transmit that position? *Ontario*'s assigned plane guard station is one of the few places everyone could be quite sure that the airplane wasn't. But Betty's notebook does not describe a rational Earhart. It describes a terrified, desperate woman who doesn't know where she is, struggling with an injured and delirious companion, sending out any navigational information she can find in Noonan's notes.

To Be Continued...

Our investigation of Betty's notebook and other alleged post-loss messages from Earhart is not yet finished, but at this time it appears that Betty's notebook contains occult references that suggest that it is a record of genuine, if imperfect, communications from Amelia Earhart. If further investigation continues to bear out this conclusion, Betty's notebook will become "smoking gun" proof that radio transmissions were being made from the Earhart aircraft after it disappeared. While it is hard to imagine how the notebook could ever, by itself, establish for certain that the transmissions came from Gardner Island, it may provide the first contemporaneous written documentation that the flight did not go down at sea.