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THE MYSTERY OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS--
A PRELUDE 1896-1949

A survey of persons, places, and events, prior to the year 1949 with emphasis on the extraterrestrial hypothesis.

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September, 1971

Revised in July, 1973 - This writer wishes to express his thanks to the famed Fortean author Vincent Gaddis, who kindly gave me his newspaper clipping collection covering the years 1946 - 1947, which made possible some thirty additional items of interest.

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Points of Interest

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- 2.) The UFO swamp gas explanation. Used for the first time in 1896? pp.16,26.
- 3.) Perhaps one of the most important UFO sightings on record. Two ministers, in 1896, see a UFO on the ground at a distance of only two hundred yards. p.19.
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PREFACE

In the publication: The U.F.O. Investigator, printed by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, there appeared the following:

"On Aug. 7, 1966, readers of the Washington "Star" had a big surprise --in fact, several surprises. Before then, a serious discussion of UFOs in the "Star" was almost unheard of. But there in the Sunday edition was a full-page fact piece on "flying saucers."

Surprise No.2: The artical was written by Lt. Col. Charles Cooke, USAF, Ret., founder and editor of the Air Intelligence Digest. Col. Cooke, refusing the official explanations, calmly set down his conclusions that the UFOs are real and from somewhere in outer space.

Colonel Cooke's Air Force service record has other surprises linked with UFOs. In World War II, he was intelligence officer for a bombardment group in Europe, where he heard first-hand reports from pilots who encountered the mysterious 'foo fighters.' In 1948-1952, at the Pentagon, he became the founder and editor of 'Air Intelligence Digest' --the worldwide AF intelligence publication. Later, in Tokyo, he became editor of FEAF --the 'Far East AF Intelligence Roundup.' During all this time, 'information copies' of steadily increasing UFO reports flowed across his desk....'No one in the USAF assembly line down which the reports passed read and pondered them more absorbedly, more dedicatedly, than I. I duly noted the myriad 'Explanations' given out by the Blue Book staff-widely referred to as 'The Little Blue Boy Blues' or 'The Little Blue Boys' --of sightings which they evaluated as mistakenly identified stars, planets, meteors ---birds, reflected lights, mirages, marsh gas --or as delusions, hoaxes, publicity stunts, ect.'

In discussing the massive UFO evidence, Col. Cooke corrects one of the most widespread false beliefs: That UFO sightings began on June 24, 1947, with Kenneth Arnold's famous report of flying discs over Mt. Ranier. ...'Far from having begun in 1947, 'says Col. Cooke, 'reported UFO sightings go way, way back.'

Commenting on the new (1966) Frank Edwards book -- 'Flying Saucers -Serious Business' --Cooke says 'Edwards book gives me great joy in its attention to Pre -1947.' Citing one famous case related by Edwards --a bishop's report of a torpedo-shaped body hovering above a building --Col. Cooke wryly asks 'I can't help wondering what Project Blue Book's 'explanation' of this report would have been. Marsh gas?' "

De Libris Revolutionum Narratio Prima

When the great Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) helped to lay the foundation of modern science five hundred years ago, by shaking free the grip of preconceived ideas on what should be purely scientific observation, he refined the methods of scientific research previously proposed by Roger Bacon. By slow, agonizing steps, the proper gathering and evaluation of information for scholastic study had reached a milestone that marked the emergence of the scientific spirit from the long torpor of the Middle Ages.

One of the very first results of this scientific renaissance was staggering in its implications. It was Nicolaus Copernicus' essay: De Libris Revolutionum Narratio Prima, which dared to suggest a profound philosophical-scientific hypothesis.

Science confirmed Copernicus' theory, the idea that the earth was not the center of the universe, and we owe the Polish scholar a large debt of gratitude for his courageous and vital initial step toward the ultimate truth about the cosmos.

As hard as it was for mankind to eventually come to terms with a universe that was not geocentric, a vastly more profound problem arose from the ruins of the harmonious astronomical-philosophical conceptions of Antiquity, and that was the question of the uniqueness of Homosapiens. If the planet earth could be demonstrated to be a mere speck in the Milky Way, just one of many possible worlds orbiting many stars and not holding a special place in the heavens, why not other races of intelligent beings?

The detection of extraterrestrial sentient life offers a mammoth challenge to science, one that seems impossible ~~take up~~ considering the physical distribution of the stars compared to mankind's present day technological limitations, to say nothing of the philosophical resistance of those who either fear the very thought of alien creatures, or who flaunt a confident and cultivated scepticism based on comfortable notions similar to pre-Leonardo times.

The apparent insurmountable barriers to the confirmation of the distrubing hypothesis that we might not be alone in the universe, would be greatly simplified, of course, if the heavens were so populated the earth could count on the inhabitants of ^{other} solar systems to achieve the feat of crossing the vast distances of space, and produce themselves here on earth for examination, thus save us a great deal of effort and speculation.

Whether a super-civilization would trouble itself to sent ambassadors to the United Nations, if one did discover our planet, ^{however,} is an open question, since an advanced race of intelligent beings may ^{find} more of value in the lower forms of life on earth, than the higher, being content to merely gather scientific samples and leave mankind alone to continue its endless political bickering. Pursuing this train of thought further, ^{since} we cannot ~~really~~ begin to guess what may lurk out there in the black void of space, ~~and~~ we may not even recognize an alien visit when, or if, that moment comes.

Modern science has progressed considerably since the days of Leonardo de Vinci, but in spite of the many laws of nature since

discovered and definded, there remains something unexplained, something that moves through the atmosphere with ease and has characteristics of a solid, intelligently controlled, device of a non-natural origin. This phenomenon is called an unidentified flying object (UFO).

Where to begin the history of unidentified flying objects offered a problem in itself, as it seems the whole subject is streved with difficult judgements, ^{but after} examining many written treatments of the subject, from naive pamphlets to ponderous tomes, one can select a date never before used and be satisfied on reasonable grounds: December 16, 1742.

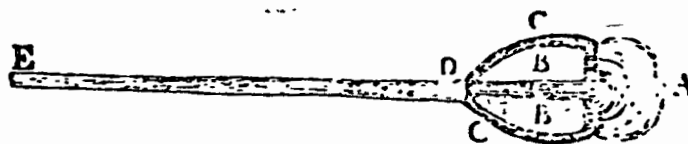
Some, using an undisciplined selection process, retreat so far back into history they find themselves amid the annals of ancient Rome. With good cause, the use of ^{very old} chronicles to prove something resembling scientific fact should be veiwd with great scepticism. .. Granted there exist quite a few reports of strange things in the sky in documents of great age that resemble modern sightings, but observers of the past consisted of unschooled mentalities for the most part and to quote such sources with their superstitious embellishments approaches the ridiculous. As we shall see, the temptation to interpet the unknown in terms which were a bias to one's belief continued among laymen into modern times, though the unknown with which we are concerned with has slowly become less enigmatic in the last fifty years.

The observing, recording, and evaluating of natural phenomena did not really come into its own until the formation of scientific

academies around the year 1560 with the appearance of the Accademia Secretorum Natural in Nales, followed by the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome in 1603, and the Royal Society for the Improvement of Natural Knowledge founded in 1662 under the patronage of England's King Charles the II, which became better known by the shorter expression: "Royal Society". It is in the journals of these academies that we should look for the earliest objective record of the type of unidentified flying object that interests us, and a diligence search is soon rewarded:

As I was returning home from the *Royal Society* to *Westminster*, on *Thursday*, Dec. 16. 1742. h. 8. 40'. p. m. being about the Middle of the Parade in *St. James's Park*, I saw a Light arise from behind the Trees and Houses in the S by W. Point, which I took at first for a large Sky-Rocket; but when it had risen to the Height of about 20 Degrees, it took a Motion nearly parallel to the Horizon, but waved in this manner,

and went on to the N by E. Point over the Houses. It seemed to be so very near, that I thought it passed over *Queen's Square*, the Island in the Park, cross the Canal, and I lost Sight of it over the *Haymarket*. Its Motion was so very slow, that I had it above half a Minute in View; and therefore had Time enough to contemplate its Appearance fully, which was what is seen in the annexed Figure,



A seemed to be a light Flame, turning backwards from the Resistance the Air made to it. *BB* a bright Fire like burning Charcoal, inclosed as it were in an open Case, of which the Frame *CCC* was quite opaque, like Bands of Iron. At *D* issued forth a Train or Tail of light Flame, more bright at *D*, and growing gradually fainter at *E*, so as to be transparent more than half its Length. The Head seemed about half a Degree in Diameter, the Tail near 3 Degrees in Length, and about one Eighth of a Degree in Thickness.

C. M.

1.
 Certain characteristics of this 1745 sighting should be kept in mind as we progress to more recent depictions of this type of phenomena. Specifically, one should commit to memory the defiance of gravity as shown by the object's level flight, which had the peculiar secondary feature of being undulatory. And the object itself is of an ovoid configuration clean of protuberances, however there seems to be a distinct horizontal axis with a prominent white illumination on the leading portion while the rear trails some sort of emission, indicating a definite orientation from right to left. The main body appears to be divided into sections lit up by a red glow so intense it reminded the observer of burning charcoal. Were it not for the unusually low, horizontal, flight path of this reported object, one would be tempted to tag the phenomenon a common bolide in spite of details claimed to have been discerned.

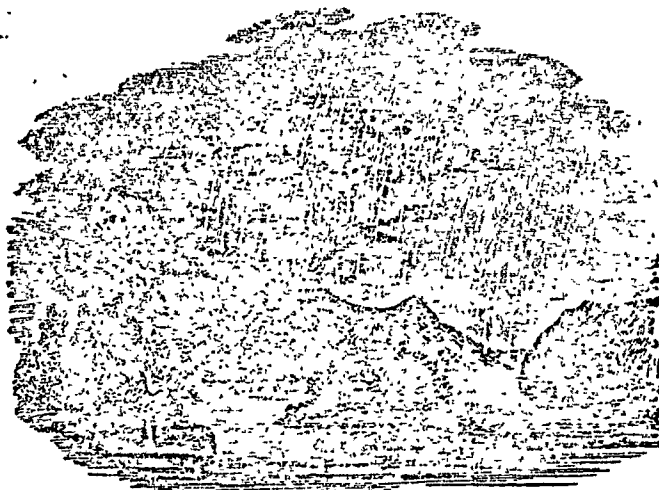
If the phenomenon alledged to have been seen and recorded in December, 1742, was of an unnatural origin and perhaps the product of an extraterrestrial science, one wonders why the owners did not land to say hello after crossing what seems to us the incredibly vast reaches of space that modern science asserts quarantines the earth from such visitations (current scientific opinion and theory hold that the solar system is void of intelligent life and speeds surpassing that of light impossible, ruling out visits from the stars.)

While it may be premature to mention it now, a bit early in our discussion of unexplained aerial objects, the injection of a certain theory at this point aides immeasurably in making some sense out of some confusing and mysterious data.

Imagine a cosmic scheme of things in which throughout the galaxy there are numerous alien super-civilizations, which find flitting from star to star an elementary achievement, with routine convoys of their spacecraft entering our own solar system to pause momentarily before resuming their voyage to far off destinations. These super-mentalities may have little or no interest in the occupants of earth, much like an airplane swooping low over a small island inhabited by hostile primitives in the Pacific Ocean. Such an alien fleet, ^{might on an occasion be} accompanied by miscellaneous debris carried along by momentum, and would no doubt cause a spectacular show as it skidded to a stop in the upper layers of the terrestrial atmosphere. As farfetched as such a mental picture might seem, it has been proposed to help explain to some degree the amazing display of November, 1833, commented on in the astronomy book: Geography of the Heavens. If the descriptions given in this volume (see illustration) have any validity, a suspicion arises whether or not something "highly unusual" took place.²

A less grandiose example of "bizarre meteor activity" can be sifted from the English Mechanic and Mirror of Science of July 10, 1868 (see illustration).³ After examining this example of strange meteor behavior, one asks the question how an "inert mass of rock" can navigate through the air as if it had wings? Either science has a lot more to learn about the "fall of meteors" or observers of the heavens in 1868 were far from accurate.

one and the same point, a little southeast of the zenith. Following the arch of the sky, they ran along with immense velocity, describing, in some instances, an arc of 30° or 40° in a few



METEORIC SHOWER OF NOVEMBER, 1833.

seconds. On more attentive inspection it was seen, that the meteors exhibited three distinct varieties; the *first*, consisting of *phosphoric lines*, apparently described by a point; the *second*, of large *fire-balls*, that at intervals darted along the sky, leaving luminous trains, which occasionally remained in view for a number of minutes, and, in some cases, for half an hour or more; the *third*, of undefined *luminous bodies*, which remained nearly stationary in the heavens for a long time.

Those of the first variety were the most numerous, and resembled a shower of fiery snow driven with inconceivable velocity to the north of west. The second kind appeared more like *falling stars*—a spectacle which was contemplated by the more unenlightened beholders with great amazement and terror. The trains which they left were commonly white, but sometimes were tinged with various prismatic colors, of great beauty.

299. These fire-balls were occasionally of enormous size. Dr. Smith, of North Carolina, describes one which appeared larger than the full moon rising. "I was," says he, "startled by the

298. What remarkable circumstance attended this phenomenon? Variety of meteors? 299. What said of the fireballs seen? Of their size?

splendid light in which the surrounding scene was exhibited, rendering even small objects quite visible."

The same ball, or a similar one, seen at New Haven, passed off in a northwest direction, and exploded a little northward of the star Capella, leaving, just behind the place of explosion, a train of peculiar beauty. The line of direction was at first nearly straight; but it soon began to contract in length, to dilate in breadth, and to assume the figure of a serpent *scrolling* itself up, until it appeared like a luminous cloud of vapor, floating gracefully in the air, where it remained in full view for several minutes.

If this body were at the distance of 110 miles from the observer, it must have had a diameter of one mile; if at the distance of 11 miles, its diameter was 523 feet; and if only one mile off, it must have been 43 feet in diameter. These considerations leave no doubt that many of the meteors were bodies of *large size*.



A LARGE METEOR.

300. Of the third variety of meteors, the following are remarkable examples:—At Poland, Ohio, a luminous body was distinctly visible in the northeast for more than an hour. It was very brilliant, in the form of a *pruning-hook*, and apparently twenty feet long, and eighteen inches broad. It gradually settled toward the horizon, until it disappeared.

At Niagara Falls, a large luminous body, shaped like a *square table*, was seen near the zenith, remaining for some time almost stationary, emitting large streams of light.

301. The point from which the meteors seemed to emanate, was observed, by those who fixed its position among the stars, to be in constellation Leo; and, according to their concurrent testimony, this *RADIANT POINT* was stationary among the stars, during the whole period of observation; that is, it did not move along with the earth, in its diurnal revolution eastward, but accompanied the stars in their apparent progress westward.

A remarkable *change of weather*, from warm to cold, accompanied the meteoric shower, or immediately followed it. In all parts of the United States, this change was remarkable for its suddenness and intensity. In many places, the day preceding had been unusually warm for the season, but, before the next morning, a severe frost ensued, unparalleled for the time of year.

302. In attempting to explain these mysterious phenomena, it is argued, in the first place, *that the meteors had their origin beyond the limits of our atmosphere*; that they of course did not belong to this earth, but to the regions of space exterior to it.

300. What other variety of meteors described? Where? 301. Point from which they seemed to emanate? What change of weather followed? 302. What fact asserted as to the distance from which those meteors came? Professor Olmsted's estimate of distance?

zing the canefields, and several very
sugar made after that method, have

IN NEW ZEALAND.—Shortland, the
township in Auckland, which already
banks and several good hotels, is forty-
miles in Auckland; there is water-carriage all
rounders are constantly plying to and fro,
in about four hours. There are about
the above diggings, and the number is
big. About eight miles from Shortland
is a township, where 1,500 men are living,
the 250 claims on these diggings were
all value. A share in what has since
of the richest claims, could have been
and the holder now refuses to take
interest in it. The whole claim is
000. Other claims, supposed to be even
have been discovered. Many claims that
ed have been resumed by men with
are reaping a rich harvest from their
Australian and West Coast diggers speak
the capability and permanence of these
should be clearly understood that they
men's diggings, a considerable amount of
required before a claim can be worked

ART NOTES.

IN THE PRINCIPALITY.—An exhibi-
tion of art is being got up at Ruthin, in
North Wales, to commence on the 4th
I remain open to the public for a month.
"Biswiddoff" holds its annual meeting
first week in August, and the attempt
in it an interesting and valuable collec-
of pictorial and ornamental art is looked
great favour. Mr. Cornwallis West, of
is an active promoter of the undertaking,
affairs, the well known connoisseur and
principal superintendent. Most of the
one of the neighbourhood will be repre-
sented Wynnstay, Chirk Castle, Ruthin
Coch, Penarth, Hooten, Oteley-cark, &c.,
tributions from Earl Denbigh, Viscountess
Lord Barot, Lord Delamere, Honourable
Mrs. Alfred Seymour, Mr. Townshend
M.P., as well as from the famous collec-
tion, of the Priory Bank, Fulham. It will
seen whether the artistic taste of Wales
developed to appreciate the glories of
the advantage of this opportunity of im-
taste and knowledge. The promoters—
new Town Hall at Ruthin, have a very
et of apartments for the proper display of
n—are very sanguine of success.

ION OF WORKS BY JEAN GOUSSON.—The
Hotel Carnavalet, formerly the residence
de Sévigne, but now destined to contain
of the City of Paris, has been completely
the scaffolding removed. The sculptures
upon have been treated with the greatest
recent excellent examples of his singularly
racy style; they consist of a group of
a, in a medallion, supporting the arms of
proprietors of the mansion, three trophies
winged figure with the foot on a mask and
a in one hand, and two lions. The repairs
are also proceeding rapidly. For the
visitors to Paris, it may be stated that the
mansion is in a street formerly called the
Sainte Catherine, but recently named after
a inhabitant of the mansion, the Rue de
de la Place Royale, and not far from the
Bastille.

ION OF FINE ARTS AT BESANCON.—The Ex-
hibition of the Friends of Art, now open
in, contains 400 works, being full 100 beyond
ry number exhibited there, and in a few days
have amounted to 17,000frs., of which about
are to the authorities of the town and the
and the rest to private individuals; the works
by the Society are to be distributed by lottery.
of several well-known Parisian artists are
of those whose works have been sold.

ASTRONOMICAL NOTES.

THE STARS.—If a brilliant star be observed
in the horizon it will be seen to present the
phenomenon of "coloured scintillation." The
has exhibited exceed in purity ever than seen
in spectrum or in the rainbow. By compar-
them the light which flashes from the ruby,
red, the sapphire, or the topaz, appears dull
and earthy. There are four or five stars which
this phenomenon with charming distinctness.
Vega, in the constellation Lyra, which
is in our latitude, is one of these. At midnight
and earlier with the approach of spring, this
steel-blue star may be seen as it skirts the
horizon, scintillating with red, blue, and
light. Arcturus twinkles yet more brilliantly
towards the north-east in our spring even-
ing. It is a rather robust scintillator, seen low
towards the north during the summer nights.
though they are the most brilliant northern
stars, with a splendour far inferior to that of
Vega. It is a very common mistake to think
that it is a star. The vivid colours exhibited by Sirius
and Vega have afforded a favourite image to the

poets. Homer compares the celestial light which
gleamed from the shield and helmet of Diomed to the
rays of "Sirius, the star of autumn," which "shines
with a peculiar brilliancy when laved by ocean's
waves." It is difficult to persuade oneself that these
ever-changing tints do not really belong to the stars.
But there is no doubt that they are caused by our own
atmosphere. In the tropics, where the air is more
uniform in texture, so to speak, the stars do not scin-
tillate unless they are quite close to the horizon.

BANANAS AT MARSA.—A remarkable meteor was
seen at the Haddiffe Observatory, Oxford, on the 8th ult.,
at 9h. 50m. When first seen by Mr. Lucas it had the
appearance of a fine white cloud about 8° in length and
1° in breadth, a little to the west of Polaris. As the
observer was pointing out its comet-like appearance to
some persons who happened to be with him in the lower
meadow of the Observatory, it appeared to start into
motion, taking a course directly west, and passing just
below α and β Ursa Majoris, and leaving a train be-
hind of a greater breadth than itself, which remained
visible through its whole course after it had disappeared
below the N.W. horizon. When it approached Leo it
deviated from the straight line which it had previously
taken, and turned somewhat towards the south, passing
near Regulus, and then bent northwards again. The
time that it was visible must have been nearly four
minutes. Its appearance at one time was very like that
of the flame and smoke combined which sometimes
issue from a railway engine, only very faint on account
of the brightness of the still remaining twilight.
There was a thick haze all the night. A crescent moon,
or mock moon, was seen on the same night at 13h. 40m.

CHEMICAL NOTES.

REFERENCE has already been made to M. Schloesing's
process of determining phosphoric acid; the following
is the manner in which the experiment is made:—A
tube of green glass is fashioned before the blowpipe, so
that there is first a part (A) of 80 centimetres in length,
which rests horizontally upon wire gauze, and where
the reaction takes place; then a part drawn out of about
15 centimetres in length, inclined downwards and back-
wards, after which the tube is continued horizontally,
and with the original diameter, for the length of 10
centimetres. Thus there is formed a kind of bulb (B),
terminated by a curved point, destined to condense
the chloride of phosphorus. At the end of the part A
a tuft of asbestos is placed, and upon this pure chloride
of potassium, decrepitated and coarsely powdered: this
chloride occupies from 12 to 15 centimetres, and is
maintained in its place by another very small tuft
of asbestos. Afterwards the porcelain boat, containing
the phosphide in fragments, with a last tuft of asbestos,
is introduced. Finally, the end of the tube is closed by
a cork carrying a little piece of tube. In the bulb B
a little water is placed, and a vertical tube containing
fragments of moistened porcelain is attached, where
phosphoric vapours not condensed in B will be con-
densed. After this arrangement comes a little washing
flask, serving to show the current of chlorine. After
having heated the chloride of potassium, and driven
every trace of moisture out of A, by a current of dry
air, the chlorine is admitted; but the porcelain boat is
not heated till the tube has been swept through with
dry air. As soon as the reaction commences, a red
liquid is condensed round the boat, and spreads over
the chloride of potassium. This chloride ought to be
heated, but only near the boat, to a sufficiently high
temperature to melt the double chloride, otherwise the
tube will become closed up. Towards the end of the
operation the heat is raised a little, without at the same
time allowing it to reach dull redness, for at this degree
of heat the phosphorus exchanges its chlorine for the
oxygen of the silica of the glass, and forms phosphates.
The perchloride of phosphorus is condensed at the end
of the tube A; by application of a gentle heat it is chased
into the bulb. The experiment is finished when the
least trace of condensation is no longer observed. A
constant but feeble excess of chlorine should be main-
tained throughout, and the operator requires to have the
chlorine easily at command; for this, the arrangement
with a couple of tubulated flasks and pinchcocks is
convenient. To determine the phosphoric acid con-
densed in the bulb with hydrochloric acid, the glass is
cut in the narrow part, the liquid transferred to a
porcelain dish, and the washings of the bulb and the
tube with porcelain united, nitric acid added, and the
whole evaporated. The hydrochloric acid, decomposed
towards the end of the operation, is eliminated without
loss. All that is now required is to estimate free phos-
phoric acid in the presence of nitric acid, and for this
purpose M. Schloesing employs nitrate of silver.—
"Chemical News."

Mining Notes.

AN IMMENSELY VALUABLE MINE.—The Eureka Mine,
now regarded as the most valuable gold mine in Nevada
county, and perhaps the most valuable in the world,
is situated a mile and a quarter north-east of the town
of Grass Valley, and was located early in 1861. It was
worked at intervals, by various parties, up to 1867, but
the most of the rock failed to pay for crushing. In the
latter year it was purchased by Messrs. Frisco, Ripert,
and Pralus, and the first crushing made by them, the
rock being taken from near the surface, yielded only
400 lbs. From 1867 to 1868 the mine was worked
to a perpendicular depth of 40 ft., during which a large
quantity of quartz was taken out, none of which paid
largely, and the greater portion failed to pay expenses.
Becoming satisfied, at length, that the mine was a good

one, they sank a vertical shaft in 1863 to the depth of
100 ft., and the mine has since been yielding handsome
returns. On the 1st of October, 1865, the mine was sold
to a company of capitalists for 400,000 dollars in gold coin.
How much it had yielded up to that time is not known,
but the owners erected hoisting works and a 25-stamp
mill, all at the cost of 20,000 dollars, besides receiving
large dividends from the profits. The mine has been
producing, under the present management, at the rate
of about 40,000 dollars a month. In the first year, ending
September 30, 1865, the gross product was 531,431 dollars,
and for the eleven months ending August 31, 1867,
538,139 dollars, making a total of 1,119,570 dollars in twenty-
three months. Nearly a thousand tons of rock have
been taken from the mine every month and reduced at
the mill, the average yield being not far from 500 dollars a
ton; and the monthly expenses, including repairs to
machinery and permanent improvements, have averaged
about 16,000 dollars. The regular monthly dividends for over
a year past have amounted to over 30,000 dollars, and one
or two extra dividends have been declared in addition.
The Eureka Mine is opened by an incline shaft, 5 ft. by
20 ft., which is designed to explore the vein to a great
depth, and is now down nearly 600 ft. Levels have
been run from the shaft at distances of 100 ft. apart, and
for 700 ft. along the lode. At 60 ft. from the surface the
quartz paid 16 dollars a ton, and increased to 28 dollars at
100 ft. Between the 100 ft. and 200 ft. levels the average
yield was 57 dollars a ton, and below that the average has
been 50 dollars. The vein runs nearly east and west, dip-
ping south at an angle of about 78°, and over the whole
extent of some 700 ft. which has been worked, the
average width is 3 ft. At the fourth level the mine is
said to show still further improvement, with an increase
in the yield of ore, though it has been worked but little
below the third level. The value of the mine, with the
mill, hoisting-works, and other property connected
therewith, is now rated at about 1,000,000 dollars. William
Watt, a successful quartz-miner, and one of the owners
of the Eureka, is the superintendent.

PHOTOGRAPHIC NOTES.

COMPETITION FOR PRESENTATION PRINT.—With a view
to secure the greatest novelty and excellence in a pre-
sentation print for distribution amongst their members,
the Committee of the North London Photographic
Association have resolved to advertise for suitable
specimens. From the excellence of the presentation
prints this society has hitherto distributed, a con-
siderable amount of prestige will attach to the selection
made in a case of competition. We hope that many
fine examples of the art will be submitted to the com-
mittee.

BIOGRAPHICAL PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUMS.—The "Sta-
tioner" says:—"The Photographic album-makers may
perhaps take a hint from a novelty about to be intro-
duced to the American trade. The article referred to is
entitled the 'Biographic and Photographic Family
Record, arranged for recording in detail the personal
incidents of each member of the family.' The first page
contains the record of the names, birth, marriage, &c.,
of both husband and wife, and spaces for the photo-
graphs of each, to be inserted at several different ages;
also space for recording the name, date, place of birth,
and death of the parents and grandparents of each,
including three generations, and for other incidents in
the life of each. The remainder of the volume is ap-
propriated to the records of the descendants of the first-
named parties, an entire page being devoted to each,
containing the name, date, and place of birth, with space
for five photographs at different ages; also for the
character and period of whatever diseases they may
have had, and the height and weight at different ages,
with the schools at which they were educated, occupa-
tions, and other events of their lives. An additional
blank page for each child enables the parents to record
whatever other incidents may seem desirable to be
remembered. Now that the album trade is beginning
to wane, a new business might be created in an article
such as is above referred to."

USEFUL NOTES.

HOW TO KEEP HOUSES COOL IN HOT WEATHER.—Mr.
John Attfield, Professor of Practical Chemistry to the
Pharmaceutical Society, contributes the following season-
able directions to the "Times":—"In these hot days a cool
apartment is a real luxury, a luxury to be had far oftener
than most people suppose possible. The secret consists,
not in letting in cool air, for naturally all do that when-
ever they have the chance, but in keeping out hot air. If
the air outside a room or house be cooler than the air in-
side, let it in by all means; but if it be hotter carefully
keep it out. A staircase-window left open during the
night will often cool the passages of a house, and the
rooms, too, if their doors be not shut; but it must be
closed at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, or, if on
the sunny side, at four or five o'clock, and the blind drawn
down. The mistake people generally make is to throw
open their windows at all hours of the day, no matter
whether the atmosphere outside be cool or scorching.
"Let us have some air," they say, and in comes the treas-
urous breeze—for even hot air is pleasant while it is
gently blowing, taking away perspiration, and thereby
cooling the skin; but the apartment is made warmer, in-
stead of cooler, and as soon as they move out of the
draught they find their room to be more uncomfortable
than before. Let in cool air, keep out hot; that is the
only formula to insure the minimum of discomfort. Sit-
ting rooms may generally be kept cool during the whole
day if the doors be only opened for ingress and egress, and
the windows be kept closed and shielded from direct sun-

Another puzzle, in regards to meteors that inexplicably deviate from the norm, can be found on page 146 of the December, 1872, issue of the magazine Nature, which mentioned a witness of an unusual event near the village of Slough, England. A Sir J.C. Cowell submitted a sketch and a brief written note on a "curious fireball" . Allegedly, Sir Cowell saw a fiery object zoomed down out of the sky and explode, producing a flash of light 12 feet in diameter accompanied by a denotation like that made by a heavy cannon. What Sir Cowell believed curious about this "meteor" was the fact that it exploded the very last instant before reaching the surface of the ground, "like a well-timed shell", as the Englishman put it.⁴

The mystery of meteors violating the accepted rules of falling gained in frequency toward the end of the 1800s. Correspondence to the Scientific American, July 22, 1882, for example, called attention to a "supposed meteor" that drifted nonchalantly across the sky:

"On the evening of the 6th, while engaged in 'sweeping' the vicinity of Ursa Minor for double stars, my attention was drawn to a bright object about the size of a star of the second magnitude moving slowly from west to east. It passed within a degree of Polaris and continued steadily on its course eastward, disappearing from view in the neighborhood of Capricornus. In color this object, a meteor doubtless, was a deep red, without scintillations or train of any kind, and its slow movement was in marked contrast with the rapid flashing of the common 'shooting star'. It was visible to me fully three-fourths of a minute, varying but slightly in brightness during that time. In the closeness of my attention to its movement I neglected to note the time of its appearance, but judge it to have been near half past ten.

Perhaps there were others of your readers who

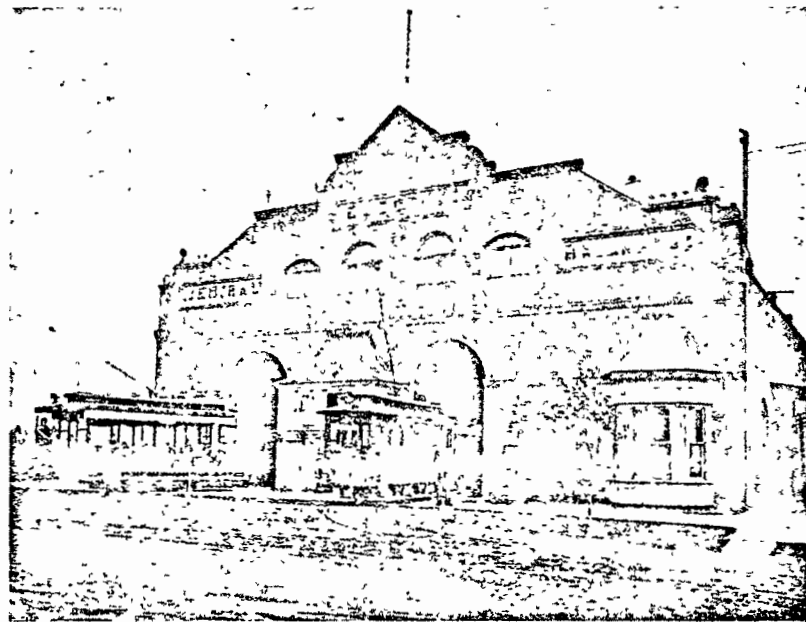
observed the phenomenon, and can add more specifically to my testimony." 5

N.S.Drayton
Jersey City Heights
July 8, 1882

In a way Mr. Drayton's hopes were fulfilled One wonders if he read the newspapers and noticed the sensation that erupted across the continent in the autumn of 1896

Chapter Two

The Amazing Airship of 1896



CENTRAL ELECTRIC RAILWAY.—CAR-HOUSE.

On September 20, 1896, an astronomer named Swift noticed a point of light the magnitude of Venus out over the Pacific Ocean approximately one degree from the setting sun as twilight fell over San Francisco. The following afternoon professor Perrine, working at the Lick Observatory atop the 4,000 foot high Mt. Hamilton due east of San Jose, California, received a telegram from Swift announcing the possible discovery of a new comet. At dusk, on the 21st, professor Perrine mounted a Herschel-prism on a 12-inch telescope and scanned the sky in every direction in the neighborhood of the solar disc as it slowly sunk below the horizon. However, the "comet" had disappeared.

About the first week of November, 1896, as dusk was descending on San Francisco, His Honor, Mayor Sutro, drove up in his carriage to his mansion west of the city, overlooking the Pacific. Members of his household staff rushed out to meet him with a remarkable story. It seems a "strange object" had hovered

in the air just offshore over seal rocks. The darkness had masked the features of the unknown aerial thing but a powerful light had been discernible on the rear portion* as it finally flew away toward the east, passing overhead at an estimated 500-foot altitude. The Mayor noticed that his servants were "full of wonderment" at the sight. He gave the episode no more thought for two weeks. 2.

On Tuesday, November 17, 1896, Charles Lusk, cashier of the Central Electric Street Railway Company at Sacramento, California, stepped outside for some fresh air at his place of residence at 24th and "O" Streets. The weather had been worse than usual that winter and the black evening skies troubled with intermittent rain drew his attention. Suddenly there appeared over the rooftops a bright light sailing on a westward course at a 1,000-foot altitude. The following day, Mr. Lusk reported the sight to the fellows at the Car Barn, where, to his surprise, the "light" was already the main topic of discussion that morning. There was a faint shape visible behind the light and the men agreed the thing could only be a powered balloon of some sort. 3.4. Others in the neighborhood had apparently witnessed the same passage of the mystery light as the city's two newspapers carried an account of ^{the phenomenon} it. George Scott, assistant to Secretary of State Brown, had been chatting with a trio of acquaintances on the steps of the State Capitol building when the floating sky light caught his eye. He ^{had} called attention to the remarkable sight, but one of his friends tried to brush it off as due to an illumination on some distant hillside. Privileged to have a key to the Capitol building, Scott ^{had} led the others to the observation deck at the very top of the Capitol dome. From their excellent vantage point the group discerned ^{adorned} the dim outline of a dark body with three lights sweeping through the air. 5.

A few of the townsfolk remembered a boast of some New York inventor a few days previous in the newspapers about his intentions to set sail in a powered balloon for California, and on the strength of that rumors began to grow fast. An Associated Press story from New York, dated November 17th, had told of a man →

#The San Francisco Examiner later learned that these servants had also discerned a row of lights along the side of the object.

named Leon who was constructing an aircraft in Hoboken which allegedly could carry him across the continent. So some of the carmen ^{at the streetcar carbarn} jocularly volunteered to the press that they heard crewmen aboard the "balloon" shouting orders to the helmsman to avoid church steeples. One fellow who used to work for the street railroad, R. L. Lowry, outdid his former buddies with this description:

I was standing near the Sacramento brewery when my attention was directed skyward by hearing a voice up there call out: 'Throw her up higher; she'll hit the steeple', evidently mistaking the tower on the brewery for a church steeple. Then I saw the light. It seemed like a light within a globular glass covering that magnified it. Above the light I saw two men seated as though on bicycle frames and working with a bicycle movement. I heard one of them say: 'We will get to San Francisco about half-past 12', but not mentioning whether midnight or afternoon. Above these two men, who seemed to be working their passage, was a kind of mezzanine box capable of holding two or more people, but I saw no others. Above this was a cigar-shaped body of some length. There were wheels at the side like the side wheels on Fulton's old steamboat. 6.

J. H. Vogel, a bartender, was standing just down the street from the carbarn crowd and ^{he} told a different story: "I saw the light and above it a dark body dimly outlined in the form of an egg, with the small end forward. I heard a muffled buzzing of machinery." 7. That was all Mr. Vogel would claim.

The carbarn foreman, Mr. Snider, didn't engage in the elaborations of the other employees when approached by a reporter from the Sacramento Bee. Mr. Snider merely affirmed that a white light, neither a star nor a meteor, had been seen by him and his men about 7 o'clock on the night of the 17th. 8.

Still, a few stories persisted that "voices" had been heard, though some ^{the} likened sounds heard to a sweet chorus of singers that seem to have the artificial

quality like that produced by a phonograph. Many were unable to make out any distinct words ^{at all}, blaming such difficulty on the intermittent intensity of volume due probably to wind currents in the air. Not everyone would volunteer even a conservative opinion. E. Caverly was approached by a reporter from the San Francisco Call, but stayed mum on what he saw, giving the impression he had witnessed something uncanny. 9.

Those residents that lived in Oak Park, a Sacramento suburb, told newspapers that something had circled high in the sky over that place the day before leaving a smoke trail, and now they were wondering if there could be a connection with the sky light mystery. 10.

The Sacramento Record-Union published a very sketchy item on page four in contrast to the Bee's front page treatment. Not sure what the "light" was, the Record-Union called the light a "wandering apparition" and titled its article: "What Was It?" 11.

A reporter for the San Francisco Call telegraphed word of the sky light to his paper which printed an account on the 18th, telling San Franciscans that a "light" had approached Sacramento at about 1,000 feet altitude and then rose to about double that height as it came in from a northeasterly direction. When it arrived at the city limits, the article continued, it turned to the south, and bore southwest toward San Francisco. In the process the light had floated over the streetcar company barn which caused the ^{startled} employees of that place to emerge en masse. The story added that the passage of the mysterious visitant took thirty minutes, furthermore a postal telegraph lineman had spotted a similar phenomenon earlier, near Suisun, at 9 o'clock Sunday evening. 12. The Call told its readers that the carmen had glimpsed a faint shape that resembled a balloon, so there was a general conclusion in Sacramento that it could only be some kind of powered balloon-airship since it moved into the teeth of a heavy

wind. 13.

On the 19th, the Sacramento Bee ran more on the Tuesday episode on its front page which asked: "Airship or What?", calling it a "queer phenomenon". The light was ^{now} the talk of the town with the opinion split between a meteor and a balloon. The description given by a couple of persons of voices and an elliptical, propeller-driven, Airship were regarded by the majority of Sacramento citizens as the embellishments of hoaxers. General agreement ^{though} centered around the arc-lamp type light. Nonetheless, unsubstantiated rumors were circulated that a balloon contrivance was tented ^{somewhere} on the outskirts of the city. ¹⁴ The Sacramento Union, on the 19th, a critic of the local uproar, painted the mood of the populace as 99% skeptical. ^{Now} the center of attention, five of the electric railway motormen, T. P. DeLong, D. Curl, F. E. Briggs, M. F. Shelly, and the ex-employee, R. L. Lowry, found their names in the Union along with details on the "voices" and the alledged specifications of the airship. 15.

As the days passed and the "unknown New York inventors" did not land, the motormen became the object of ridicule with every fare boarding the electric railcars making flippanant remarks about when the next Airship was due. It was not long before the number of wisecracks approached intolerable levels. ^{By} November 20th ^{things began to quiet down} ~~went by quietly~~. The Sacramento Union ran a comic fictional piece of a group of hillbilly types engaged in a country store, cracker-barrel, wild tale contest on the "Airship", complete with humorous accents. —————> |
|< The Union noted that: "Hundreds agree on the light rising, falling, and moving slowly, but only two or three hold that they saw the machine and only one (R. L. Lowry) gives any rational description of it." 16.

The San Francisco Chronicle mentioned nothing until the 19th when they carried a small story on page five titled: "Strange Tale of a Flying Machine", "Romance from Sacramento", "Said to Have Been Seen by Many Citizens", "It Looks Like a

Fake of Large Size", "Mysterious Light Seen at the Capitol City". The San Francisco Chronicle preferred to see more of a hoax than an Airship, diagnosing the Airship sightings as the affliction of the staggers, wondering in print why the marvelous flying machine had neglected to pay its respects to San Francisco. The Chronicle suggested that the Bible-pounders around town may be right when they sermonized loudly that the citizens of the bay Babylon were Hell bound and hardly the place any decent soul would venture near. All day, the Chronicle went on, shoppers and businessmen "glanced furtively" upward expecting to see a black oval and passing off such unusual interest in the sky as concern for the weather. A reporter down at Police Headquarters had told the editor's desk to relate the fact that the local enforcers of the law characterized the sky light as a fake, but that the night squads planned to engage in some amateur astronomy. Meanwhile, said the Chronicle, a peddler had spent a profitable day selling cheap telescopes on Market Street carrying a sandwich board advertising: "Watch Out for Great New York Airship". The Chronicle ^{even} sought the advice of professor George Davidson who saw the nonsense as the work of the imaginations of the "wild-eyed", ^{the} holding that ^{the} reported helter-skelter arrangement of the rumored propellers on the "Airship", and ^{the claim} that people on the ground could hear clearly conversation of the "Airship's" crew 1000 feet in the air, was the product of a "freemasonry of liars". He could expect, he snorted, that at least a "thousand fools" would be victims of eyestrain having spent their evenings searching the heavens. Weather observer Hammon shared the professor's conclusions, annexing it with his own comment that only a true heavier-than-air craft could perform as the ^{reported} Sacramento "balloon". 17.

Elsewhere editors shared the disbelief of Dr. Davidson.

The Stockton Daily Independent finally took notice of the ruckus with an editorial jibe at the imaginations of its northern neighbors, ^{proposing} ~~saying~~ that they

perhaps

were still under the influence of the "airy flights" of the recent Presidential campaign. 18.

A letter to the editor was published in the Sacramento Bee which chose to use the words: "A Car Barn Conspiracy" to title a complaint of the sky light tomfoolery. And the Bee's editor began to be concerned about reputation of Sacramento. 19.

On the 20th, the Chronicle's airship enthusiasm had shrunk to the size of a small article on page 13 titled: "More of a Hoax than an Airship". Along with the paper's waning interest someone on the staff made a careless error by referring to the Sacramento mystery object as a "black oval speck with outstretched wings and mysterious wheels". Not once did any Sacramento witness ever mention wings. 20. And as for the mysterious wheels, that can be traced to the sole imaginative mind of R. L. Lowry. However, one must keep in mind the state of technology of the late 1890s. It was very difficult for the average Victorian to imagine a possible flying machine moving through the air without the aid of flapping wings or machinery powering fans of some sort.

What had happened to the "Airship"?

No one could offer any information on that score, ^{as} news value of the "hoax" was all but dead and public opinion was more or less convinced that the "Airship" was being kept aloft with the hot air of liars. Besides, one might be at a loss to explain the lull with so many eager observers on station.

South of Sacramento at a small town named Tagus, about 10 miles west of Visalia, California, there occurred an incident that seemed unassociated with "Airship" stories up north. It seems that about 2:00 in the afternoon of November 20th, Mr. S. H. Rison claims to have seen what he believed to be neither an airship nor a balloon:

(it was)...more like a canvas sheet spread out floating in a northeasterly direction at about an altitude of two thousand feet. He says he was pumping some water and a tramp came up and asked him for a drink. While drinking the water he saw the object floating in the air and called Mr. Rison's attention to it.

They watched until it was out of sight and could see nothing but the canvas.* Mr. Rison had not heard nor read of the Airship at Sacramento.† 21.

On Saturday, the 21st, the Chronicle ventured to ask if the strange light over Sacramento might have been Diogene's ghost, fruitlessly searching the town with his lantern - a jest with unflattering overtones for the citizens there. 22.

Victorian Sundays were relaxed affairs and ^{on} the Sabbath of November 22, 1896, ~~there was~~ ^{found} little in the afternoon newspaper editions, ^{even} about flying balloons and such. The Sacramento Record-Union tried to put the finishing touches to the Airship debate by suggesting Ignis Fatuus (swamp gas) and other jejune logic. 23.

At 5:30 of the churchday afternoon, the sky was obscured with a dark, angry ceiling of clouds, resulting in a premature twilight, when "it" came out of the northwest exhibiting a small searchlight flashing out in sharp relief against the solid, low hanging overcast. "It" evidently was bent on a repeat of Tuesday's run, only this time it was not going to skirt the city out where the Car Barn was located, ^{instead it} but, headed directly for downtown!

Mr. Isaac Gough, who happened to look up while walking near Second and "K" Streets, claims to have been the first to see the incoming marvel. After a moment's hesitation to convince himself he was not seeing things, he dashed down the street shouting the alarm in all the stores, saloons, and hotels. People ^{quickly} spilled out into the cool evening air to see the amazing aerial prodigy with their own eyes. As the word spread like wildfire, the much abused motor-men raced their trolleys across town yelling and clanging their car bells with

*Apparently something else besides the "canvas" was seen, but unfortunately Mr. Rison did not elaborate.

† See note at the end of this chapter

all the zeal they could muster, now that the opportunity to salvage their reputations unexpectedly presented itself.

Luckily, the enigma was in low gear and Jacob Zemansky, a cigar store proprietor, had a small telescope which he brought to bear. He gave the crowd around him a running account of a dark mass rising and falling to which the bright light seemed to be attached. The staff of the "we'll-believe-it-when-we-see-it" Record-Union, hearing the uproar outside, charged through the front door of their office bugged.

Though the dark sky did not permit them to distinguish details they returned to their desks impressed by the large, bright, evidently electric light carried along by the mystery ship. 24. 25. 26.

Edward Carrgher, owner of the Saddle Rock Restaurant, had a pair of field glasses which also disclosed a large, dark body supporting the light. Dr. Amiel Morris of Woodland, California, was called outside by Carrgher who pointed out what the doctor believed to be a ball of fire sailing along about 600 feet in the air. 27.

The Sacramento representative of the San Francisco Chronicle, Colvin Brown, *of the airship tales,* a leading debunker, was horrified at what was happening. During the twenty minute passage the chagrined journalist grabbed an almanac and attempted to convince a nearby knot of people at Seventh and "K" Streets that the planet Venus must have slipped its orbit and was now coursing overhead. Making no impression on the excited observers, the never-say-die newspaperman went off in search of Sergeant Barwick, the head of the weather bureau, *have him* to explain the thing as a meteor. 28.

The Contra Costa Gazette, which was published weekly at Martinez, California, *later* managed to obtain complete information for its November 28th issue. The "light", it seems, appeared in the northwest and headed slowly southwest. As *the light* ~~it~~ reached the southern edge of Sacramento, the enigmatic visitor turned west and then south, after which it was absent for a period of time. Later the pheno-

menon made another appearance out of the west, ^{finally} ~~only~~ to leave the skies over Sacramento on a northwest heading. The Gazette allowed that whatever it was, it permitted everyone an extended look. 29.

Among the groups of witnesses that evening, one cluster was composed of State officials and lawyers of repute which fancied themselves above the hysteria of the profanum vulgus and thus were among the most astonished. The Governor's executive secretary took in the sight with amazement, appraising the flicking mystery as definitely not a star (the sky was overcast, anyway) or some breed of meteor, but undeniably an arc light. The aerial riddle moved with such quickness, he swore, that he had to keep shifting his position as the downtown buildings intervened. Dignified reticence kept him from endorsing the "Airship" theory, ^{conceded} although he ~~agreed~~ that the traveling light was neither a phony nor a mistaken celestial body.

District Attorney Frank D. Ryan stared at the spectacular sight and muttered aloud:

And there will be strange sights seen in the heavens. Wars and rumors of wars. I shall certainly attend church tomorrow, for this may be the advent of the millennium.

And then the feeling that, ^{perhaps} ~~maybe~~ he was becoming too serious, Ryan forced a laugh and turned to those around him and spoke in a lighter tone:

That thing is too deep for me. I don't understand it. It might be that aerial travel has been accomplished. It seems as strange and improbable as were the inventions of the telephone, phonograph and the electric power applied to streetcars. 30.

The regional military Signal Corps Commander, also an onlooker, subscribed

to the anti-hoax theory and suddenly remembered an inquiry two gentlemen had made at his office around 4 o'clock only that afternoon. A Mr. Haines and a Mr. Fleetheart both said they had the good fortune to have been gazing upward when an object crossed high overhead in the azure and vanished in the northwest. The Signal Corps lieutenant assured the two men the dark, misty thing could only have been a cloud, but the miffed duo insisted that the rapidity of its passage and the then clear sky precluded a prank of the weather. Now, an hour and a half later, a strange flying body had issued from the same compass reading, so the officer informed the press that the public could well believe a real air vessel was of operational status. 31.

It will be remembered that our mystery light had disappeared to the south of Sacramento for a short spell. The Livermore Herald fills in an interesting gap here. The Herald quotes two gentlemen who said they had a fantastic encounter near Knights Ferry in Stanislaus County (southeast of Sacramento) the evening of the 22nd. While their buggy rattled across a bridge, something "like a ball of fire" caught their eye about a furlong ahead. The "fireball" rose slowly and then flew low for 100 yards before beginning a shallow climb. The strange thing began its takeoff in the direction of the perplexed witnesses, yet made a half circle maneuver to keep its distance. At two hundred yards the men discerned a couple of lights on the "nose" at right angles to the body and another on the rear as it swung by. The two watched openmouthed as the thing gathered speed and sped off. In relating their story to the editor of the Herald the gentlemen discounted the meteor possibility, remarking that the thing skimmed the surface of the ground. Nor did they want to give credence to the popular balloon rumors. However, ^{they asked,} if not an Airship, then what could it have been? They left the editor with statements that the aerial mystery must be shorn of the burlesque antics of irresponsible newspapermen, for they could vouch for the

authenticity of the phenomenon. That is still quite a whopper to tell on the Sabbath; however, in this case a fib was unlikely. The witnesses were two prominent Methodist ministers, Rev. H. Copeland, and Rev. John Kirby. 32.

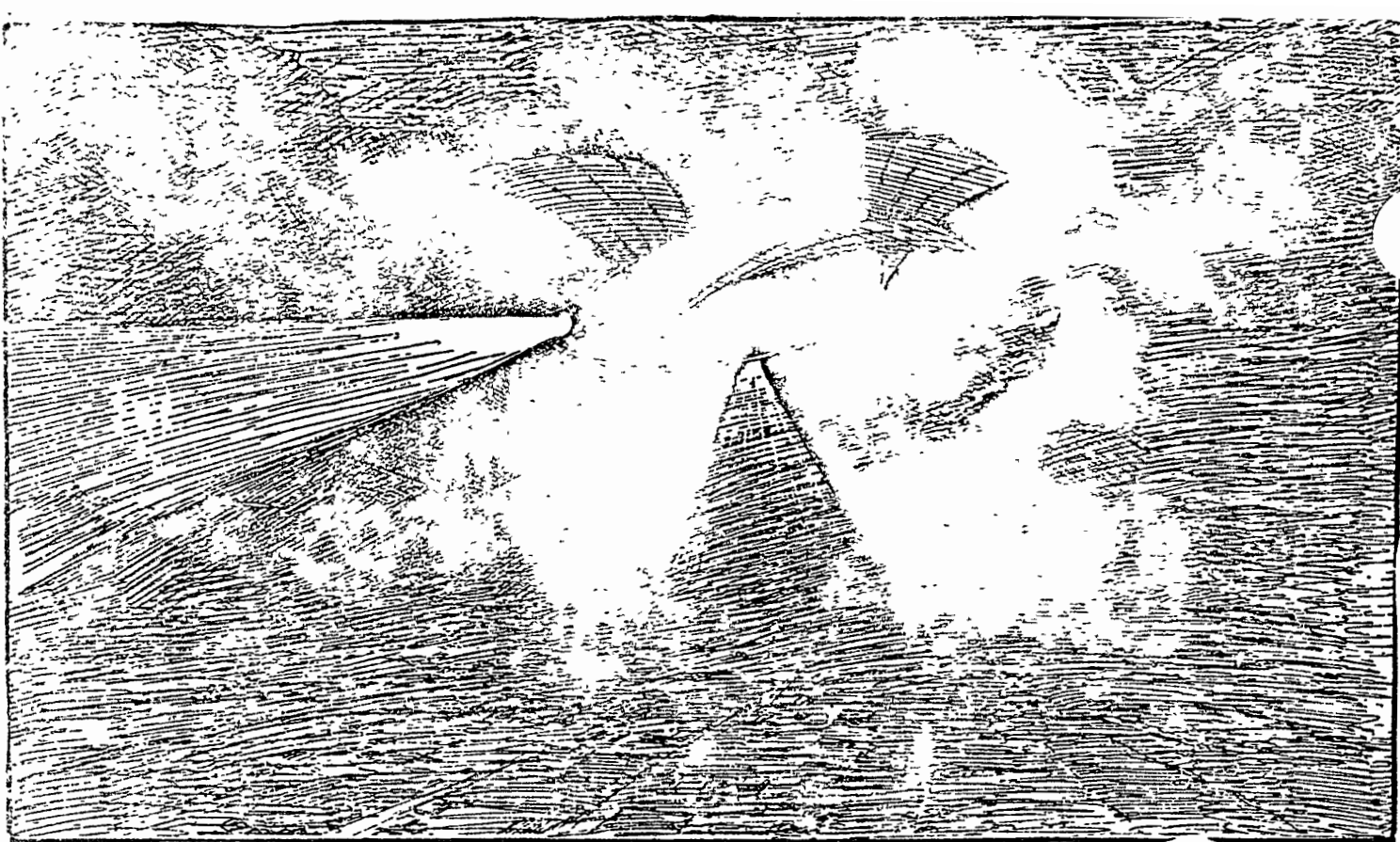
One is also inclined to believe these men of the cloth because the description correlates with the one given by Nick White, editor of the Record-Union:

"...(I) at one time saw several smaller lights in addition to the larger light. When the direction(of the Airship) changed, but one of the lights was visible." 33.

Back in Sacramento on the 22nd, convinced ^{and excited} crowds ^{of people} chattered in homes and hotel lobbies long into the night about the new wonder of science they had ^{just} seen with their own eyes. The saloons were doing a roaring business as endless toasts were offered to the unknown inventor that had finally mastered the age-old dream of air travel. The Wednesday edition of the Call, that had carried speculation and told of the Hoboken inventor on the possible workings of Airships ^{and} was hunted down all over town by non-subscribers and was not to be had, as the Call editors proudly related, for "love or money". ^{The particular} That issue was passed around among friends but jealously guarded as to ownership. Even Walter Mallory, the deputy sheriff, now stepped forward to be formally listed as an original Tuesday night witness of the visitant's passage. Mr. Mallory told everyone he had just left the jail and was walking near Kearny and Broadway on Tuesday night when he happened to notice ^{the} ~~an~~ unusual sight:

It was a strong white light, seemingly moving. I thought at first it was a balloon attached, but on a closer observation I thought I recognized a dark body immediately over the light, somewhat of a different shape than a balloon. The more I observed it the more puzzled I became as to what it was. 34.

The papers the next day proclaimed that there could be no doubt as to the Airship's reality, describing how suddenly and completely skepticism had evapor-



The Great Airship That Is Startling the People of Many Cities. Drawn From Descriptions of the Inventor's Attorney, George D. Collins.



ATTORNEY GEORGE D. COLLINS, Who Knows the Inventor of the Great Airship.

Illustrations taken from the pages of the San Francisco Examiner printed during the 1896 airship excitement.

ated by the display of the previous evening.

The "light" had not finished its nocturnal wanderings, for having left the Sacramento sky at approximately six o'clock, ~~at~~ 150 miles to the southwest, a brilliant shaft of light was seen over San Leandro, on the East Bay, south of Oakland, California. This "mysterious bark", as the Oakland Tribune termed it, rose and fell in an undulating fashion and was seen by Selby Yost, a motorman of the Alameda electric railway line(those Car Barn types again), as well as passengers: C. H. Ellis, a Miss Wilson and an unnamed friend. An unidentified youth ~~who~~ had first spotted the "bark" and dashed to the nearest "expert" on the phenomenon -- the local streetcar operator. 35.

← A large dark shape was seen emitting a stream of light from its forward part, ^{it} floated rapidly toward the northwest and then turned in the direction of Hayward where it vanished in the darkness. Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Rodda, strolling the street that evening, backed up the witnesses on the Alameda car, saying they discerned a light in the sky about the same time. 36.

The light was ^{also} supposed to have hovered over Saint Mary's College in Oakland which had reporters knocking on the door of its director, Brother Walter. He said:

I gave no special thought to the light that was seen, because there was nothing to attract my attention to it until I heard some of the people about the college discussing the airship story. I found, upon talking to several students and members of the faculty, that none who observed the illumination gave any thought to it except to surmise it was a meteor, although it moved rather slowly for that. Nothing, I learned, was visible except the light, and that was of such a character as to cause no special comment. 37.

One would believe the unknown aerial navigator had made a direct transit from Sacramento to San Leandro, yet accounts have the aerial visitor leaving

the Capitol city on a northwest bearing. Luckily, a telegraphic message was received by the Sacramento Record-Union office reporting ^{that} the Airship ~~flying~~ ^{had flown} near Folsom, 20 miles west, ^{the} site of the new hydroelectric plant, shortly after six, moving along on a southern heading before pivoting to a southwestern track, taking it into a bank of heavy clouds. 38.

At 11 o'clock, Frank Everette, living in Santa Clara, south of Hayward, glimpsed the light bound for an unknown destination in the southeast. 39.

The foregoing times and direction do form a rough sequential scheme for the night of the 22nd and make it appear unlikely all of the witnesses had been inspired by telegraphic accounts, which lends credence to the actual physical character of the phenomenon.

Now that thousands had viewed the Airship over Sacramento, the suspense became unbearable ~~while~~ waiting for the genius responsible to land his craft and exhibit the machine for public inspection. ^{Earlier in} ~~the~~ the month of November, a Bay Area attorney had received assurances from an inventor, who wished to remain anonymous, that the problems of air travel had ^{indeed just} been solved. George D. Collins, who had a law practice in San Francisco, let it leak out that a mysterious client of his evidently had been the one cruising among the clouds over the Capitol. Collins had been impressed with the claims of the unnamed improviser ^{who said} that \$100,000 and five years had gone into perfecting a 150-foot machine equipped with canvas wings. Furthermore, this San Francisco member of the Bar declared he had been "favored with a demonstration at a secret location". Up to the day of the 21st such claims received ^{an indifferent} ~~a~~ reception, but the sensation at Sacramento on the 22nd caused the overrunning of Collins' home and office by reporters and ^{just plain} snoops pressing him for details. Backed into a corner, Collins said the aerial nocturnal wonder was hidden in a Berkeley barn during the daylight hours, and that a mysterious Dr. Benjamin of Ellis Street had something to do with the construction of the vehicle. 40. That temporarily got everyone off Collins' back and

rushed to
 self-appointed detectives, ~~searched~~ Ellis Street and Berkeley to run down a lead.
 The case began to take on the flavor of a Victorian dime novel.

The November 23rd edition of the Call carried a front page drawing of the "Airship" -- a black, stubby, torpedo garnished with the large fabric wings described by Attorney Collins. Even a tale by a San Rafael hunter was entertained concerning the alleged discovery by him of an Airship machine shop on Bolinas Ridge some months earlier. The Call *actually began to* believed it was closing in on the story of the century. 42.

The San Francisco Examiner had the young William Randolph Hearst as Editor-in-Chief, a coming name in sensational journalism, but ~~he~~ *Hearst* had left the West Coast *some months before* and was then in New York at the helm of the Journal-American, a failing daily he had recently *purchased* ~~bought~~ and was now rebuilding in a fierce circulation battle with the other metropolitan papers. Even though well occupied with the Journal-American, Hearst kept close control over the Examiner's editorial policies, constantly urging more pictures and bigger type. One would have expected the Examiner to have played up the sensational aspects; yet, the comment in its columns on the *California* mystery light was of a lighthearted nature mixed with considerable straightforward news reporting. In fact, the Examiner didn't even mention the airship business until November 23rd. The Examiner even corrected the facts on the ~~recent~~ *recent* Oakland *airship sightings* ~~case~~ as reported in the Call. In a story under the peculiar multi-headings common to the newspapers of the time: "Queer Things You See When", "A Mysterious Wanderer of the Skies Perplexes People", "The Sea Serpent Has Drawn in His Horns and His Nose is Out of Joint", the Examiner quoted Superintendent Tiffany of the Piedmont electric road on the aerial "bark". Tiffany said:

I made a thorough investigation today of the story told by some of our men of an alleged airship seen floating over Saint Mary's College ...so far as I could learn among our men, none of them saw

anything but a light. I had a long talk with Selby Yost and he admitted that he saw nothing but a moving light in the air. The airship proposition was, I found, not considered for a moment. 43.

then went to work and

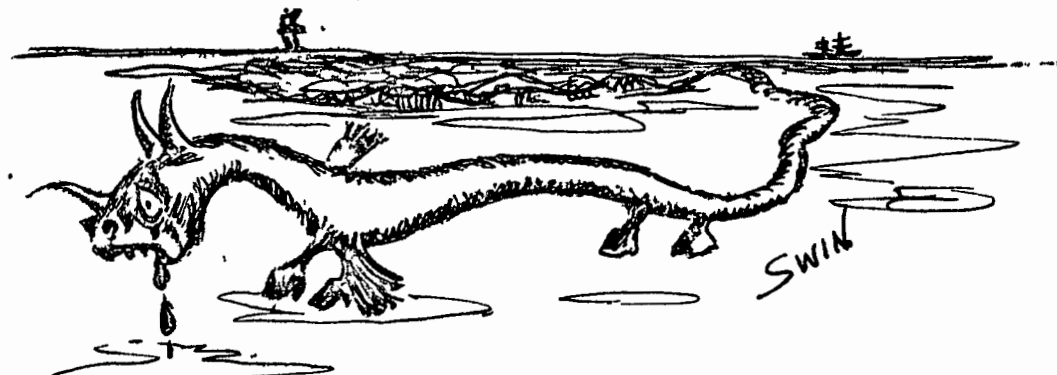
The talented Examiner cartoonist, James Swinnerton, ^{*subject*} had a field day with the airship ^{*at*} the expense of true believers.

The Call, involved in a circulation struggle with the Hearst ^{*paper*} ~~upstart~~, expressed a conviction that the Examiner's negative outlook was ^{*simply*} due to the fact that they had been scooped by their crosstown rival.

The November 24th issue of the Call carried charges by attorney Collins that: "...a Chronicle reporter had misrepresented him (claiming) he had actually seen the airship and was processing a patent for it." Furthermore that: "...the Examiner sent a man to me today who said they had treated the whole affair as a huge joke, but found that the people were looking at it in a serious manner and they were ready to give the news received, regardless of how improbable it might look. He asked me to give a true account of the matter as far as I knew anything, but when I denied having seen the machine work or having ridden in it he laughed and said I was hedging." 44.

Similarly, Collins snapped to a reporter from the San Francisco Bulletin: "Oh, now, what are the papers saying?" "Why, my airship grows larger and larger. It is expanding indefinitely. The first day I was its sponsor, today I am hedging it on behalf of its sponsor. Oh, I get lots of funny letters and see lots of funny people and I think they are likely to get worse. One man wants space for a peanut stand on the airship; another a barber shop." 45.

Newspapers with Collins' remarks hadn't been on the street more than a few hours when something was spotted hovering high over Sixth and Broadway Streets in Oakland. Around 7:00 that evening the sidewalks began to fill with crowds gawking



VANQUISHED, THE SEA-SERPENT PREPARES TO DIE OF GRIEF



ONE MAN WHO SAW IT



THE AIRSHIP BUG

Copies of some of the Swinnerton cartoons.

P. 24-A

INVENTED THE AIRSHIP

upward. The light would hang motionless and then move around in different directions. Witnesses said it performed "evolutions" and blinked on and off. Reporters noted the more prominent persons among them for their readers: Colonel Garrity; George Hatton, the managing editor of the Tribune; city electrician Carleton; and Melvin Holmes, ex-deputy Superintendent of Streets. The aerial rover, as the Call termed it, seemed to move to a position over San Francisco and then return to the dark night sky over Oakland where it disappeared for awhile. 46.

Three men just south of Oakland, at that time, saw a powerful light southeast of them moving toward the bay. One of the men, Mr. Hooson, made the observation that: "One peculiar feature of the light was the way it changed from time to time. It appears as if the operator of a searchlight was placing red and blue glass before the light occasionally so as to make the light more noticeable...no star has ever done that in the past and I am not ready to believe one is doing any such capers at present." 47.

The Call quoted Deputy Constable Robinson's estimate that some 5,000 people were watching when the mystery light reappeared over East Oakland:

It wheeled around over Alameda and then seemed to cross over San Leandro toward Piedmont. By the time it was headed for Piedmont the excitement was intense. Proprietors and clerks came to the shops doors, bartenders left their pumps, ladies stopped walking and directed their attention heavenward. Cable and electric cars slacked up so that passengers might peep at the wondrous light. At the Golindo Hotel the windows were thrown open and guests appeared with all manner of spyglasses and looked at the traveling light. Sometimes they declared that there were several smaller lights visible and that they could see a dark object, but it was too high in the air for any of them to detect the nature of its wings or tail, if it had any. 48.

Sometime before midnight the light moved out of sight in a northeastern direction.

A cause for confusion was the phantom's habit of popping up again and again all around the state.

Steering southwesterly at 10 o'clock on the evening of the 23rd, the "light" dropped in on Stockton, California. The Stockton Daily Independent carried accounts of citizens seeing a bright, swift light moving through the rainy, black-curtained sky. ^{49.} From the suburb of Lathrop a Mr. Saguinette telegraphed that the light was growing rapidly brighter as it approached out of the dark sky in the north, exclaiming he would try to signal the Airship to land. ^{50.} A nightwatchman in the area ^{later} gave testimony that a cigar-shaped silhouette with smoke issuing from both ends dipped low near the building he was patrolling, announcing its arrival with two loud booms. Because the guard here is speaking about the grounds of the Lathrop State Insane Asylum, it took a bit of nerve ^{for him} to tell the tale to the Independent the next morning. The Independent was presented with another engrossing yarn when a steamboat captain turned up to demand the local Justice of the Peace prepare an affidavit dealing with a phenomenon that had disturbed his sleep the previous night (the 24th). The Captain had the document read, that he had been enjoying the slumber of the just, when about midnight his Chinese cook busted into his cabin yelling excited Canton gibberish. The cook grabbed his arm and dragged him out on deck to see something. There in the night sky was a flying cigar-shaped thing, accompanied by dull thuds, ~~was~~ high-tailing it along surrounded by a "shifting" light. The Chinaman was terrified at the sight and jumped ship at the very next mudbank. ^{51.}

A local Stockton citizen then stepped forward with this account:

W. Bruce Harrison of the Farmer's Union also saw the 'thing'. It was on Thanksgiving (the 26th) night and he declares that the brandy in his mince pies was not strong and that there was no sherry in his plum pudding sauce. He saw the lights out to the northwest of the city over the tules. He says it might have been ignus fatuus (swamp gas), but it was not a lantern tied to a wild goose, nor a

paper balloon, nor a star hidden by the mists. He does not pretend to say that the thing was an Airship nor that it had people aboard, but he does declare that it was something which he had never seen before and something which he could not explain and would like well to have someone else try to. 52.

As a crowd gathered around the Independent office while ^{more} the reports were tallied, one townsman offered to pass the hat to raise funds for a trusted and sober member of the community to spend the night perched atop the highest church steeple (with one hand placed over his heart). Still the disbelieving staff of the Independent remained sceptical, preferring to treat the idea of machinery challenging the clouds as absurd "dreams of Verne."

Big city papers gave news of some scattered ^{airship} sightings over the thinly populated western part of San Francisco (at long last), but a low level swoop over Market Street never materialized. The Chronicle continued to report the plight of attorney Collins harried by ~~flying~~ squads of "Baker Street irregulars", reporters, and outright cranks. "Airship" Collins, as he was now known among his detractors, changed his tune ^{completely} and denied ever having any knowledge ^{at all} of a fully completed aircraft. The Washington, D. C. Patent Office sent disclaimers in response to a flood of mail inquiring if Collins had applied there; furthermore, the patriarch's residence at the Smithsonian Institution refused even to comment on atmospherical apparitions across the continent. 53.

The Sacramento Record-Union continued to call for an explanation insisting that a dark object carrying an arc light was an undeniable fact, but its nature, ^{54.} whether natural or supernatural, remained in doubt. Whether or not it was due to the continued publicity, a few Sacramentoans observed a third overflight at 2 o'clock on the morning of the 25th, with the object rushing away to the northwest. 55.

Also on the 25th, the Chronicle felt it was time to ring down the curtain on

the Airship operetta and devoted a number of lines to the continuing recanting by Dr. Benjamin, now nicknamed "Aluminum Benjamin", and "Airship" Collins, plus their latest woes. Up and down Market Street reporters polled passersby as to their opinion, the Chronicle men finding the planets Mars and Venus vying for first place as the explanation for the "light" in the sky that had been fooling impressionable individuals. Dr. Benjamin complained ^{to the press} ~~loudly~~ that he had to move to escape the curious, and that eating in public restaurants proved impossible because throngs would quickly gather to stare, giggle, and gesture at the windows of the establishment. He feared his mind would soon become unhinged.

Collins opened the Wednesday edition of a leading newspaper to page 16 and saw the result of his contradictions-- a huge cartoon of himself puffing on an opium pipe! 56.

Waning credibility in San Francisco meant little to the wandering enigma. A perusal of newspapers of various localities elsewhere had the Airship still on the prowl. Some accounts were old as well as new.

J. B. Loser, who ran the Analy Hotel in Sebastopol, California, claimed to have seen a dazzling flying light while enroute to the County seat around the 22nd. 57.

C. T. Musso, who had some fruit orchards near Bowman, Placer County, told friends that he had witnessed a singular vision four weeks previous (October 25) when he beheld:

...the prettiest sight that his eyes ever viewed... (which) appeared to be three very bright lights moving horizontally and easterly at a rate of perhaps 100 miles per hour. 58.

Mr. A. H. Thompson concurred by testifying he saw the same aerial display which he described as:

"...three very bright and large lights appearing about eight feet apart, the forward one as being larger and brighter than the rest, and moving horizontally eastward rapidly and gracefully...(in sight for) several minutes." 59.

Under the heading "Santa Rosa Excited", the San Francisco Call printed a news dispatch that said:

...at 7:30 (on the night of the 23rd) a light appeared to be moving in an eastly direction, occasionally disappearing entirely from view with a dull red glow, only to reappear more radiant after a few seconds. It was impossible to see anything beyond the light, owing to the distance. 60.

Also from Santa Rosa was this report:

On Saturday night (the 21st), just before midnight, several reputable gentlemen of this city saw a light moving in a southwesterly direction. It was first observed about two miles southeast of town, just above Taylor Mountain, and seemed to come from the Sacramento Valley. It moved quite swiftly and disappeared in the direction of Alameda County. This is vouched for by Charles Winters, a well-known merchant, and William Rohrer of the firm Rohrer, Einhorne, and Company. 61.

The San Francisco Bulletin, which had generally ignored the whole airship ~~business~~ ^{business}, finally gave in and carried a dispatch from the northern section of California's great central valley:

At about 6:45 P. M. (on the 24th) a crowd which was standing on the corner of Walnut and Washington Streets (Red Bluff, California) noticed almost directly west of them what appeared to be a star; but which was moving rapidly in a southwesterly direction toward the mountains.

Dr. J. A. Owen, who was in the crowd, called to

several others who were near, and the crowd watched the object till it went out of sight over the mountains. C. H. Chase, the attorney, says that he saw it first while standing on the corner of Main and Walnut Streets and that it was rapidly moving toward Leesville. He watched it for about twenty minutes at the end of which time it disappeared over the mountains. Mr. Chase says that it was going directly west, as part of the time when the ship was on this side of the mountains ~~and so that~~ ^{and so} he could see the summit of the mountains above it, ^{and so} he noticed that it was not going north or south, but appeared to be getting further away. Soon after the object had passed out of sight a telegram from Chico was received stating that the object had passed over there a few minutes previous. 62.

The Chico Enterprise confirmed the San Francisco Bulletin's account received from Red Bluff:

the light was a little

When first seen last evening, south of this city and gradually traveled to the north with an irregular motion finally disappearing behind the trees.

Parties who witnessed the strange sight from the Normal building (a small teachers college now the site of Chico State College) perhaps had a better view of the phenomenon than any one else in this city. To them the light appeared to be about the size of a ball, which threw rays of light from four or five different sides. From the elevated position on the Normal building it could also be plainly seen that the mysterious object was moving, as though it were coming to the ground, and then rise high in the air, all the time pursuing its northward course. 63.

The Bulletin's Red Bluff dispatch continued:

W. H. Huges, a carpenter, climbed to the top of the (Red Bluff) City Hall after it had disappeared and says that after making a few turns it came back over the mountains and a few minutes later again passed over this place. A telegram was a short time later received from Leesville saying that the strange craft had gone as far as that place ...several people

say not only the light was visible, but on the return trip the body of the object was seen. The witnesses compared it in shape to an egg. 64.

Again the Chico Enterprise confirmed the flight path of the mystery light. The light, or an object bearing a light, had retraced its flight path and flew by Chico once more:

...a bright light was seen west of this city apparently at a distance of about 6 miles. The light was a whitish color, and had the appearance of an electric light.

Second Street was thronged with men, women and children who had heard of the strange light, but had not before had the privilege of seeing it. 65.

Elsewhere the Placer Herald, printed in Auburn, California, told its readers:

Several citizens...assert they discovered a brilliantly lighted barrel-shaped object passing over town Wednesday (November 25th) night. It was 'away up in the sky' as they put it...(and) traveling very rapidly and had a sinuous motion up and down. 66.

And then there were two items from the Hayward, California, area. A man named Webb told George Oakes, the editor of the Hayward Journal, the light was seen by him and his family over Hayward traveling east toward Castro Valley on Wednesday about 9:30. The spectacle must have been convincing, for a certain Fred Hoyt stated to Oakes he probably saw and chased on foot the same leisurely floating enigma near Liedel place close to San Lorenzo. Hoyt had fallen headlong into a ditch while running in pursuit. 67.

Still more. A story in the Call titled: "San Jose Startled", dated November 24, stated:

...11 o'clock a bright light moving rapidly in the heavens toward Gilroy, was testified to by Eugene Barre, Dan Manning, and Jerre Sullivan, who are employees of the Sunset Telephone Company. About one hour afterward others saw the same mysterious light moving northeastly very rapidly, as if it were returning from the direction of Gilroy. 68

The airship business was also still making headlines in the Bay Area in regards to who was responsible for the construction of the craft. W. H. H. Hart, one time Attorney General, ~~had been~~ convinced, apparently by one of the dozens of local "airship inventors", and stepped forward to claim that he was in secret communication with the mysterious genius, ^{thus} replacing Collins as the focus of attention. ^{He said:} "You know the idea is not now to get it patented, but to use it for war purposes (leveling Havana)." 69

Almost overlooked among the Airship stories was a sad note from Oakland. John Griser had schemed since 1880 to perfect a contrivance for navigating the atmospheric sea. Laboring for years, existing in squalor, Griser's spare time and funds had gone into the building of a rickety, wood-framed Airship behind his modest house near Lake Merritt. After a score of attempts to get his device off the ground he believed he was close to success by the fall of 1896. When the newspapers began headlining stories of an Airship already in the air, he went out to the shed in his back yard, took one last look, and then kicked sixteen years work to kindling. 70.

The Call let the world know that four strong men had formed the "Mission Dolores Vigilance Committee" to track down and punish practical jokers with balloons. Apparently, this article was meant to intimidate the Examiner which was sending aloft toy balloons to hoax airship believers and embarrass the Call and Chronicle.

The Call had found the airship good front page stuff for over a week, with

the lawyer Collins and "Aluminum" Benjamin providing local excitement. Now Collins had washed his hands of the whole matter and Dr. Benjamin had fled into hiding leaving what personal effects he had heft behind in his apartment to be auctioned off. However, local curiosity still continued. As workers cleaning out Dr. Benjamin's apartment speculated on some copper dental fittings found, a few reporters still around scribbled down the laborers' remarks that perhaps the metal was meant for bomb cases.⁷²

The San Francisco Bulletin and Examiner had been unenthusiastic all along and the Chronicle threw in the sponge on Wednesday, the 25th, when Collins recanted. The Chronicle, on the 25th, titled a special article: "Mars and Venus under Suspicion", "Planets Stay Out Late at Night", "Airsnip Hunters Seek Them", and "Conjurer Collins Explains the Reasons Why He Didn't Do What He Did". And on the 26th, when the dispatch from Red Bluff and points north came in, the Chronicle carried them, but also included editorial opinion of a negative nature under the headings: "The Airship Craze Fast Fading Away" and "Star-gazing Has Ceased".

To keep some life in the Call's news leadership, the paper needed two things. First of all, local airship news was essential. Secondly, the Call needed an exclusive pipeline to the center of the mystery to keep the public plunking down their nickles for the latest revelation.

The ~~an~~ ex-Attorney General, W. H. H. Hart, fortunately had come forward to replace Collins as a spokesman for another secretive airship inventor. A bearded, distinguished-looking gentleman, Mr. Hart filled the bill as a convincing source of information. Or so it seemed. The mysterious airship owner, Hart assured the public, would without a doubt demonstrate his craft in the daytime for all to see at some future date he would soon announce.

The Call announced Hart as the new custodian of the aerial machine secrets on the 25th. On the 26th, the Call carried a story that expanded on W. H. H.

Hart's claims which the Call backed up with the headline: "The Mystery Again Seen at the Capitol". Without a close perusal one would think the Call was offering a new airship episode, however, the information was merely a retelling of the sighting over Sacramento the evening of November the 22nd.⁷³ The Call had lacked the second ingredient vital to a front page treatment and that was some local aerial maneuvers by the elusive airship.

Luckily, the unidentified voyager of the air put in an appearance over San Jose at the south end of San Francisco Bay on Thanksgiving eve, the 26th, in front of some excellent witnesses. The Call carefully gathered what information it had on hand and hit the streets on Sunday, the 29th, with a full page spread built around the San Jose sighting with statements by Professor Cross, Dean of the University of the Pacific, and Professor H. B. Worcester, two who saw the passage of the mystery light with their very own eyes. On the same page was a full statement over Hart's signature again affirming the existence of an aerial invention, ^{and it} that would soon be perfected and dispatched to aid Cuban insurgents fighting their Spanish overlords.

A friend of Professor M. S. Cross, Professor H. B. Worcester, President of Garden City College, gave an account of what happened on the night of the 26th:

There was a small party at my house in East San Jose on Thanksgiving Day and it was prolonged until about 7 o'clock in the evening. The company then retired to the front of the house to enjoy some music and I went into the rear yard to get a lantern. I happened to look up and saw several miles away, apparently about College Park or Santa Clara, a large light moving rapidly toward San Jose. In fact I surmised it was the mysterious light which people had seen and which was said to be attached to an airship. In order to call the attention of those in the house to the same I ran around the house to save time and called out that the airship was passing. Everyone rushed out into the front yard.

Within the time it had taken me to run around the house the light had changed course from east to southwest and had traveled several miles and was in line with the southern portion of San Jose. The entire party saw the moving light go west, then turn south and then change to the southeast. We watched the light finally disappear behind the horizon.

When the ship turned to the southeast I could distinguish two lights, one behind the other. The single light first seen was about the size of an engine headlight and had more of the appearance of a large incandescent light than anything else. It was moving at the rate of from 60 to 100 miles an hour only a few moments before it had disappeared behind the horizon.

There were three things regarding the light which impressed me, viz.: its velocity, its regular movement and its apparent intelligent control ...I have seen many fire-balloons, but the light I saw had none of the characteristics of such a toy. Its velocity was great for a balloon on such a still night and its movements too regular. The light was about 1500 feet high when first seen and may have continued at that elevation, but it appeared to lower as it disappeared...the party consisted of Professor Cross, Dr. and Mrs. Allen, Colonel and Mrs. Moore, Miss Annie Chase, and Mrs. Worcester. 74.

Professor Cross backed up his colleague:

I was visiting at the residence of Professor Worcester and was called into the yard by him to view the airship. Whether it was in fact an airship of course I am not prepared to say, but certain it is there was a rapidly moving light in the heavens far too large and bright to be an electric street light. To my eye it appeared to be about six inches in diameter. It was moving in a southwesterly direction and apparently at a high rate of speed.

The motion was not steady. It wavered and swerved, rising and falling slightly. The motion, however, was not that of a balloon. I have frequently watched balloons in the air, and the motion of this light was in no way suggestive of the manner in which I have always seen them behave. Moreover, it was a quiet night. What slight wind there was I think was from the south. Yet this light traveled rapidly in a southerly direction. As it left us the light seemed to broaden. This suggest-

ed to us that there might be two lights which as the craft swung broadside to us joined rays and gave the appearance of a wide streak of light. 75.

Professor Worcester described the light's undulatory, bat-like flight, as suggestive of "the alternate flapping of wings." That statement gave the Call the chance it needed and it wasn't long before a farmer, John Bawl, was located to testify that he had discerned wings propelling the mystery object. 76.

While the San Francisco papers continued to entertain their readers with personalities and gadgets, the mystery light began to shift its attentions elsewhere.

At Modesto, on the 26th, around 10:30, the cashier of the First National Bank, J. E. Ward, alerted his friends and neighbors to witness the passage of some flying lights thought to be the famous airship. Deputy Treasurer W. B. Bell; C. P. Schafer, the bookkeeper of the First National Bank; County Treasurer W. A. Downer; and Armory L. J. Maddux joined Ward to see the lights float by at a great height in a northwesterly direction. 77.

Also on the 27th, observers in and around the city of Woodland informed the Woodland Daily Democrat that bright and unusual lights were seen in the sky flying in a southwest direction around 10 P.M. Accounts mention that at first the display was believed to be a group of stars. 78.

The strange light began to shift more and more to the south as telegraph dispatches followed its progress toward the Los Angeles area.

In Fresno, California, at 6:30 on the evening of the 25th the airship was seen:

...traveling high up in the western horizon in a northwestern direction...(it was in sight from) two to seven minutes...(and appeared to be) several miles distant. It sailed toward the earth for a time and then took a sudden swoop upward.

The light was not at all like a star, and its peculiar motion makes it altogether unlikely.

The light seems to be double as if there were one in front of the craft and one behind. The light was irregular as if it were being turned in different directions. 79.

In Visalia, California, The Weekly Delta carried this about a sighting on the evening of the 26th:

...a number of people in the south part of town saw the vessel in the air and the sight created considerable excitement. E. O. Larkin testified that last (Tuesday) night about 7 o'clock Mrs. E. M. Jefferies came rushing over to his house exclaiming: 'come see the airship.'

At first it seemed to be traveling a north-westerly course at an apparent speed of a train of cars in a straight line; then it moved upward, then downward, then to the right and again to the left, but all the time moving onward in its north-westerly course until it finally passed out of sight as if it had gone beyond the Coast Range mountains, and in the direction of San Francisco.

Sometimes on its course the light would disappear for a moment as if behind some object, but it would emerge again as bright as ever. The same night it appeared over Hanford (about 20 miles west of Visalia)...the Hanford Sentinel says that the aerial visitor was seen by Will Mathewson and Mort Hornbea (who)...saw a great light at an angle of 45 degrees in the heavens...The light was not a bull's-eye lantern because it was too high up; it was not the north star because it was too low down; it was not a comet because it had no tail.

The light was surrounded by a halo the prismatic beams of which so dazzled the eyes of the beholders the true form of the ship was obscured. The light was a reddish hue. Its course seemed to be from Bald mountain, northeast skirting the boundary line between Kings and Fresno counties, thence in and across the counties of Fresno and Madera toward Mariposa where it was lost to view in the horizon. 80.

In Bakersfield, California, on the night of the 26th:

Several parties declare they saw the airship about 8 o'clock...in the heavens over toward Tejon. Mr. Goode, the fruit vender, was one of the parties. He declares that all he could see was a monster red looking light, while the others who saw it claim that something encased the light. Mr. Goode says his eyes are bad and in consequence he could not see as well as the others. 81.

In Bakersfield again on the night of the 27th:

A. Hughes of Hughes Drug Store saw something against the western sky in the early evening...'It looked like a great moving white looking light similar to a street electric light not very high moving slowly south.' Mrs. Webster said that on Thanksgiving(the 26th) she was driving home from Poso and saw it...'show blue and white lights. Seen through a telescope it looked like a balloon in construction as it glided slowly toward the south.' 82.

W. H. Sanborn and Robert Elodge confirmed the presence of something odd in the sky over the Bakersfield area on the night of the 27th when they told the local paper, The Daily Californian, they:

...saw the mysterious light low in the southwestern heavens 7:30 Friday while looking out the back of Mc Kelvery's store. They declared it moved out of sight in a short space of time and it also had a descending and ascending or undulatory movement. It was a very large, bright light. These gentlemen do not claim that it was an airship, but a mysterious moving light, and that's all. 83.

A singular report among the last sightings around the state was that of

the episode at Tulare, California, on November 29, 1896:

Over one hundred Tulareans positively assert that they saw the now famous Airship that has been wandering around in different sections of the state. Those who saw it say it first appeared just west of town last evening about 7 o'clock, between the residences of E. T. Cooper and Mrs. C. Castle. It came down quite a distance, then went up and took a straight shoot for Hanford (westward). Red, white, and blue lights were seen in succession, but no part of the ship was seen. They seemed to have perfect control of the ship, as they moved it around in many different directions. It was seen from every section of the city, and many people watched it as long as it was in sight (15 witnesses named in the news account). 84.

About 35 miles south of Tulare the same night there came this account:

Reports came from Delano that the airship was seen there Sunday night. The whole population turned out to gaze at the heavenly visitor and there is abundant assurance that if not a real airship there is still something mysterious floating in the air. 85.

The San Francisco Call notified citizens in northern California on December 1st that the skies over Los Angeles had finally been visited. It seems that on November 30th:

...strange lights made rapid flights over the San Fernando Valley, in Los Angeles County. Last night the people of Los Angeles City were treated to the strange sight. Two fixed lights passed over the city at a high rate of speed and at a very great distance from the earth. A third light that appeared to have all the characteristics of a searchlight in the hands of a skillful manipulator was also seen in conjunction with the two fixed lights. These passed according to reports from the northwest to the southeast, and two hours later they reappeared, passing from the southeast to the northwest. 86.

The Times had ignored reports of strange flying lights in the air over Los Angeles on Friday, November 27th, but when there was more on the 30th the paper published the previous accounts:

Last Friday evening numerous citizens of Los Angeles discovered a bright light in the heavens near the southern horizon. It was first observed about 6 o'clock and attracted the attention of many people who were on their way home. The most intelligent account of this particular appearance of the phenomenon is that given by Capt. Frank B. Taylor, United States Army, North Key West Street. About 6:30 Friday evening Capt. Taylor was called out by a neighbor and his attention was directed to the light which was then near the horizon. To the naked eye the object seemed like a fixed star, although no scintillation was perceptible. Capt. Taylor brought out a field glass and made a careful observation. In describing the light as it appeared through the glass, he said: 'The light was apparent at a considerable distance perhaps fifteen or twenty miles through the glass it appeared pear-shaped or like a soap bubble when suspended from the pipe. With the apex tilted a little to the left. About one-fifth of the surface, on the left hand side, was dark and the remainder was very bright and covered at regular intervals with still more brilliant spots. It was up about 20 or 25 degrees in the heavens and appeared to be moving away in a southwesterly direction. I watched it through the glass for about ten or fifteen minutes. It finally disappeared apparently going toward the ocean. I did not think it was an airship. It seemed probable that it was some novel affair sent up by someone to impose on people. It might have been a fire balloon, although it hardly had that appearance. I could not see any indication of a car or any other attachment, though if there were anything of the kind it probably would not have been visible. 87.

On November 30, ^{persons} ~~many~~ at Redlands, California, claim to have been the last to catch a glimpse of the brilliant sky light that Monday eve. And at the other extreme end of the state two gentlemen, E. G. Case, grand chief ranger of the Ancient Order of Foresters of the Pacific, and William Held, official steno-

grapher of the local Superior Court of Ukiah, California, were on their way to Potter Valley, twenty miles north of Ukiah, when they encountered the "airship". About two miles from their destination and around 7:30 P.M., on November 28, the "object" passed so close to the double team of horses that the animals became panicky. The two telephoned Ukiah from Held, California, with a short message that they had seen the "aerial wonder. It was cigar-shaped and was evidently suspended from a balloon." 88.

A news dispatch from Anderson, California, told of something spotted near there on the 28th, about an hour after the report from near Potter Valley:

...the aerial monster passed over Anderson last evening about 20 minutes past 8. Her citizens claim to have seen the stranger in its flight.

It was first observed from the corner of East Center and Ferry Streets by a reputable citizen noticing a peculiar light to the west. He called the attention of others to the seeming phenomenon, and quite a crowd collected. It was generally conceded that this must be the long-talked-of airship. Its course was south to west, and the lights soon disappeared in the south. The light was large and brilliant and seemed to move in a steady course. 89.

The stories of regular overflights of California cities had an unnerving effect on H. W. Herne of Portland, Oregon. A loner and an eccentric, Herne became depressed at frequent reports of a successful airship. According to neighbors, Herne "became violently excited over the airship stories and declared one of his ideas was stolen in its makeup." Barricading himself in his home and refusing food, the brooding recluse was finally hauled off to the insane asylum by authorities. 90.

The San Francisco Call squeezed a final drop of ink out of the controversy by attacking its arch rival, Randolph Hearst's Examiner, maintaining that the

two Hearst papers, one on the west coast and the other on the east coast, had engaged in a two-faced game. The Call knew Hearst tightly controlled the editorial policies of both the Examiner and the New York Journal, and it appeared the Airship business had been enlisted to do battle in the young journalist's attempts to draw readers away from other newspapers. The truth had evidently been an early casualty. Hearst's San Francisco paper warred against the Call's big headlines about mysterious Airships by vigorously blaming the aerial visions on those under the spell of the Roman god Bacchus, while the Journal ^{back east} excited New Yorkers with sensational tales of powered balloons zipping all over California. Leaving nothing to chance, Hearst had artists on the Journal's staff sketch picturesque impressions of the Airship right down to the wiring on the rudders. The Call printed selected excerpts from both Hearst papers for side by side comparisons. 91.

The impression received from the California "airship" news reports would play an important role during the summer of 1897, for an important event had taken place on November 24, 1896. On the 24th, ^{the} mysterious phenomenon had appeared in a state other than California.

By an odd coincidence, the first appearance outside California of what would become a national sensation by April, 1897, took place in the same area a pilot would see nine unexplained flying objects on June 24, 1947, and that would later create another and greater sensation.

On November 24, 1896 the following occurred in the state of Washington:

Last Tuesday night the operator of the airship is believed to have visited and explored the top of Mount Tacoma (Rainier). Tuesday night druggist George St. John closed his drugstore on Pacific Avenue at 11:30 and went home. He reached his residence on Tacoma Avenue fifteen minutes later and soon retired. It was a beautiful moonlight night and the window curtains a few feet away from the bed were up.

Before Mr. St. John could drift off to sleep he was awoken by his wife:

Just about 12 o'clock Mrs. St. John saw the strange light and called her husband's attention to it. It appeared to be high up in the heavens east of Mount Tacoma and moving in a southeasterly direction. The distance from Tacoma must have been at least fifty miles. They watched the heavenly stranger over an hour. They first saw it through a north window in their room but after a while they could see it through a window several feet further south without having changed their positions. This proves that the airship traveled a long distance during the time they were watching it.

Mr. St. John says that vari-colored lights were shot forth in all directions. They were emitted from each end and both sides. Sometimes the light at one end or one side would be cut off. Some of the lights were white, others red, blue and green. These four sides were distinctly visible. When all the lights were shining the aerial monster seemed incased in a brilliant glow, having the appearance of a powerful electric searchlight. The size then seemed to be that of an arc light. It flashed often sending the various colored rays shooting out from the center in every direction like spokes in the hub of a wheel. Sometimes it had a waving motion and swayed back and forth in its course through the heavens like a vessel at sea in a storm, but the undulating motion was its chief course, being varied by frequent dartings.

The moonlight was not strong enough to permit a distinct view of Mount Tacoma, but the airship was seen to approach the neighborhood of the mountains at what seemed to be its exact height, and dart hither and thither as if an exploration was in progress. 92.

The identity of the California sky light or whatever it was, has never been established. Though everyone at the time insisted the mystery was due to either a hoax, a natural phenomenon of some kind, or an airship of a timid inventor, one gentleman of that Victorian age, a detective named William Ahern, conducted his own inquiry and came to the following remarkable conclusion:

"... there is nothing improbable about our recent Airship visitor. The only doubt that can arise is as to the origin of this particular messenger.

In my investigations of this subject it would seem that this visitor is from our neighboring planet Mars. We know from the evidence of scientists and astronomers that Mars is many millions of years older than this Earth. It is but reasonable to agree and consider that the inhabitants of our planetary neighbor are more advanced in the sciences and have more knowledge of the use of the great scientific power than the denizens of the Earth. Many thousands of years of experience have given the perfection of invention which would appear marvelous to our making (sic) people.

The Lord Commissioner of Mars had evidently sent one of his exploring expeditions to the younger but larger world.

The Airships are constructed of the lightest and strongest fabrics and the machinery is of the most perfect electrical work.

Aluminum and glass hardened by the same chemical principles that form diamonds contribute the chief materials of their most perfect Airships.

When in use these vessels at a distance have the appearance of a ball of fire being operated by the electric current generated on such vessels.

The speed of our Martian ships is very great and can be registered to the rapidity of a thousand miles a second.

In fact, with the Martian ships space is almost annihilated. These aerial craft can so adopt their course that when they desire to rest they can anchor within certain degrees of latitude and wait for the revolution of the Earth, for resistance to bring any particular locality desired much nearer than without the necessity of any aerial navigation.

On Mars, all the great electrical power is converted by the waves of the ocean, thus making electricity a common utility for everything necessary for the arts, science, manufacturing, transportation, etc.

It is supposed that the Lord Commissioner of Mars is sending out his Airship seeking to establish at least telegraphic or telephone communication between the planets.

It is probable that in a short time his ambassador will make a call on the President. Perhaps they are delaying until McKinley assumes the administration of affairs on the theory there may be more advanced ideas in his head." 93.

6
+

a policeman

On April 24, 1964, ~~police~~ saw a mysterious ellipsoid resting on slender metallic legs in the desert a few miles south of Socorro, New Mexico. Near the object were two small figures in white coverall type suits. ~~who~~ ^{the figures} retreated inside the oval machine when a police patrol car drove toward the scene to investigate. Spurring flame from its bottom, the craft flew away in a horizontal direction barely a dozen feet above the small mesquite bushes that dot the arid area. ~~the policeman~~ ^{the policeman} Though ~~police~~ did not get near enough to make out small details, an "insignia" in the form of red geometric lines was seen on the side of the object.

Authorities investigated the incident and found that the report seemed very sound and well substantiated. When the government denied that the object was American made, the episode became an overnight national sensation.

But the Socorro case was not the only report of something unusual in the region. Within a week many odd sightings were reported to local newspapers.

A "ball of fire" landed and then took off close to a radio station at Las Vegas, New Mexico.

A gentleman living in Edgewood, New Mexico, emptied his revolver at a large egg-shaped object hanging motionless 100 feet in the air.

State police ~~one~~ ^{on another} evening watched a strange glowing object hover over the Port of Entry building south of Las Cruces and then move slowly west to a position over Deming, New Mexico.

On April 29, a group of witnesses in El Paso, Texas, saw an egg-shaped object drop down out of the sky and hover a short distance away. One of those watching it, a ten year old girl, stood her ground when the rest drew back. The young girl had to be treated shortly afterwards by a doctor for burns about

the face, apparently inflicted by some sort of infrared radiation.

The El Paso Herald-Post carried one story in particular on the 28th of April that stands out from the rest. A group of eight youngsters saw something in the air over their school in El Paso and they made this statement: "It seemed to be floating in the air covered with something like a sheet. It was about 5'--6' tall and sort of egg-shaped."

THE THING OF WHEELS AND CRANKS AND FROLIC.

Oh, say, you airy phantom,
Far up aloft afloat,
Are you some nervous goblin
Who likes to steer a boat?
Say, do you use the atmosphere,
As others use the sea?
And as you note our wonder
Do you chortle in your glee?
You hang out lights of warning
Across the misty sky,
But then you quickly vanish-
Oh, how? and whence? and why?

Some have not had the honor
To see your trailing gleam,
Yet 'tis against all reason
To say the others dream.
Some have not heard the voices
Your crew sends forth at night,
But still, as a phenomenon,
We vote you out of sight.
We cannot solve the problem:
Are you all gross, material?
With wheels, joints and engines-
Or wraithlike and ethereal?

We'd like to learn about you;
Permit us then to guess,
For you have got us rattled
To a point of keen distress.
Are you a Shortridge thunder bird,
Turned loose among the stars
From interstellar spaces
To scare the varlike Mars?
Or does the ghost of Hornbrook
Whirl down the giant void,
Revisiting the worldings
His fables once annoyed?

Flammarion predicted
That stars would fall as rain-
So far as we have noticed
The most of them refrain.
To bring a pour of stars it seems
Was quite beyond his power,
But lights like yours may indicate
He did scare up a shower.
Magnetic currents-fearsome, weird-
Maybe have made the flash
To let the erring mortal know
His globe is soon to crash.

One editor is certain
You really are a snip,
And most adroitly manage
To give his sleuths the slip.
He thinks that now, or later,
The human race will fly;
So can't you, as a favor, soon
Take him aboard and try?
For if your motive power consists
Of force akin to wind,
He is as large a bag of that
As you will ever find.

Our faith it might be stronger,
But earth is rich in liars
Who do not pause to ponder
The future and its fires.
They'd see a ghost on every cloud
To sell the tale for space,
And spend the price for pie and cake
Wherewith to feed the face.
But come again, oh, toy balloons!
We rather like your style-
We see your catch of suckers
And join you in a smile.

The San Francisco Examiner.

November 26, 1896, page 13.

Chapter Three

The "Airship" Moves East

About the time the last word was heard on the "California Airship" in December 1896, the sparsely populated range lands of central Nebraska became the haunt of the sky ghost. Nebraska opinion varied as stories reached Omaha about the strange skylight seen over the rural regions to the west. Some supposed unusual atmospheric disturbances were responsible, while others guessed the lights were probably artificial and controlled by a human agency.

From December to February skylight stories from the interior of the state continued to mount, yet some still attributed the reports to "distorted imaginations and befogged fancies", but the believers in the phenomenon gained considerable ground as the list of witnesses kept growing and the popular rumor which asserted that the world's first successful airship was being tested secretly under the cover of night, seemed to be bore out by claims which stated the lights often moved swiftly through the air.

Around the first of March a big light appeared in the sky south of Omaha, causing a lot of speculation, but nothing definite was visible.¹

Two weeks later, March 14th, the puzzling sky light sailed into view over southern Omaha about 9:30 p.m., coming out of the southeast. The light floated to the west, and then to the north, before passing out of sight. It was visible for 30 minutes. A group of people on the way home from an evening church service saw the light.

Among those returning from church was a Mr. J.J. Copenhaver who testified:

"We thought at first it was a balloon...If there is such a thing as an airship, however, I believe now that it was one. There was a bright light, about a foot in diameter, and some of us who saw it thought we could distinguish some dark body below the light, but we might have been mistaken in that." 2.

Railroad men working in the Omaha railroad yard said the light altered its course to a northwest heading before disappearing below the horizon. 3.

The skylight excitement smoldered for about two weeks and then burst into full flame with massive sightings at the end of March:

"Topeka, March 28, Residents of a dozen or more northern Kansas towns are excited over the appearance of a strange light which has been seen in the western sky for several nights. Reports from some localities are that it is an immense ball of fire, while other observers say it resembles an airship.

J.A. Rea of Belleville, reports that the light hovered over the city three-quarters of an hour Friday night and then moved rapidly away. It looked half the size of a locomotive headlight and was of a bluish tint.

Last night hundreds of Belleville people watched for the light, and it appeared at 10 o'clock. This time the light was so strong that it reflected brightly through the windows. Several people who looked through a strong glass claim they could distinguish the outline of an airship.

About 8:30 o'clock last night a strange light appeared in the sky west of Topeka, evidently the one reported at Belleville. It was about the shape and twice the size of a man's hand and was blood red. It was traveling slowly in a northerly direction. It was in sight about half an hour and then disappeared with a flicker like a candle put out by the wind.

Several hundred people witnessed the light from the State-House steps. Among them was Gov. John W. Leedy. He said: "That is a very strange light. I don't know what it is, but I hope it will solve the railroad problem. If it is an airship maybe it will'.

The light was also seen last night at Atchison, Hiawatha, Halton, Concordia, and elsewhere." 4.

6 Like the first sightings of the mystery light over Sacramento, California on November 17, 1896, various individuals were quick to seek a limited fame by claiming knowledge of an operational airship of a conventional design. A Topeka newspaper carried a story on March 29th which declared that a local farmer had stated an airship's grapnel had snagged his trousers, picking him up and dumping the poor sodouster in a pasture among his grazing cows. The account was annexed with an assertion of the farmer's reputation of truthfulness. 5.

Whether under the influence of April Fools Day or simply the fact many were caught up in the general enthusiaum of man's first experiments in aerodynamics, a rash of airship sightings broke out on April 1st. Galesburg, Michigan residents claimed that a sky guest of giant dimensions, black in the night heavens and sporting a brilliant headlight, visited that town that day. 6. On the same eveing, Everett, Kansas, alerted neighboring towns that an airship had spent the late night hours over that city ~~also~~, illuminating the sky with a white headlight while a greenish-blue glow emanating from the airship itself. 7. Both accounts contained additional details. At

Galesburg, it was alledged by a few people that human voices ^{from the sky} ~~could be~~ were heard. And at Everett, for several minutes, the outlines of the mystery vessel were alledged to have been seen by a number of others which indicated an airship of familar design: gas bag, basket, and wings.

Notwithstanding that it was the first day in April, the holiday dedicated to practical jokes, Kansas City, Kansas, succumbed to the airship affliction:

"At 8 o'clock last night...the 'strange lights' appeared in the sky south of ... (the) city and

caused the highest interest among the people. To those who saw the lights all talk of Venus and other planets will not be listened to. As one man put it, Venus does not go zig-zag and criss-cross along the horizon, as they declare this light does." 8.

Center for UFO Studies
P. O. Box 11
Northfield, IL

A situation developed that was identical to the confusing flap in California the previous November. Numerous reports of moving lights in the night sky pored into the offices of the nearest newspaper. Inevitably someone with ambitions exceeding his more conservative neighbors would boast the vision of an eagle and give testimony that he had caught a glimpse of the physical features of the aerial craft, proposing the mystery ship to be something within the bounds of advanced Victorian science. Editors, beset by so many sightings of an unexplained nature, printed the only ~~available~~^{out}, and one might say pausable, details available which turned out to be dirigible descriptions.

Occasionally, editors attempted to back off and regain their objectivity. The Kansas City Times, on April 2th, for example, seriously questioned the airship sightings and printed only what scanty facts it could ~~obtained~~^{about} the glowing points of light. The Times could only print that a odd light flew over the city ^a little after 8:00 the previous eveing, sending out a white colored ray that eventually turned a red hue. 9.

Again, on April 6th, dispatches from Omaha carried reports of the ghost of the heavens. It was stated some members of a local fraternal order were alerted to the passage of the mystery craft, light, or whatever, when the glare produced by it lit up the interior of their meeting hall. Apparently the sky vessel

was relatively close because it caused a rush to the windows by the members. The Knights claimed they got a peek at the light craft but their descriptions mention only a metallic looking tube of some sort about 3'x20' and ^{not} a wing flapping gas bag. 10.

By the 10th of April the Chicago Daily Tribune splashed big headlines about the appearances of the "airship" over that Illinois metropolis, ^{the mystery craft} coasting through the heavens over the southern suburbs, swinging its headlight to and fro. Hundreds of Chicagoans were eyewitnesses as the sky phenomenon invaded a new section the country. Evanston, Niles Center, and Schermerville, Illinois, ^{also} sighted the multi-colored glow among the clouds. Professor Hough of Dearborn Observatory, Northwestern University, quickly advanced an explanation, but it did not meet with anyone's satisfaction. He said the lights were due to the flickerings of the Orion constellation, though the pedagogue confessed he could not explain why those stars only just recently excited such great interest. 11.

Norman, Oklahoma, joined the ranks of towns reporting the airship on April 9th, telegraphing that a torpedo with a bright, white, light and with flashes of crimson down its side, made its way though the air ^{over the town} in a zig-zag fashion. 12.

The same night a 100 citizens at Wausau, Wisconsin, ~~could~~ ^{13. and} made out a dim, egg-shaped, object in the sky, ~~where~~ residents of Mount Carroll, Illinois, testified the mystery ship was seen there, coming out of the northeast and then switching to a western course. The people there also reported that the object was oblong and had a great red light on it. 14.

With the arrival of the 11th of April, the continued rumors of the mid-west aerial mystery caught the attention of the

sensation orientated New York dailies. Telegraphed dispatches to the New York Herald quoted Professor Hough's theories, but that paper was more impressed with accounts of something with a white searchlight on a swivel just ahead of a green light, then a small white one, and finally one red in color.^{15.} Yet Chicago produced even better grist for the New York sensation mills. A Max L. Harmar, an officer of the Chicago Aeronautical Association, expounded at length to the press that he had knowledge of the craft and its owners. He said the air vessel was constructed of paper and was in the process of a coast to coast flight. Furthermore,^{said Harmar,} Octave Chaute, the president of the association, was then in San Francisco to register the powered balloon ship in official records in order to raise additional funds for the new invention's expenses.^{16.}

Due perhaps to the claims of Mr. Harmar, a new twist to the airship angle developed. The city^{of} Newton, Iowa, on April 10th, send word to Chicago that thousands of its residents were in the streets gazing upward at a dark shape marked by lights,^{when} a spark, or somekind of glowing fragment, was seen to detach itself from the strange shape in the ~~dark~~ heavens and float downward. Rumors quickly swept through the crowd that some attempt was being made to send a message to those below.^{17.}

Meanwhile, there were many run-of-mill sightings. The same day the rumor of messages from the airship got its apparent start in Newton, Eldon and Albia, Iowa, reported airship sightings. ^{The newspaper} Ottumwa, Iowa, headlined its initiation to the airship club: "Aerial-What-Is-It?". Eldoria, Iowa, tells us that on April 10th reputable residents there spied the airship which had the look of "polished silver", while police in Elgin^{19.}

Illinois said the 10th of April marked the day a red, blue, and white lighted object was seen there, coming from the direction of Chicago only to turn after a while and reverse its course.^{20.} Furthermore, the Chicago Tribune passed along the information in its April 10 issue, ^{which stated} that a multi-colored thing flew over south Chicago and that it had been under observation by numerous field glasses and small telescopes as it approached the city out of the mists hanging over Lake Michigan. Consensus of what was ~~seen~~ discerned with the optical devices turned out to be very meagre, and even then results were qualified with the admission by the Tribune's editor, ^{who wrote} that estimates of size, when the distances to the flying object were unknown, would be unreliable. The best guesstimate arrived at was a slender object some 70 feet long.^{21.}

Milwaukee, Wisconsin was the next city of major size to receive a visit according to the Chicago papers. On April 12th, the airship approached Milwaukee from the direction of Lake Michigan. The strange "machine", or whatever, as the janitor at the Central Police Station termed it, came to a halt 1,000 feet over the Milwaukee City Hall, appearing as an oval form from which a light was suspended. The police station caretaker would ^{not} admit to seeing figures like another witness named Mayer, but he thought he could detect some rotating motion he suggested might have been kind of fans in operation.^{22.} That's all the New York Herald needed, as that ^{paper} began running big front page spreads on the historic scientific milestone of man's finally achieving the power of flight. The fact that the inventor was unknown and the airship was leading everyone a merry chase throughout the midwest gave the story extra elements of mystery

and intrigue hard to resist.

The New York World tried to shoot down the burgeoning airship story in the rival Herald by running an item from Omaha, that detailed a confession of a couple of practical jokers. Some ^{Omaha} men ~~that~~ declared they had sent up a fireballoon April 1st and that it had fooled the whole town. It wasn't completely convincing, but the confession sowed the seeds of doubt and helped counter Herald's bid for expanded readership.

The Herald, ^{met} the challenge with a counteroffensive. On Monday a dispatch from Chicago was carried in the Herald telling of the two photographs taken of the phantom airship. Four persons were named as witnesses to the capture of the airship on film. The image allegedly consisted of a long gasbag of silk, below which hung a frail framework where a man was seated working the propellers and rudder.

Not content with that tale, the Herald mentioned a claim by a Omaha inventor, hitherto ignored, that the Capital ~~Trans-Mississippi~~ Trans-Mississippi Exposition officials could confidently expect a flying machine of his manufacture to be available shortly for exhibition. And then there was the New York Herald's file on San Francisco's attorney George Collins and his supposed ~~inventor~~ client, the anonymous Oroville airship inventor, ^{and} even the bragging of a San Jose, California, electrician that he had flown to Honolulu and back as a guest of the unknown airship improviser. The Herald got out all that old material and stuffed it into its April editions.

Tales of airship inventors helped fill out stories of airship sightings ^{which} ~~that~~ ^{quite} were coming routine. Down St. Louis way the Burlington Fast Mail was paced by a "huge spectacle", details

of which are lacking, but which the train engineer surmised^{23.} could only have been the much talked of airship. The wave of sightings hit a crest on April 12th when the aerial mystery chased another train leaving Chicago, outdistancing the locomotive by the time Lisle, Illinois was reached. Rushville, Europia,^{and} Washington, Iowa, as well as various towns in Kansas, reported sightings. Warren, Illinois and Muncie, Indiana were^{also} listed as new locations of sightings^{by} on the 12th.

April 15th the Herald printed another routine report telegraphed to that paper from Anderson, Indiana. Citizens there would only attest to something moving through the air that looked to be bigger than a star, but the Herald played up the fact eleven well-known citizens^{had} signed affidavits.^{24.}

At this time a significant change took place in the scripts of the more sensational dirigible dramas. At Girard, Illinois, it was alledged that a winged, canopied encumbered, dirigible^{one} landed and then quickly took off again after^{of} its crew made a fast inspection of the craft's rigging. As the story goes, a large "M" followed by some smaller letters that could not be made out at a distance were claimed to have been visible on the side of the gas bag during the airship's brief touchdown.^{25.}

A very similar tale originated in Brimingham, Iowa, placing reliance on the word of a "respecable citizen".^{26.}

Resisting the speculative trend, a Baptist minister at Washington, Iowa, a Reverend Gray, refused to claim he had seen an airship, perfering to call what he observed as probably a "burned out star".^{27.}

The New York Herald drowned out such cautious talk and dwelled on a theory from Chicago, April 12th, that told of a controversy over the whereabouts of yet another airship inventor and the status of his patent papers. ^{28.}

It must have been strange to those who believed in the airship to read about touchdowns of airships complete with detailed discription of the crews at apparently radom locations around the midwest, while none of the highly touted inventors could manage to land thier craft at agreed places and times in front of reliable committees of witnesses to reap the large cash rewards and immortal fame that awaited them at any of the publicized sites.

A fisherman boating on Lake Erie later let it be known that he had spotted the airship hovering over that body of water and that he could make out the crew quite clearly. He said he saw a man, a woman, and a small boy. All were wearing conventional clothing and were fishing from the deck of their airship. ^{29.}

The conservative ~~newspaper~~ New York Tribune viewed such stories with disapproval. Snubbing the "scareship" business, the only thing in the air as far as the Tribune was concerned was the possibility of a political compromise between Turkey and Greece over some Balkan real estate. But the airship kept its place on the front page of the Herald up to April 13th, when at Carlinville, Illinois, it was alledged the airship alighted repeatedly and was depicted as a winged cigar-shape. ^{30.} However, the novelty of such tales was quickly waneing and the rumormongers sought new innovations.

It wasn't long before a telegram from Appleton, Wisconsin was made public. On April 14th the public learned that a note had been dropped by the mystery airship to enlighten those who wanted to know the specifications of the aerial vessel and the workshop of its birth. The message turned out to be a new version of a George Collin's type run-a-round, but for a while it put new life into the airship story. Encouraged, an official of the Tennessee Centennial Commission posted a \$25,000 reward for the craft's appearance at the coming state exposition, but there were no takers for what was a handsome sum even by modern standards. ^{32.}

By now the airship uproar ^{had} sent waves far afield. Paris, France learned of the American airship excitement via the New York Herald's European editions. The Paris paper Figaro expressed alarm at the apparent achievements of American engineers, having taken the Herald's version of the situation at face value. France, the Figaro warned, must be far behind the United States in the important work of ^{the} discovery and application of motive power to the ^{solving the problem} ~~power~~ of aerial flight. ^{34.}

Back in the United States, ^{April 15th,} the community of Lynn Grove, Iowa telegraphed that the famous airship had swooped low near there and that some towns people had picked up some ballast bags allegedly tossed overboard ^{in order} to regain lost altitude. As proof the bags had been put on display in the windows the local drugstore. ^{35.}

Appleton recaptured attention once again, when more airship missives, this time attached to iron arrows, were claimed to have been sent earthward by the mystery craft as it passed near that city. These letters were rich with information on the

mystery airship's mission. 36.

Greenburg, Indiana came up with an intriguing case on April 15th. A multi-colored sight ^{had} made its appearance in the night sky there. The report of the sightings told of a trio of lights: green, red, and one large white headlight centered between its tinted associates. The colors changed positions occasionally and once in a while dimmed to extinguishment. An enthusiastic professor named George Keely had posted himself in a tower to await just such an airship passage, and when the strange trio of lights appeared, Mr. Keely climbed down from his perch to boast of the advantage his foresight had permitted. The recent polychromatic visitor, he stated, had been a 60-foot cigar-shaped balloon with a 20 foot enclosed cab slung underneath. Professor Keely said he spied a bearded old man and a young blade sporting a "cuban crushed hat" which evidently made up the crew. Both skysailers were clearly seen though the car's windows, Keely claimed. 37.

When ^{the} rumor reached the Topeka State Journal, April 16th, that the airship had arrived over the suburbs of Washington D.C., the report must have generated talk about the craft's voyage being completed, yet the ^{new} versions of airship tales ^{that kept} cropping up got more elaborate. 38.

Waterloo, Iowa, previously the location of a pile junk a fellow claimed was ^{famous successful} the airship and charged 5,000 persons a small fee to see, again made headlines with a yarn that told of a functional flying machine landing on a Waterloo farm for repairs and that onlookers that gathered were held at bay.

by an armed guard. Allegedly the parked airship was covered with a fabric sealed with repeated layers of varnish in order to protect the craft on its forecoming round the world trip. That ^{much} the guard was suppose to have told the people. he was warning away. 39.

A slightly more believable account of an airship report came in from Parkerburg, West Virginia on April 17th:

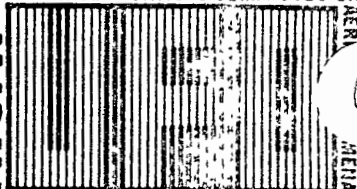
"What is believed to be an airship passed westward over this city at 9 o'clock last night. It was seen by a dozen responsible persons. The visitor was the shape and size of a box-car, with a flashing headlight. A red, a white, and a blue light were seen. The object's speed was about eight or ten miles per hour." 40.

And then a theme to top the tales from Waterloo, Iowa, showed up in the Dallas Morning News on April 19th, concerning ~~a~~ the small community of Aurora, Texas. According to the news item citizens of Aurora had been startled 6 o'clock in the morning of the 17th by an airship that zoomed low and as a result ran into a windmill, exploding and destroying both the windmill and the flying machine. The story asserted that the remains of the aerial vessel's pilot and an examination of papers discovered in wreckage covered with incomprehensible heiraglyphics proved: that the pilot: "...was not an inhabitant of this world(!)". A member of the U.S. Signal Service, an officer by the name of T.J. Weems, was suppose to have aired his belief the crashed airship and its helmsman must have been from the planet Mars! 41.

UFO INVESTIGATOR

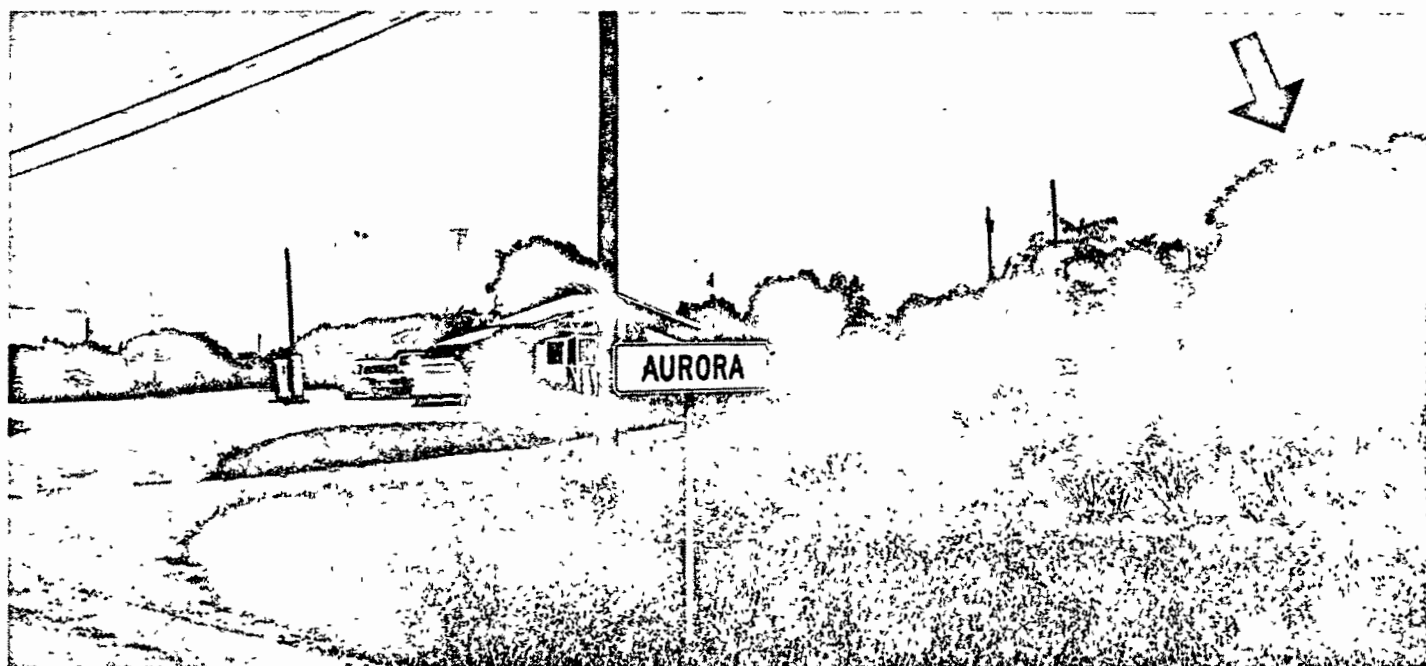
NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON

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POSSIBLE GRAVE OF 'AIRSHIP' PILOT SOUGHT IN OLD TEXAS COWTOWN



Small gas station at edge of Aurora, Texas, is owned by Brawley Oates, whose property includes grove of trees in right background (arrow) that hides old well site where strange "airship" reportedly crashed in 1897. Body of pilot was allegedly recovered at crash site. (Photo courtesy William Case)

Discovery of a grave suspected to contain the remains of an 1897 "airship" occupant has put the subject of UFOs back on the nation's front pages.

Evidence uncovered late last month indicates the alleged crash of a strange aerial device near Aurora, Texas, in April 1897 may be factual, including the reported burial of a "small man" whose dismembered body was supposedly recovered from the wreckage and interred in the Aurora cemetery.

Aviation writer William Case, of the Dallas *Times-Herald*, has reported to NICAP that his search for information on the crash has led to an obscure gravesite marked only by a small stone on which a crude drawing has been cut of an elongated object. Although partially obliterated by effects of the weather, the drawing closely resembles eyewitness descriptions of the object reported over Aurora on April 17, 1897.

According to Case, metal fragments found at the alleged crash site have been submitted to scientists in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for analysis. Preliminary results

indicate most of the samples are ordinary materials, although one remains a puzzle. Dr. Thomas Gray, a physicist at North Texas State University, says his tests have shown the unidentified sample is predominately iron and zinc. Unlike most materials containing large amounts of iron, this sample is nonmagnetic.

Early reports from Aurora indicated legal steps had been taken by an Oklahoma UFO group to exhume the body of the alleged UFO occupant, despite resistance from local residents. According to Case, these reports are inaccurate, since no legally acceptable basis for exhumation has been established.

Initial reports of the alleged crash appeared in Texas newspapers on April 19, 1897. The Dallas *Morning News* reported that early risers in Aurora on April 17 "were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing throughout the country." The paper said the object was spotted about 6 a.m. coming from the south at very low altitude. It passed over the Aurora town square and

moved north towards a small hill owned by a judge named J.S. Proctor. As it traveled over Proctor's yard, it struck a wooden tower atop his well and exploded. The blast threw debris over "several acres," wrecking both the tower and the judge's flower garden. Persons who arrived at the scene found a badly disfigured body, which was moved to the Aurora cemetery a few hours later and buried on April 18.

Reportedly, one of the witnesses to the explosion was a farmer named James Stephens, whose son Charles still lives in Aurora. Now 86, "Charlie" Stephens recently told newsmen he remembers his father talking about the incident:

"It was just a big light up there, and he seen it and didn't know what it was. He said, 'I'm going to Aurora in the morning and see...' They were scared to death, they didn't know what it was. They thought the world was coming to an end. My daddy often took me up there in a wagon. I can show you within 20 feet of where that

(See Grave, Page 3)

Grave

(Continued from Page 1)

thing crashed. It was all burned around there."

Stephens added that his father did not see the object prior to the explosion and did not view the wreckage until the following day. Stephens said he did not recall his father saying anything about a body.

In the last week of May, Case located a 91-year-old woman, Mrs. Mary Evans, who lived in Aurora in 1897 and claims to remember the day the crash occurred. A teenager at the time, Mrs. Evans told Case her parents visited the scene of the wreck and saw the body but would not allow her to go with them. Her parents described the man as about four feet tall.

The property where Proctor lived has been owned for the past 26 years by Brawley Oates, who now runs a small gas

who normally rules on such matters, would not likely approve a petition without additional evidence that exhumation would be justified. Many of the graves in the cemetery contain the bodies of children stricken in a typhoid epidemic that hit the Aurora area the same year of the supposed crash.

The Aurora sighting was only one of many alleged observations of an airship traveling over Texas and other parts of the country in April 1897. Most accounts described the object as shaped like a dirigible and powered by two propeller-type engines, one on each side of the object. Some witnesses said the airship had a rotating blade on top, portholes on the underside, and a bright light at the front. It was reported to move at an estimated speed of 10-12 miles per hour.

The gravestone drawing discovered by Case shows a rough outline of what appears to be a cigar-shaped device with o-

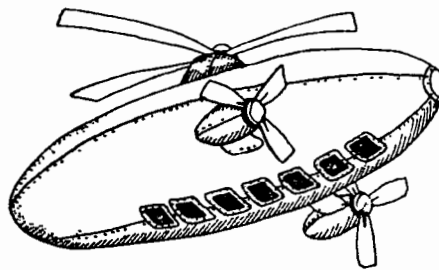
with no inscription. It was among those stolen by vandals.

In mid May, a man who gave his name as Frank N. Kelley appeared at the Oates' property and took readings in the chicken yard with a metal detector. He unearthed various metal fragments in mounds of dirt and told newsmen, "In more than 25 years of recovering metal...I've never seen metal like that." Newsmen who later tried to contact Kelley discovered the address he had given them was fictitious. Sources in Corpus Christi, Texas, where Kelley said he lived, also reported no record of such a person. Kelley described himself as a treasure hunter and geologist.

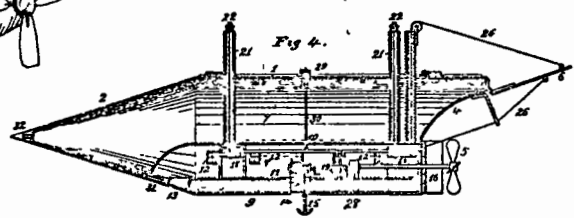
The Aurora case is reminiscent of the incident that occurred near Alamosa, Colorado, in September 1967, when the remains of a horse named Snippy were discovered on a desert ranch. Speculation that Snippy had been killed by a UFO



Gravestone at site where "airship" pilot may be buried shows vague outline of what could be front half of ship. Circles could be windows or other structural features. Outline has been sketched over with chalk to make it easier to photograph. (Photo courtesy William Case)



Artist's sketch of "airship" reported over various towns during April 1897 shows dirigible-like construction and prop-type engines. Object that crashed at Aurora was reportedly made of "unknown metal resembling mixture of aluminum and silver." (Art courtesy Southern Living)



In summer of 1896, California inventor Charles A. Smith was granted patent for this airship design, which used screw-propeller and internal engine. Patent application said ship would be made of "aluminum alloy" and filled with "hydrogen or other gas." (Art courtesy U.S. Patent Office)

station on it. Oates reports he helped seal the old well in 1945, along with the local marshall, H.R. Idell, and a nephew. The site is presently occupied by a chicken yard, with the former well housing being used as a coop. The metal fragments removed for analysis were dug up from the well site and yard.

The Aurora cemetery is owned by a small association of local citizens, who are anxiously trying to protect the property from souvenir hunters. Since late March, when the Oklahoma group announced plans to seek an exhumation order, 20 tombstones have been stolen and other vandalism reported. The association has been forced to post guards at the site and may seek a court injunction to keep out the continuing string of visitors.

Because of the vandalism and other disruptions caused by the publicity, most of Aurora's small population is opposed to any attempt at exhumation. Since the exact gravesite, if not the entire crash story, is still in question, the local county judge,

openings on the bottom and a structural feature at the nose. Case says the stone has been broken and does not contain the complete drawing. No trace has been found of the missing section.

In 1897, balloon technology was well advanced, and motor-driven dirigibles had been successfully flown in Europe. Although no evidence exists that inventors had developed powered airships in the United States as early as 1897, it is known that a patent for a self-propelled dirigible had been granted by the U.S. Patent Office in 1896 and a device of this kind was developed in Texas near the turn of the century. It is a matter of speculation whether unrecorded experimental flights could account for some of the airship sightings.

Prior to Case's discovery of the gravesite, the Oklahoma group had selected another burial plot as the probable location of the alleged pilot's grave. The exact spot they chose was among other graves known to have been dug in the late 1890s. The only marker at the spot was a small rock

brought news reporters on the run and triggered a spate of headlines that still turn up in books on UFOs. Investigators eventually determined that Snippy most likely died from an apparent infection associated with two bullet wounds in its hindquarters. Snippy's skeleton is presently on display in an Alamosa pottery shop.

Aurora, Texas, unlike Alamosa, is a virtual ghost town, located some 30-odd miles northwest of Fort Worth in rural country. In 1897, it boasted a population of 3000 and was a busy stop on the old Chisholm Trail. Cotton buyers and cattlemen frequented its 15 saloons, generating enough news to support a local paper. Some present citizens of Aurora have suggested the airship report was a joke cooked up by railroad men, possibly as a stimulus to business. Other skeptics point to a 19th-century news correspondent named S. E. Hayden, whose financial interest in the cotton trade may have prompted him to indulge in fanciful public relations for Aurora. Hayden wrote a story about the Aurora crash.

That such a sophisticated theme turned up in a Dallas newspaper back in April of 1897 need not be surprising. Indeed, the Victorian age had been introduced to more polished version at exactly this time, a coincident that should not be ignored. The first installment of H.G.Wells' War of the Worlds had reached the public in the May issue of Cosmopolitan magazine and was being advertized in most leading newspapers.^{42.} H.G.Wells did not write his fiction novel of interplanetary war with the airship mystery in mind, and if his brother Frank had not suggested the idea, the gifted visionary may never have put pen to paper in regards to the subject. Once unleashed, however, the genius of Wells produced a sciencefiction classic. To introduce his war between worlds Wells used the following quotes from Kepler:

"But who shall dwell in these worlds if they be inhabited...Are we or they Lords of the World? ...And how are all things made for man?" 43,

Meanwhile, reports of a mysterious spindle shapes with small running lights continued to turn up in the newspapers even without sensational elaborations.

Bathing Sisterville, West Virginia with its searchlight, a phantom spindle cruised over that town for a considerable time and the streets below were jammed with gawkers, if one can believe what was printed in the Sisterville paper. 44.

And then, on the days of April 20th and 21st, the 1897 air-ship story reached its climax. First, the curtain came down on ^{the inventor business.} A

Someone in Astoria, Illinios, with a talent for publicity, stuck an iron arrow in the ground and tied a message to it.

The arrow was ^{later} discovered and taken immediately to the Astoria telegraph office. The New York newspapers were alerted because the message turned out to be a letter addressed to America's foremost inventor: Thomas A. Edison. The message read:

"From airship. Notice to the finder: Please mail letter inside. Passed over about 2:30 P.M. on April 16, 1897, Friday, about 2,300 feet high, going east and north. Excuse dirt as just got done oiling. (Signed) Harris." 45.

Tuesday, April 20th the following appeared in the New York Herald written by a reporter of that paper:

"I showed Mr. Edison yesterday afternoon the letter published in the Herald.

'This is the latest, isn't it?', inquired he, leaning back in his chair and glancing over the letter a second time. 'You can take it from me that this is a pure fake. I have had several men in my employ, but I know nothing of C.L. Harris.'

Mr. Edison then grew more thoughtful and stated that he had no doubt that airships will be successfully constructed in the near future. In reference to the western 'airship' he added: ' --It is absolutely absurd to imagine that a man would construct a successful airship and keep the matter secret. When I was young we used to construct big colored balloons, inflate them with gas and would float for days.

Whenever an airship is made it will not be in the form of a balloon. It will be a mechanical contrivance, which will be raised by means of a very powerful motor of little weight. At present no one has discovered such a motor, but we never know what will happen. We may wake up some morning and hear of some invention which sets us all eagerly to work within a few hours, as was the case with the Roentgen rays."

'I am not, however, figuring on inventing an airship. I prefer to devote my time to objects which have some commercial value. At best airships would be only toys.' 46.

The Edison interview brought speculation in the New York newspapers more or less to a close, since the great Jehova of inventing had spoken and the airship idea found wanting.

The airship sightings ^{themselves} reached a climax on the following day, the 21st, when an affidavit was filed in the small town of Le Roy, Kansas. At first glance the episode seems truly mysterious, but considering other cases containing similar details: dangling ropes, red lights in the sky, cigar-shaped objects with carriages slung underneath, affidavits of honesty, tales of Martian airship pilots, ect., ect., the account loses a lot of its credibility. One ^{can} say this though, Mr. Hamilton, if he was fibbing, carefully omitted any detail that would be a dead giveaway. All factors considered there is no way of ascertaining the veracity of the following statement, though a check made in the 1960s established the fact that the people mentioned in the case really existed:

"Last Monday night about 10:30 we were awakened by a noise among the cattle. I arose, thinking that perhaps my bulldog was performing his pranks, but upon going to the door saw to my utter astonishment that an airship was slowly descending upon my cow lot, about forty rods (660 feet) from the house.

Calling my tenant, Gil Heslip, and my son Wall, we seized some axes and ran to the corral. Meanwhile the ship had been gently descending until it was not more than thirty feet above the ground, and we came within fifty yards of it.

It consisted of a great cigar-shaped portion, possibly three hundred feet long, with a carriage underneath. The carriage was made of glass or some other transparent substance alternating with a narrow strip of some other material. It was brightly lighted within and everything was plainly visible -- it was occupied by six of the strangest beings I ever saw. They were jabbering together but we could not understand a word they said.

Every part of the vessel which was not transparent was of a dark reddish color. We stood mute with wonder and fright. Then some noise attracted their attention and they turned a light directly upon us. Immediately on catching sight of us they turned on some unknown power, and a great turbine wheel, about thirty feet in diameter, which was revolving slowly below the craft, began to buzz and the vessel rose lightly as a bird. When about three hundred feet above us it seemed to pause and to hover directly above a two-year-old heifer, which was bawling and

jumping, apparently fast in the fence. Going to her, we found a cable about half an inch in thickness made of some red material fastened in a slip knot around her neck and going up to the vessel from the heifer tangled in the wire fence. We tried to get it off but could not, so we cut the wire loose to see the ship, heifer and all, rise slowly, disappearing in the northwest.

We went home but I was so frightened I could not sleep. Rising early Tuesday I started out on my horse, hoping to find some trace of my cow. This I failed to do, but coming back in the evening found that Link Thomas, about three or four miles west of Le Roy, had found the hide, legs and head in his field that day. He, thinking that someone had butchered a stolen beast, had brought the hide to town for identification, but was greatly mystified in not being able to find any tracks in the soft ground. After identifying the hide by my brand, I went home. But every time I would drop to sleep I would see the cursed thing, with its big lights and hideous people. I don't know whether they were devils or angels, or what; but I don't want any more to do with them."

by Mr.

The foregoing account was signed, Alexander Hamilton, of Le Roy, Kansas on April 21, 1897. Attached to the above statement was the following affidavit:

"Hamilton has been a resident of Kansas and known all over Woodson, Allen, Coffey and Anderson counties. He was a member of the House of Representatives. He staked his sacred honor upon the truth of his story.

As there are now, always have been and always will be skeptics and unbelievers whenever the truth of anything bordering the improbable is presented, and knowing that some ignorant or suspicious people will doubt the truthfulness of the above statement, now therefore we, the undersigned, do hereby make the following affidavit:

That we have known Alexander Hamilton for one to thirty years, and that for truth and veracity we have never heard his word questioned, and that we do verily believe his statement to be true and correct.

Signed:

E. W. Wharton, State Oil Inspector

M. E. Hunt, Sheriff

W. Lauber, Deputy Sheriff

H. H. Winter, Banker

H. S. Johnson, Pharmacist

J. H. Stitcher, Attorney

Alexander Stewart, Justice of the Peace

F. W. Martin, Registrar of Deeds,

and H. C. Rollins, Postmaster

47.

Subscribed and sworn before me this 21st day of April, 1897."*

Reports of airships and strange lights sailing in the heavens tapered off toward the end of April and the New York dailies turned their attentions to the world of recognized fiction. The popularity of H.G.Wells' War of the Worlds grew in scope and William Heinemann, the London publishing house, made plans to bring the serialized novel out in hardback.

William R. Hearst, the young dynamic editor of the New York Journal-American, sensed the impact of the Martian invasion theme and employed the popular science writer Garrett P. Serviss to produce a sequel to Wells' work. Serviss thrilled the readership of the Journal with: "Edison's Conquest of Mars", in the spring of 1898, just after the termination of the Wells

* Another story appeared at this time which asserted that an airship had snagged a church steeple with its iron anchor, and that a man in a sailor suit climbed down the anchor rope to the craft. The foregoing story is no doubt inspired by an old English legend. An account of this old tale appeared in the Salt Lake Tribune on March 7, 1897, p. 15, just prior to the mid west airship flap. This fact helps to weaken the rature sensational Alexander Hamilton, LeRoy, Kansas episode.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

BY H. G. WELLS



I.

THE EVE OF THE WAR.

NO one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their affairs they were scrutinized and studied perhaps almost as closely as a man with a microscope might scrutinize the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this little globe about their affairs, dreaming themselves the highest creatures in the whole vast universe, and serene in their assurance of their empire over matter. It is just possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space, or thought of them only to dismiss the idea of life upon them as impossible or improbable. At most, terrestrial men fancied there might be other men upon Mars—probably inferior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet, across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to the beasts that perish, intellects vast and cool and unsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew up their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the great disillusionment. The planet Mars, I may remind the reader, revolves about the sun at a mean distance of one hundred and forty million miles, and the light and heat it receives from the sun are scarcely half of that received by this world. It must be, if the nebular hypothesis has any truth, older than our world, and long before this earth ceased to be molten, life upon its



[Although Mr. Wells is a comparatively young man, his name has become, within a very few years, a familiar one in all English-speaking lands. His books number a scant half dozen, yet they have achieved the widest reputation, not only because of the attractive style in which Mr. Wells clothes his brilliant imaginings, but also by reason of the underlying vein of philosophical suggestion. "The Time Machine," "The Wonderful Visit," "The Wheel of Chance," and "The Island of Dr. Moreau," are the stories upon which Mr. Wells' reputation is founded. The editor of THE COSMOPOLITAN hazards the opinion that "The War of the Worlds" will be regarded by the public as much in advance of any previous work of this author.—EDITOR.]

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serial in the December issue of the Cosmopolitan. The author Serviss conceived a stirring counterattack ~~against Mars~~ by the scientists of earth in answer to the aggression from the planet named after the god of war. A fleet of spaceships, wingless, portholed torpedos, captained by the planet earth's chief scientist, Thomas Edison, are pictured sweeping down on the red planet and laying waste to that hostile globe with disintegrator rays.

Amid all this fiction though, there was an interesting acknowledgement, in the August, 1897 issue of the Cosmopolitan, by Wells, ^{to the effect} that the heavens did hold some unsolved mysteries. On page 391 of the magazine Wells had the following inserted:

"In the first installment of this story it was stated (the grain of fact from which the story grew) that a light had been seen on the unilluminated part of Mars 'first' by Perceval, of Nice, in 1894. This statement involved a slight to the Lick Observatory, whereat similar lights were observed as early as 1800 --a fact I was unaware at the time of writing the story. I trust any American astronomer who may read this story will acquit me of intentional discourtesy." 48.

Whether stories of strange shapes and lights in the sky in 1896-and 1897 contained their own "grains of fact" mixed in with a lot fiction-remains an intriguing ephemeral mystery, as elusive as a filament of fog vanishing around a corner at night. The possibility there may have been something real and important behind the airship sightings went unchallenged and uninvestigated. The mass of data became a sleeping giant.

In any event the airship story did ^{not} end here. Reporters were sent by the New York World to interview the famous multi-millionaire John Jacob Astor. Mr. Astor's wealth (\$80,000,000)

made possible a very active life style and being blessed with a healthy body and a vigorous mind, he was equal to the opportunities money provided. During the Spanish-American war Mr. Astor would raise and equip a complete battery of artillery at his own expense and personally lead the unit into battle, exhibiting both dash and bravery, however such was the adventurous spirit of this remarkable man, he envisioned places and events offering challenges far exceeding those of the Victorian era. He dreamed of the year 2001 when a trio of scientists might leave earth and speed toward the giant planet Jupiter in ~~an~~ ^{an} aircraft utilizing an anti-gravity substance he called: "energy". This craft, a spaceship shaped like a bullet and constructed of glass and "glucinum", Astor saw in his mind's eye dodging comets and asteroids on its way to the fifth planet and back. The imagined voyage was written and published by the rich New Yorker, and probably largely forgotten until, after just returning from Europe in April, 1897, some newspaper men descended upon him. The newspaper reporters mentioned the the amazing airship "Callisto" in Astor's book: A Journey In
Other Worlds ^{49.} and compared the prophetized machine with the reports of similar bullet-shaped airships recently reported ~~r~~
~~K~~ over the mid-west. To such a suggestion Mr. Astor gave this cautious response:

"I hope the reports from the West that an airship has been seen in practical operation may be verified ... 'I know nothing of the matter except what has been printed in the newspapers, and, of course, no definite conclusion can be reached from the rather hazy data so far secured.'" ^{50.}

Trumps sounded an opening chord that swelled into an immense orchestral paean. Richard Strauss' homage to Nietzsche, Also Sprach Zarathustra, meant to musically convey the various phases of mankind's religious and scientific evolution, burst forth in all its magnificent glory for a thrilled first-night crowd in Berlin. One music critic attending the 1896 premiere jotted down his impression in bold graphite strokes: "dangerously sublime".

In the United States, meanwhile, a shy, heavysset, American was quietly absorbed in a Victorian literary romance, ^{Astor} A Journey In the Other Worlds, a fictional voyage to the planet Jupiter in the far off year of 2001. After finishing the novel, the ^{two} twenty-year-old reader returned to the preface to ponder the advice offered by the author John Jacob Astor. Lashing out at contemporary scientific thought, Astor had written:

"There can be no question that there are many forces and influences in Nature whose existence we as yet little more than suspect. How much more interesting it would be if, instead of reiterating our past achievements, the magazines and literature of the period should devote their consideration to what we do not know! It is only through investigation and research that inventions come; we may discover something of perhaps greater moment. It is probable that the principle glories of the future will be found in as yet little trodden paths..." /.

Something glimmered in the mind of the young man, a fellow by the name of Charles Fort, who happened to be skilled at shorthand and having an inborn appetite for mysteries. The main preoccupation of Fort's life was now decided. Henceforth, a library would be Fort's favorite haunt.

Born August 9, 1874, Charles Fort was one of three sons of an Albany, New York businessman, a Victorian father whose word was the law in the family. Charles rebelled against the hard Victorian discipline and ^{that} probably was the reason he craved excitement tinged with irreverence. In later years it would mean trouble for the sacred cow of science.

For Charles and his brothers, games of imagination had to do ^{because of} ~~for~~ the lack of ready-made ones modern youth enjoy, a particular favorite being one patterned after the historic Guy Fawkes "Gunpower Plot", England's equivalent to America's Fourth of July. One likes to imagine good old Charlie still playing his game to the hilt, tunneled under our civilization and surrounded by kegs of explosive data.

In school Charles Fort preferred to give comic speeches to turning out impeccable test papers, yet he was no fool and showed an early talent for taking accurate notes on his surroundings which eventually led to a position on the staff of the Albany Democrat as a cub reporter.

About 1892 Fort took off and traveled thirty thousand miles all around the world, subsisting on a slim legacy willed to him, riding the rails and sleeping in the open under the stars. Practically a tramp, Fort soaked up a vast store of experiences and information nonetheless, one important event being the reading of Astor's A Journey In Other Worlds.

In 1896 Fort settled down in New York and his life gained some direction and stability. Through his future seemed to lie in straight newsreporting, Fort's spirit of independence

prompted forays by him into more expressive writing: short stories, feature articles, and novels.

Having taken a wife, Fort was hard pressed for awhile to make a living and he remained on the edge of poverty for years. Trapped by finances in a Bronx clapboard tenement amid the noisy clamor of a slum, Fort, nevertheless, managed to keep his clownish outlook on life, for his early writings were warm accounts of his rundown neighborhood. His literary output had to bring in the groceries, so expediency kept a brake on any unconventional leanings. Even so, at times, the furniture had to be broken up to keep the family hearth supplied in the winter. 2.

Meanwhile Fort found time to thumb through bound volumes of scientific journals at the huge New York Public Library with an eye out for strange facts that science may have ignored. His labors uncovered hundreds of items.

A typical head-scratcher found was the phantom companion of the cloud veiled planet of Venus. In 1645, Fort learned, by consulting pages penned by scientists, a large, unexplained body was seen by telescope near the Cytherean world, even though science was sure the second planet out from the sun had no lunar attendant. Astronomers Cassini and Short, each using an array of optical instruments and eyepieces, checked and double-checked, before notifying their colleagues. A scientist named Maigne reported a similar satellite four times during the first weeks of May, 1761, and even described the object as presenting a phase. Observers Rodkier and Horrebow concurred with the other witnesses of the "new discovery" after searches with own telescopes in the month of March, 1764.

Another student of the night sky, Montbaron, followed up with three more visual confirmations the latter part of the same month. Finally, planetary expert Scheuten claimed that he had checked the Venusian transit of the sun in 1761 and detected the supposed luminary of the Cytherean night tagging along with its parent orb. M. Baudouin utilized Montaigne's observations of the alledged phase of the Venusian moon and calculated a diameter of 2,000 miles. The celestial authority Houzeau even went so far as to cristen the new found sphere "Neith", however after the year 1767 this tiny world was never seen again.

Richard Proctor, a sober scientific author, wrote in his survey of the heavens, Other Worlds Than Ours (1897), that the peer-a-boo episode with the elusive and now total vanished Venusian moon was: "...one of the most perplexing enigmas that has ever been presented to astronomers".³

Charles Fort, Proctor's contemporary, regarded the same rogue morsel, and no doubt with a bellow and roar, penciled the blasphemous oddment on some foolscrap. Fort adjusted his intellectual bifocals and discerned a "super-construction" as responsible for the planetary size bit of prestiditation. By a "super-construction" he meant a vessel of sorts from a super-Rome.

A lesser known bit of esoteric was sniffed out of the Annual Register by Fort, now a bloodhound on the trail of the improbable, concerning a M. DeRostan, a Paris based astronomer, who was giving his attention to the Sun's disk on August 9, 1762, when a vast spindle shaped form became noticeable by its eclipsing a portion of the solar limb. For a month that observer tracked the black profile's progress as its tortoise drift eventually

moved it off the Sun's face. No scientific crowd had registered this quasi-datum like the mysterious moon "Neith", save for an interesting exception. A German many leagues from Paris had set down his own daily accounts of the opaque spindle's traverse of the Sun's disk. An exchange of notes between the two observers on the phenomenon, which at first glance seemed to have been an unusual sunspot, showed that the German diagramed a different path than the Frenchman, which indicated, because of parallax, the solar blemish must have crusing in space, pacing the earth. What's more, M. DeRostan believed he discerned a nebulosity around the weird torpedo. Fort pondered the story and suggested one should credit the misty penumbra to an atmosphere and the umbra to a super-zeppelin, while he smiled and named the whole object: "Monstrator".⁴ In Fort's mind something was out there, something had dropped anchor.

On the eve of the French Revolution (1786), a violent storm struck northern Europe and amid its fury like some errie omen a ball of fire moved to and fro over a field in England for 40 minutes, a duration of time that did not fit either a meteor or ball lightning.⁵ For Fort it could have only been a kind of cyclops without a body.

These early Philistines existed on yellowed paper and contemporaries of Fort considered them erroneous, nevertheless one person believed. Charles Fort drew, dreamed, and scratched, a new quasiness: something had arrived,

On September 7, 1820, eyes turned skyward to behold a rare wonder of nature: an eclipse of the Sun by the Moon. Fort dug out of a French journal, Annals de Chimie, the recorded fact

that over one French town during the eclipse residents could see⁶ objects they could ^{not} explain maneuvering overhead with parade precision. The simple peasants just could not mentally digest the prodigy.

Fort, who examined considerable amounts of newspaper files and great numbers of scientific journals covering the 19th century, never found the slightest hint of any "alien ambassadors" approaching an earthman to introduce themselves. It could be earth's "guests" were a timid lot, or the culture on the third planet out from the star Sol was unappealing, yet has it ever been? Another possibility could have been that "they" were busy elsewhere, perhaps on what the poets call the orb of dreams and mystery.

Turning a page, Fort discovered that on October 20, 1824, there was seen, on that part of the Moon in darkness, strange lights and that Mare Crisium in particular treated curious earthmen to a brilliant lunar display, at times dots, and at times streaks.⁷ On July 4, 1832, there were more of the same.

Fort isolated something from the Malta Times, dated June 18, 1845, which told of a British ship that logged an extraordinary occurrence while sailing in the eastern portion of the Mediterranean Sea. The British vessel's lookout noticed a commotion in the water about a mile and a half away. Glowing objects were seen leaping from the sea into the clouds.⁸ At least the editor of the Times did not disguise the phenomenon with his own interpretation. Take, for example, what Fort underlined in the Scientific American, dated September 29, 1877, which called an unknown light reported hovering in the sky a

"stationary meteor".

March and December, 1847, according to Fort's investigations, there more unexplained lights on the Moon. Volcanos?

Those who Fort called ostrich-thinkers preferred to ignore the likes of the next item. Fort scissored from the London Times a clipping of a dispatch from Inverness, Scotland, September 19, 1848, which told of large unexplained lights roaming the sky up that way. What's more, a year later, in 1849, an explosion rattled those same haunted skies which then sent down a single hailstone. Not much of a storm, but that bit of ice did its best. Even Fort was a little amazed when he read that the single hailstone had a twenty foot circumference!⁹

Something was seen over the hills hard by Petworth, England, on August 11, 1855, having a red color and throwing out rays of light in a wheelspoke pattern. Fort called it a "construction".¹⁰ One meditates on the word "construction" for how can such concept be entertained if these things in sky never took the time to land? What possible evidence could support such a strange theory of "constructions" defying gravity long before man had achieved powered flight? What Fort found amused him greatly, for this additional evidence had two characteristics that appealed to his clownish outlook. The material was both bizzare and puzzling. After considerable labor Fort accumulated a large number of accounts of strange showers.

One case described a red rain soaking a certain section of Siena, Italy, on December 28, 1860. The same area received the same downpour for four straight days.¹¹ Were the episodes due to some artificial agency?

Fort exhumed a particularly frightening item from the crypt of buried and forgotten data when he discovered in an old newspaper that Memphis, Tennessee, had been subject to a muti-thousand shower of snakes, ranging from 12-18 inches in lenght, on January 15, 1877.^{12.}

But Fort came across some data even more creepy than the fore-mentioned rain of vipers. Reading the writings of Fort we are directed to check the San Francisco Evening Bulletin of August 9, 1869. The Bulletin reported the fall of flesh, strips of meat which included skin covered with brown hair. Furthermore, Fort discovered a similar item in the Scientific American stating that on March 3, 1876, at Olympian Springs, Kentucky, organic matter tumbled down out of the sky on an area a several hundred feet square. Careful examination of samples picked up at the scene identified fragments of cartilage, muscle, and lung tissue.^{13.}

And then if the strangeness of the showers were not enough, Fort could quench the doubts of sceptics with a bewildering variety; he could drown them with downpours of the inexplicable. A shower of rancid oil, a deluge of turpentine, and rains the shade of black ink, ~~have~~ (all been recorded at one time or another). At least in previous mentioned categories there had been a resemblance to something wet like real rain. How about hunks of lignite as big as coconuts, seeds partly germinated, or a slab of limestone --200 pounds worth! Such deviations from the everyday weather we all are familiar with taxes our sanity.

One proposes, naturally, that a rain of anything not true

precipitation must have been sucked aloft by tornadic winds. This makes some sense so we try to avert our eyes from the likes of lignite or limestone and consider what else Fort has to offer logically carried up by a waterspout or other air currents.

How about a fall of frogs? But before we can reach for a conclusion, Fort raps our fingers with this: the fact that thousands of little croakers had tumbled out of a clear sky on a calm day. We try again. A fall of fish was recorded which seems unmysterious. But Fort intervences again, he's left out a couple of details. The shower, he finds, covered only an area of 80X20 feet square and again fell out of a calm and weather clear sky. What's more the fall of fish reoccurred ten mintues later at the same spot. Moreover, on many occasions the fish were of a variety not found in local lakes or streams. 14.

Here is a series ~~Fort found~~ which was among the most baffling in Fort's files. Three torrents of fish were recorded. The first consists of live, thrashing examples of evidently fresh whirlwind ejectmenta. And then Fort distrubes us with a second finny episode, a fall of fish bone dry, but before we can recover our wits, there is presented a devastating clout to our brains: a downpour of headless, rotten, denizens of the deep. 15.

Fort shows us the Monthly Weather Review for June 16, 1882. This journal would not have the effrontery to indulge in anything offbeat we suppose, however tha Bronx eccentric

6
 fingers an item about the city of Dubuque, Iowa, where large hailstones fell --with live frogs inside! 16.

One would think that anything with the ability to break the bounds of gravity would be unafraid of mere humans, but Fort ran across the following. On October 4th in the year 1869, we have the word of some English fishermen with their hands on Bibles that something rested on the water with the appearance of being all aflame ten miles off Plymouth. A burning ship was their guess until the glowing blob jumped into the air at their approach and fled among the clouds. 17.

6
 Another fragment of Fort. On a day in March in 1870, deckhands on the ship Lady of the Lake experienced something that would astonish their drinking buddies when the hit port. A circular object had coasted high over their ship. The strange thing was marked off in divisions like a pie and was trailing a long curved tail of some sort. 18.

Fort also listed a note made from the journal Comptes Rendus about a luminous object moving slowly through the air and executing an occasional turn, seen on August 1, 1871. 19.

So many "meteors", similar to the ones Fort studied, were taking such inexplicable amounts of time to "fall", that even the famed French astronomer Flammarion recognized their uniqueness and created a specially named category for them: "bradytes".

6
 In the Report of the British Association for the year 1877, Fort singled out an artical that mentioned a remarkably slow group of meteors. He took issue with the lack of strength of the word: "remarkable". 20.

In Fort's research work there are many references to luminous bodies moving through the air and some had interesting details. For example, not every flying light flew high in the atmosphere. On July 30, 1880, three flying lights silently investigated a ravine near St. Petersburg (Leningrad), Russia.²¹ The three minute phenomenon found its way into a French scientific journal where Fort ran across it, but no one in air minded Paris suggested an airship solution. Perhaps Russian science was held in low regard.

In September, 1883, a luminosity was seen in the sky over Perth, Australia, which observers believed a comet, but Fort had his doubts when the newspaper, the Perth Inquirer, mentioned that the aerial interloper at one time threw out a searchlight beam.²² Also, Fort cut from the Staits Times an article dated October 13, 1883, that told of a comet-like apparition that paid a visit to the sky of Samarung, Malaya. The local natives became terrified at the sight and sent up clouds of incense to appease the gods. Only two months before nearby Krakatoa volcano had blasted a cubic mile of earth thousands of feet into the air, in the biggest explosion of recorded history, and that would have been enough to test anyone's nerves.²³

In the publication Nature, Fort learned, it says that in 1893, sailors aboard the ships: Caroline and Leander witnessed a strange phenomenon in the sky as their ships sailed a galeane through the East China Sea in the month of February. Luminous globe-like objects flew alongside the Caroline, pacing the ship for two hours. The crew of the Caroline was intrigued when the phantom lights were mirrored in the water and were seen to

pass behind an island, both improbable feats for a hallucination. The H.M.S. Leander came across the same glowing globes soon after the Caroline had left the area. The Leander's bold Captain, a gentleman named Castle, turned his ship and aimed the vessel right at the odd lights pacing him. The fiery objects, milling around close together and occasionally trailing out in a single line like a tail on a kite, recoiled from the Leander's charge and rose far out of reach. 24,

One of Fort's favorite sources, the English Mechanic, received an account from Stockholm about a strange red colored light in the sky oblong in shape, that explored the heavens over Sweden for ten hours on the 8th of February, 1892. The sight was termed by the Swedish observer as an extraordinary spectacle. 25,

This Swedish item brings us up to the mid-1890's when the big airship flap occurred in California, an excitement that worked its way east, where Fort was following the controversy in the New York newspapers. With his discerning mind, Fort pondered the picturesque elaborations in William Randolph Heart's Journal-American and the scoffing of Northwestern University's Professor Hough, who proposed that the mystery lights were due to the Orion Constellation seen under unusual atmospheric conditions. With the absurd ^{explanations} ~~tales~~ by so-called experts in mind, Fort penned a very perceptive prediction for the benefit of later generations. We will save this gem ^{this book's epilogue} for ~~another chapter~~, until then, let us move beyond the big airship wave of 1896-97.

As the 1800s came to close, a significant sighting of something in the air took place at Lille, France, September 4, 1898. According to the journal Cosmos, a crimson glow appeared in the night sky. As we have learned, mysterious lights in the heavens are not necessarily a rare event, however the phenomenon over Lille was examined carefully through a small telescope and prove to be a somewhat different breed. An oblong shape all aglow was discerned, ~~which~~ ^{it} had a violet band running down its whole length ~~and~~ with the main body of the object broken up into vertical stripes of red and black. After a while the strange thing rushed away and in the process emitted somekind of luminous emission. ^{26.} While points of light in the sky may be blamed, with some success, on the unsteady image of a bright star or some other conventional phenomenon, visions of weird spindles remarkably similar to one another could not be dismissed so easily. In exactly fifty years it would be just such a multi-colored torpedo that would cause panic in the ranks of U.S. Air Force Intelligence.

Interplanetary matters and the question of extraterrestrial life focused itself during the turn of the century on the terrific tussle between Percival Lowell and his critics. Lowell had built an observatory at Flagstaff, Arizona, using his own funds with the avowed purpose of detecting details on the face of the planet Mars. Long suspected of harboring an alien civilization, at least this was the popular fascination prevalent among the public, Mars came under close scrutiny by Lowell during one of red planet's periodic near approaches to earth in the mid 1890s. The results of Lowell's labors turned out to be highly controversial, he declaring a network

of canals was visible which could have only been engineered by an intelligent race of Martians. Since to discern such features, it was claimed, one would have to peer long and very intently, waiting for extremely brief moments of stable atmospheric conditions, many astronomers did not see the markings and debated fiercely with Lowell, asserting that the long straight lines crisscrossing the red disc existed only in his imagination. Arguments rapidly became tainted with acrimonious remarks and great personal feelings. The controversy ended in a draw, but the "elaborate Martian culture", just beyond the blur of the flickering images that danced in the eyepiece of his telescope, remained an obsession to Lowell to the last of his life. The impasse on the Martian question wilted public interest on the matter, while at the same time international political problems loomed larger on the horizon.

One of last public statements from Flagstaff before the outbreak of the Great War consisted of an interesting and singular claim. The editors of the Scientific American, in 1901, mentioned:

"Prof. Pickering makes the following statement relative to the light flash from Mars: 'Early in December we recieved from the Lowell Observatory in Arizona a telegram that a shaft of light had been seen to project from Mars lasting seventy minutes. I wired these facts to Europe and sent out neostyle copies through this country. The observer there is a careful, reliable man and there is no reason to doubt that the light existed. It was given as from a well-known geographical point of Mars. That was all. Now the story has gone the world over. In Europe it is stated that I

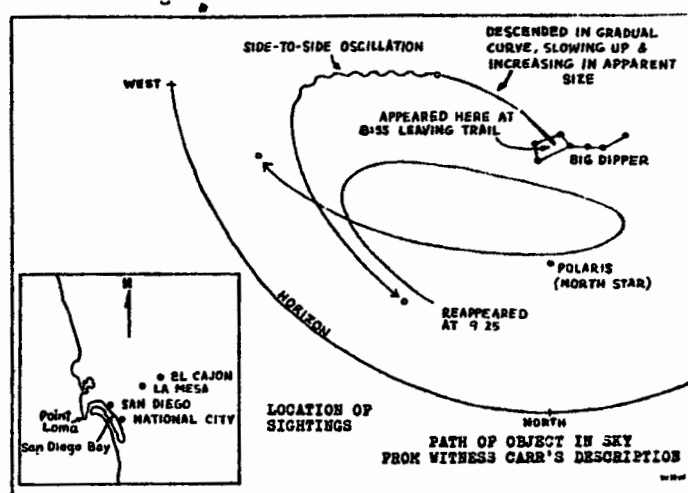
have been in communication with Mars, and all sorts of exaggerations have sprung up. Whatever the light was, we have no means of knowing. Whether it had intelligence or not, no one can say. It is absolutely inexplicable." 27.

September 15, 1901, a Mr. Benette, Justice of the Peace in the French village of Herbignac, let his gaze wander over the evening sky decorated with scattered clouds. He noticed an unusual "star" that slowly pulsated, matching a first magnitude star at its brightest. After calling for his wife to witness the sight, something like a searchlight beam became visible illuminating the clouds in the vicinity of the phenomenon. The French publication The Bulletin de la Societe Astronomique de France,^{later} printed a letter from Mr. Benette describing the entire incident. 28.

It is tempting to muse a possible connection between the "signal from Mars" and the episode in the sky over Herbignac, that perhaps vessels from the void of space were taking aim at the planet earth. The France astronomy bulletin topped its earlier puzzler with another paragraph in the same issue. It declared that on February 9, 1902, a very odd "bolide" entered the atmosphere near the star Capella over France. The "meteor" traced its firey course in an othodox manner for about three seconds and then cruved its path toward the star Algol, where it looped and sped off in a different direction for a short distance before starting to stray once more from a straight trajectory. Near the star Aldebaran the "meteor" separated into four parts which then vanished. The observer of the phenomenon,

located at the city of Havre, timed the total elapsed time of the "fall" at 12 seconds.

A very similar description of the "fall" of a strange "meteor" is detailed in the book: The UFO Evidence on page 4. The incident took place in the sky over San Diego, California, on May 13, 1952, at approximately 9:00 P.M., PDT, and was recorded by an aeronautical engineer, whose testimony was confirmed by six other witnesses at scattered locations in and around the city.



February 24, 1904, American Naval personnel aboard the U.S.S. Supply noticed three red colored lights in the sky just below a layer of clouds. The lights flew toward the ship, gaining altitude as they approached. As the lights soared higher and higher, quickly passing through the layer of scattered clouds which had provided a temporary backdrop, the men of the U.S.S. Supply observed that each light was a glowing body of different size. The largest appeared to be six times the size of the sun and had the profile of an egg. The second largest object about was about double the size of the sun and the third object about equal. The "meteors" were so remarkable special mention was given the sighting in the March 1904 issue of the Monthly Weather Review. The officer that wrote up the report on the episode, Lieutenant Frank H. Schofield, apparently suffered no ill effects, career wise, from witnessing the "illusion", for he eventually rose in rank to command the entire U.S. Pacific Fleet twenty years later.* 29.

*See the book Mysteries of the Skies -UFOs in Perspective by Gordon I.R.Lore, Jr., and Harold H. Deneault. This covers much of early UFO history with an emphasis on a comparison of pioneer feats of early aviation with sightings of unexplained objects in the air.

There is little mystery why the strange kind of material, as that collected by Charles Fort went unrecognized as potentially important to science. For example, the Scientific American magazine even derided the idea of heavier-than-air flying machines as late as January, 1906, a full two years after the first successful trials at Kitty Hawk.

As for things falling out of the sky, even conventional meteorities were once considered pure hoosy as late as the mid-1800s. Camille Flammarion included the following in his gold medal winning book: Popular Astronomy:

"A rather curious fact is that, although the ancient traditions, the histories of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, and the popular beliefs, had distinctly spoken of stones fallen from the sky, stones of the air, aerolites, the savants would not believe in them. Either they denied the fact itself, or they interpreted it quite otherwise, regarding the stones fallen on the earth as shot out by volcanic eruptions, raised from the ground by waterspouts, or even produced by certain condensations of matter in the midst of the atmosphere." 30-

That alien beings and their devices may be have been coming and going in the earth's atmosphere, was beyond the philosophical range of contemporary understanding of the vast majority of those living in the early 1900s, did not faze Charles Fort. Undiscouraged, he kept busy brooming off cobwebbed incongruities for decades. When his library searches pulled abreast of current events, Fort still found enough data occurring every year to keep him busy recording, comparing, and speculating.

Fort lets us in on some uncanny doings over Wales in the winter of 1904-05. Luminous globes in the air were noticed by crowds at outdoor revival meetings. One organizer of the spiritual renaissances, a Mrs. L. Jones, an owner of one those newfangled

automobiles, gained a new follower, but with a twist. A "light" flying about in the air took a liking to the her brass-trimmed vehicle and paced her car over a long stretch of road in spite of ^{her} efforts to elude it. The English newspaper, the Daily Mail, even sent teams of reporters to track down the strange balls of light. These investigators caught sight of their quarry, however efforts to trap one proved fruitless. The reporters shrugged their shoulders and blamed the phenomena on extraordinary examples of Will-o'-Wisp³¹. One supposes the Will-o'-Wisp theory of these lights still stands, though modern science says it knows of no examples of burning marsh gas, termed ignis fatuus in scientific circles, to last for any great length of time, rise more than six inches from the ground, or to appear any brighter than a feeble glow.

A later admirer of Fort, Eric Frank Russell, rechecked records covering 1905 and had this to say about some strange lights seen in sky across the channel ^{from England} in the month of April:

"...a mysterious thing hung around over Cherbourg, France, for several nights. It was luminous. Now and again it shifted position in a manner impossible for a star. Observers deluged the papers and technical journals drawing attention to the phenomenon.

The result was a three-sided fracas, two groups of authorities against the laymen. One bunch of experts decided that a lot of imbeciles had been gaping at the planet Venus. Another bunch asserted that many ignorant nincompoops could not recognize Jupiter when they saw it. The imbeciles and nincompoops went right on swearing that they could see, and that it was neither Venus nor Jupiter.

A bureaucrat then suggested that the vision was that of a captive balloon, but no such balloon could be identified

and the theory was dropped. French astronomers care fully-kept away from the scene and a solitary expert went to have a look for himself. Commander de Kerillis, master of a warship and not an expert in aerial phenomena, made semi-official observations, reported that conditions had proved unfavorable for accurate diagnosis and that all he was prepared to say was that the object was not the planet Venus." 32.

Fort relays to us from the London Times a cutting dated December 10, 1907, about a Mr. R.W. Purdy, who watched an unexplained "lamp" sailing through the air, ^{turn and} race toward him across an open field and then changing its mind and speeding off in another direction. 33.

The summit of this series of flying lights and objects was reached in 1907. The July issue of the Monthly Weather Review 34. gave a complete and unmistakably clear picture of the aerial phenomenon that challenged science for recognition. The unnatural and distinctly artificial tube hovering in the air, accompanied by a mysterious globe of energy that exploded, and the fact that the tube seemed to be disintegrating with intense, deliberate fury, were elements of the account that should have been engraved on the mind of an alert scientist for future reference (See Illustration).

meteorologists can do nothing better than to secure for the earth the longest and most homogeneous series of observations possible—C. A.

A POSSIBLE CASE OF BALL LIGHTNING.

By WILLIAM H. ALEXANDER, Local Forecaster. Dated Burlington, Vt., August 12, 1907

During the month of July, 1907, the weather in the Champlain Valley, if not in the entire State of Vermont, was characterized by several interesting (not to say abnormal) features. Perhaps the most prominent feature was the large number of violent, and in many cases destructive, thunderstorms that occurred. A considerable number of lives was lost and much valuable property destroyed by lightning. Without doubt one of the most singular, certainly one of the most unusual, electrical phenomena known to the writer occurred at Burlington on the 2d, incident to the passage of a barometric depression from the Lake region to the lower St. Lawrence Valley during the last days of June and the first days of July. The distinctive feature of this storm was the single peal of thunder or explosion attended by what is believed to have been a case of "ball" or "globe" lightning. The "explosion" was so sudden, so unexpected, and so terrific that it startled practically the entire city, and there was a general, spontaneous rush to the window or street to see what had happened.

Effort has been made to obtain from eyewitnesses all observed details of importance relative to the phenomenon, but it appears that altho all heard the sound only a few actually saw anything. Fortunately, however, there were competent and reliable witnesses whose statements are given below in their own words.

Bishop John S. Michaud says

While standing on the corner of Church and College streets just in front of the Howard Bank and facing east, engaged in conversation with Ex-Governor Woodbury and Mr. A. A. Buell, when, without the slightest indication or warning, we were startled by what sounded like a most unusual and terrific explosion, evidently very near by. Raising my eyes and looking eastward along College street, I observed a torpedo-shaped body some 300 feet away, stationary in appearance and suspended in the air about 50 feet above the tops of the buildings. In size, it was about 6 feet long by 8 inches in diameter, the shell or cover having a dark appearance, with here and there tongues of fire issuing from spots on the surface resembling red-hot unburnished copper. Altho stationary when first noticed this object soon began to move, rather slowly, and disappeared over Dolan Brothers' store, southward. As it moved, the covering seemed rupturing in places and thru these the intensely red flames issued. My first impression was that it was some explosive shot from the upper portion of the Hall furniture store. When first seen it was surrounded by a halo of dim light, some 20 feet in diameter. There was no odor that I am aware of perceptible after the disappearance of the phenomenon, nor was there any damage done so far as known to me. Altho the sky was entirely clear overhead, there was an angry-looking cumulo-nimbus cloud approaching from the northwest, otherwise there was absolutely nothing to lead us to expect anything so remarkable. And, strange to say, altho the downpour of rain following this phenomenon, perhaps twenty minutes later, lasted at least half an hour, there was no indication of any other flash of lightning or sound of thunder.

Four weeks have past since the occurrence of this event, but the picture of that scene and the terrific concussion caused by it are vividly before me, while the crashing sound still rings in my ears. I hope I may never hear or see a similar phenomenon, at least at such close range.

Mr. Alvaro Adsit says

I was standing in my store door facing the north, my attention was attracted by this "ball of fire" apparently descending toward a point on the opposite side of the street in front of the Hall furniture store, when within 18 or 20 feet of the ground the ball exploded with a deafening sound, the ball, before the explosion, was apparently 8 or 10 inches in diameter, the halo of light resulting from the explosion was 8 or 10 feet in diameter; the light had a yellowish tinge, somewhat like a candle flame, but no noise or sound was heard before or after the explosion, no damage was done so far as known to me.

Mr. W. P. Dodd's (who was on the south side of the street, in the office of the Equitable Life Insurance Co.) says.

I saw the "ball" just before the explosion, it was moving apparently from the northwest (over the Howard Bank Building) and gradually descending; did not see it at the moment of the explosion, or afterward; no damage resulted so far as known to me.

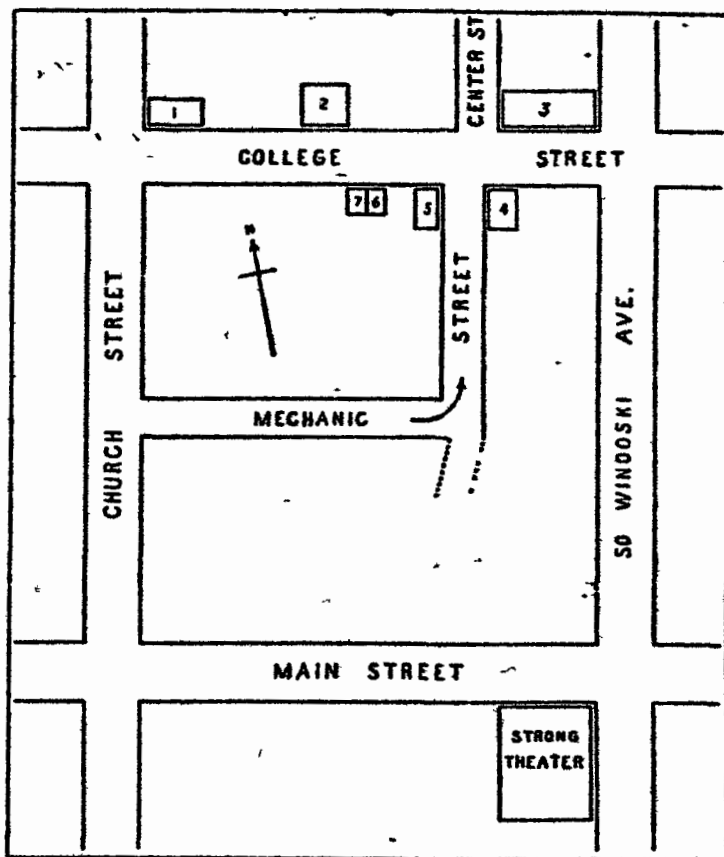


FIG. 1.—Plan of small section of Burlington, Vt., drawn (not to exact scale) to show roughly the several places mentioned in connection with the electric phenomenon of July 2, 1907. 1. Howard National Bank 2. National Biscuit Company 3. Hall's Furniture Company 4. Ferguson & Adsit's store 5. Dolan Brothers 6. Equitable Life Insurance Company 7. Standard Coal and Ice Company.

The following account is taken from the Burlington Daily Free Press of July 3, 1907.

A forerunner to one of the series of heavy and frequent thunderstorms that have characterized the early summer in this vicinity startled Burlingtonians yesterday just before noon. Without any preliminary disturbance of the atmosphere, there was a sharp report, the like of which is seldom heard. It was much louder in the business section of the city than elsewhere, and particularly in the vicinity of Church and College streets. People rushed to the street or to windows to learn what had happened, and when a horse was seen flat in the street in front of the Standard Coal and Ice Company's office it was the general impression that the animal had been struck by lightning and killed. This theory was not long entertained, as the horse was soon struggling to regain his feet. * * *

Ex-Governor Woodbury and Bishop Michaud were standing on the corner of Church and College streets in conversation when the report startled them. In talking with a Free Press man later in the day Governor Woodbury said his first thought was that an explosion had occurred somewhere in the immediate vicinity, and he turned, expecting to see bricks flying thru the air. Bishop Michaud was facing the east and saw a ball of fire rushing thru the air, apparently just east of the National Biscuit Company's building. Alvaro Adsit also saw the ball of fire as did a young man who was looking out of a window in the Strong Theater Building. Another man with a vivid imagination declared that the ball struck the center of College street near the Standard Coal and Ice Company's office, knocked the horse down by the jar and then bounded up again to some unmarked point in the sky. * * * The unusual disturbance was followed in a few minutes by a downpour of rain, which continued, with but a brief interruption, for nearly two hours.

Another described the sound as "like the tearing of new canvas". All agree that it was the most startling phenomenon of the kind ever experienced, because so unexpected. The "explosion" was followed in a few minutes by a heavy

* This "ball of fire" may have been a distant meteor, and it will be worth while to seek for observations by distant observers about noon, Tuesday, July 2, 1907.—Editor.

The famed American author Theodore Dreiser is best known for his literary achievements such as Sister Carrie, The 'Genius', and An American Tragedy, but he could claim another, rature unique, distinction. Charles Fort had only two close friends and Dreiser was one of them. Dreiser had a brilliant mind, though his personality was riddled with grotesqueries^{which} often resulted in behavior that was unpredictable and childish. He was also fascinated with the bizarre, ^{and aside} ~~from~~ from being something of a maveric himself, Dreiser possessed two other things that would prove beneficial to Charles Fort's writing career: a position of success that gave him leverage with book publishers and a stormy temperament that would not always take no for an answer.

Dreiser had taken over the editorship of Smith's Magazine in 1905 and was casting about for interesting manuscripts when a few appeared written by a fellow named Charles Fort. Dreiser immediately noticed the extraordinary wit and perception in essays submitted by Fort, so believing the eccentric Bronx author would make it big one day, he felt it would prove profitable and entertaining to cultivate the unusual thinker's acquaintance. ^{As time went on} Dreiser like to tell his editor friends of the other shaggy pulps what rare abilities were latent in the, as yet, unknown free-lancer he had discovered. Fort tried to live up to Dreiser's expectations and scribbled over 3½ million words worth of novels of stylistic quality, but the manuscripts lacked significant themes.

The first (and only) published novel by Fort, The Outcast Manufacturers, introduced him to the public in 1909, written in a manner that set him apart, a mixture of incongruity and the ludicrous: "...a dead horse lying in the south side gutter, boys jumping on it enjoying the elasticity of its ribs..."²

Fort, a timid, heavyset fellow, peering at the world through thick glasses, never quite meshed gears with the main stream of society. Withdrawn, he turned to his own peculiar world for satisfaction. Further inheritance boosted his income to a level where he did not really have to write for a living, so he read and wrote what he pleased all day long and attended the movies with his wife, Anna, almost every evening.

Still prodded by the words of John Jacob Astor, Fort continued to take notes on "mysterious forces and influences", patterns of orphaned freaks of data.

He ~~skipped~~^{skipped} off two purely fictional manuscripts, indirectly inspired by the weird material he had so far gathered, titled "X" and "Y". Fort did not think too highly of the works and eventually threw them into the fireplace. While the manuscripts did not survive, the two ideas the tales were built around nevertheless lived to play a minor role in our own story later on. Before they were burned, Dreiser tried to peddle the two manuscripts to publishers *but had no luck with them.*

But then another idea took hold in Fort's mind. He began to toy with the thought of using the odd facts he had accumulated for the nucleus of a non-fiction work, sewn together with his commentary on the importance of the information and the reception the scientific outcasts had so far received.

By 1908 the making of a new wave of reports was shaping up and Fort kept close watch on the newspapers. Two early events, however, took place beyond the reach of the New York newspapers.

Myriads of stars were sparkling coldly in the velvet pall of the heavens over the state of Washington one night early in the month of February, 1908, when a bright point of light in the sky was seen to move about, attracting the attention of those persons living just north of Tacoma.

On February 1st the following occurred:

"...(a) mysterious flying object described as three times as bright as the planet Jupiter, displaying colors of dark red, pale green, yellow and brilliant white,... (was seen) cruising the evening skies over the region around Tacoma between the hours of 7 and 9 o'clock ... Rumors in such towns as Kent, Grays Harbor, and Tacoma had the phenomenon explained as a Japanese airship spying out the Pacific coast. On one occasion something like a rocket was seen discharged apparently from the unknown object." 3.

For three nights the light was seen, a fact which prompted a mention in the daily newspaper:

"Kent, Wash. , Feb. 3 --(Special) --For two nights past much curiosity has been aroused by the appearance of a large bright light apparently low in the western sky, two or three times as bright as Jupiter. It was observed both Saturday and Sunday nights between the hours of 7 and 9 o'clock, moving slowly from north to south. Suggestions were made that it might be an airship, and telephone inquiries were made covering a distance of two or three miles from this place, but no satisfactory answers were received. At times the strange light did not appear to be more than 10 to 12 miles distant. All sorts of conjectures are ventured as to the mysterious illumination." 4.

Early in the evening of February 4th, a whole train full of people saw the strange light:

"As the Northern Pacific train waited for the Fifteenth street bridge to come down on the rail line that crossed the tidal flats near Tacoma, Washington, the engineer looked up and saw a strange multi-colored light in the evening sky traveling north to south. So prominent was the light, the train's conductor and some of the passengers left the coaches and ran down the track to get a better look. One person had field glasses and said he discerned a cigar-shaped mass."

5.

The following day this editorial appeared on the matter:

"...things are crowding the limit when the Jap pre-emptes the air. Here is the searchlight of this airship piercing the night, like the glowing eye of a demon, to startle the peaceful folk of Kent. Not them alone, but this matter touches us all. Trains are halted in their progress across the tideflats while passengers sweep with tele scopes --not traveling bags --the circum-ambient atmosphere to detect the lurking place of this creature. This thing must be stopped. A citizen wandering home at night must not be further unduly alarmed at his mental condition because, forsooth, multi-colored lights flash through the heavens. A free moral agent should not be so deceived into signing the pledge. This airship must be captured. We do not know its intentions, but we have no doubt that they are evil. Perhaps it fitted over this city to detect the dark designs of that suggestive democratic convention or the cracks in primary law. If so it was a useless labor; the people see through these. Perhaps it seeks to spy on Captain Howell and his battery of artillery. If so, we warn it that it will fail. Perhaps it wants to learn how 'Billy' Poulhamus at Sumner managed to procure the payment of an over-charge claim from an express company. If so, it is doomed

to disappointment: nobody knows. Perhaps it would capture that record-breaking hen at Kent. Or perhaps it would discover the reasons for operating street cars with flat wheels or delve into the mysteries of the lighting problem. If so, it will have to come close to earth.

And here will be the opportunity for its capture, easily affected by the usual method of salt on its tail.

But where is the hero? Truly we are living in a fearsome age." 6.

The "airships" were back again, and so were the mysterious "meteors".

June 30, 1908 a huge, tube-like, shape sped toward the earth out of the depths of space, plunging into the atmosphere high over central Asia. The thing belched great clouds of smoke as it streaked lower and lower over the territory of Imperial Russia, rushing into the frigid, forested wastes of Siberia. A mass of 50,000 tons was zooming downward on a shallow slant at 30,000 miles per hour. As the thing approached the headwaters of the Tunquska River north of Lake Baika, the visitor from space suddenly exploded at an altitude of 5,000 feet. A blinding flash lit up the remote region followed instantly by a roar that sounded like the sky itself was being torn apart. The forest for miles around collapsed as a mushroom cloud boiled tens of thousands of feet into the stratosphere.

As high as an altitude of 50 miles, strange luminous clouds floated about in the atmosphere after the tremendous blast. For days the glowing vapor persisted in the heavens over the Tunquska River area.^{7.}

The fate of the unusual "bolide", which witnesses said resembled a giant shuttle and had left a peculiar wake of smoke made up of glowing gas, whirling flames, and sparks, became a major scientific puzzle. Before the enormous explosion there had been a mass of an estimated 50,000 tons, but afterward, though the effect of the blast was easily visible, no debris of the colossal body could be found.

Here are the results of field investigations:

"1. The entire stricken area of forest spread to the south-east to the north-west, that is to say, in the direction of the meteorite's flight before falling. Normally, the place where a meteorite's falls is in the center of such destruction, but in this case it was like the handle-end of an outspread fan, at the extreme north-west point of the affected area.

"2. The neighbourhood of the fall was studded with small craters or funnel-shaped holes. Search in some of these brought no result whatever in the form of any unusual substances, debris, ect.

In 1928 and again in 1929 other expeditions, equipped with electro-magnetic detectors and drilling apparatus, were similarly unsuccessful. No material traces of the meteorite were discovered.

Nothing whatever remained of the giant meteor which crashed to earth. Stony meteorites are never of great size and their fragments are dispersed like those of metallic meteorites.

Therefore this huge celestial body had either been volatilized or disintegrated(!). 8.

Dispatches from Europe in 1908, meanwhile, told of incandescent spheres exploring the English countryside and taking rests at intervals over farmhouses.

Also, stories of mysterious visitations by unexplained "airships" cropped up in different parts of the eastern United States during the winter of 1908-09. Among these accounts was a spectacular searchlight probing of Worcester, Massachusetts, twice, by a large object in the night sky with the profile of a cigar. Police and newsmen, we are told, were greatly excited over the incidents. Hunting, West Virginia; Chattanooga, Tennessee; and numerous towns in the state of Alabama, housed thousands of victims ^{of} airship "illusions".

England received only a few months respite before sightings of strange things in the night sky began anew, swamping newspaper editors. March, 1909, at Peterborough, a strange shape in the evening heavens, for example, was sketched on the note pads of constables. The thing appeared to narrow, oblong, and equipped with a glaring headlight. ^{9.} Fort read in the London Daily Mail an editorial comment on the continuing sightings of mysterious lights and objects in the sky, which said ^{that} no more space in the Mail's columns would be given over to any such reports until tangible evidence was obtained. An aviation expert, C.S. Rolls, offered his judgement that every report

could not be written off so simply, as an organizer of England's Aero Club, he pressed for a more tolerant view. Another correspondent, Fort recorded, debated the reality of the observations reported over nearly the whole of England by expressing doubt any airport facilities for such a craft would fail to come to the attention of authorities. Furthermore, if continental powers were snooping, the gentleman stated, why haven't their zeppelins been tracked crossing the seas around our island nation? Moreover, the newspaper Weekly Dispatch computed the locations and times of the different airship sightings and protested that if the mystery object was a zeppelin it would have had to achieve the impossible speed of over 200 miles per hour. 10.

No mention of the English airship wave of 1909 can be complete however, without bringing up the alledged episode that was supposed to have taken place on the summit of Caerphilly Mountain in Wales on May 13, 1909. For many years students of the UFO problem have relied on Charles Fort's account of the case as it appears on pages 631-632 in the volume: The Books of Charles Fort.

Fort had taken an item from the newspaper Daily Mail, a story told by a Mr. Lithbridge, who claimed to have seen two figures dressed in thick overcoats standing near a big "tube-like" contraption parked in a field. According to Mr. Lithbridge, he surprised the "airship crewmen", who became alarmed and jabbered away in some incomprehensible language with heavy accents, and then jumped into their craft and took off.

Many fans of Fort's work believe that Mr. Lithbridge may have

had an encounter with some alien explorers from outer space, but such a hope is at odds with Fort's own opinion. If one reads Fort carefully, one can see that Fort discounts the possibility that any creatures from Mars were involved. It seemed to Fort that Mr. Lithbridge's tale was a fake and that the man merely had a desire for publicity.

An examination of this story as it originally appeared in the Daily Mail discloses that Mr. Lithbridge described the airship crewmen as quite normal in appearance and the airship they were flying as one of a conventional design. These details are not given in Fort's writings which explains how the case has been misinterpreted, nonetheless, since the original Daily Mail version is not readily available, misunderstandings will probably continue.

The picture of the 1909 airship "scare" should include a word or two about the political climate at the time which would help explain Mr. Lithbridge's hoax. Fears in England concerning the war-like intentions Germany's Kaiser had reached such a pitch by 1908 the Parliament instructed the a "Committee of Imperial Defense" to establish an invasion inquiry. Barbara Tuchman touched on the matter in her book: The Proud Tower, a superb historical work:

"The Committee's conclusion that a successful invasion could not be mounted was not known to the public, which felt an awful fascination in the topic. Erskine Childers had raised it in an

absorbing novel The Riddle of the Sands, in 1903 and William Le Queux more emphatically if less artistically in a novel called The Invasion of 1910 which ran as a serial in the Daily Mail in 1910 and was advertised through London by sandwich-men dressed in Prussian blue uniforms and spiked helmets. In 1909 Guy du Maurier's play An Englishman's Home, which dramatized an invasion by the forces of the "Emperor of the North," opened at Wyndham's Theatre and played to packed houses for eighteen months. The idea of invasion became almost a psychosis. Living at Rye on England's south coast Henry James felt "exposed," as he nervously wrote a friend in 1909. He worried that "when the German Emperor carries the next war into this country, my chimney pots, visible to a certain distance out to sea, may be his first objective." //

It should not be considered strange then, that airship reports again gained in frequency in English newspapers in 1913, as the international situation heated up to its feared conclusion, though there was no exact reason why the second outbreak should have hit the English public in the month of January.

By 1913 even the conservative London Times was receptive to airship reports, and on January 6th headlined: "Unknown Aircraft Over Dover" ^{12.} Cases listed by authorities during January were almost identical to those of 1909. On the 21st, for example, the Times printed:

"It is stated that on Friday evening last an airship was seen passing over Cardiff in the direction of Swansea.

Captain Lionel Lindsay, Chief Constable of Glamorganshire, says: --'at a quarter to 5 I noted the object. It was dusk and foggy, so that one could not define it. It was much larger and moved faster than the Willows airship and left in its trail a dense volume of smoke. I called the attention of a bystander to the object, and he agreed that it was some large object. It disappeared quickly.'" ^{13.}

The great enigma that presents itself here is whether the political tensions produced the airship stories, or that something strange in the air was producing the political tensions. Also, the advance of technology brought new allies to the suspicion something extraordinary may have been happening. The magazine Flight, the journal of the Aero Club of the United Kingdom, felt qualified to weight the evidence from a standpoint of a decade of experience with powered flight:

"Yet again the throb of an aerial motor and the whirr of a propeller has been heard during the hours when most worthy citizens are abed. This time the mysterious aircraft was heard at Dover at 5 a.m. on the 5th, but it was not unlikely an aviator from a flying ground, not a hundred miles from Dover, out for a very early spin. No doubt if aviation progresses as rapidly in the future as it has done in the past it will not be long before episodes such as this will not be deemed just in the day's or night's events." 14.

After a couple of weeks the editor of Flight had second thoughts about his first explanation for the mystery:

"I am wondering whether the mysterious Dover 'airship' after all is found in the suggestion that the noises were due to a motor boat 'Sappho,' owned by a Mr. Walker, which was known to have been entering Dover Harbor with its engines unsilenced at the very time when the dirigible was supposed to have been passing overhead. In that case, where did the bright rapidly moving light come from? Could it have been supplied by imagination? If it indeed were a dirigible, where did it go to, for it is hardly conceivable, since it disappeared inland, that it could continued its cruise without being noticed by other people." 15.

The new wave of mysterious airships over England was accompanied by another spectacular "meteor fall" that behaved in a remarkable manner.

A little after 9 o'clock in the evening, February 9, 1913, an amazing cluster of "bolides" cruised a distance of 2,500 miles through the atmosphere as measured from the first locality it was spotted, at Regine, Saskatchewan, Canada, to the last point ~~where~~ the phenomenon was visible far out in the Atlantic over Bermuda. If the "bolides" did finally come to earth, they must have struck the ocean in the lonely expanse of the south Atlantic where the fate of the visitors from space went unobserved.

The Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada called the passage "An Extraordinary Meteoric Display", and devoted seventy pages of one issue to the amazing sight.

Awed witnesses of the meteors living in Canada's Ontario province and right across the border in New York state, cooperated with professor C.A.Chant, who investigated the display, by sending him descriptions of what they had seen: One person wrote:

"There were probably 30 or 32 bodies, and the peculiar thing about them was their moving in fours, threes, and twos, abreast of one another, and so perfect was the lining up you would have thought it was an aerial fleet manoeuvring after rigid drilling.

About half of them had passed when an unusually large one hove in sight, fully ten times as large as the others.

Five or six would appear in two detachments,

probably 5 seconds apart: then another wait of 5 or 10 seconds and another detachment would come into view. We could see each detachment for probably 20 to 25 seconds. The display lasted about 3 minutes." 16

Correspondence from another witness read:

"There would be number of the bodies in a line with a light streak between them; and the last was one large ball by itself. The display lasted fully 3 minutes. While we were gazing with awe on the brilliant display far above us in the clear sky a voice from a group of men was heard to say: 'Oh, boys, I'll tell you what it is --an aeroplane race.'" 17.

As unusual as the display was, the meteoric firballs did not deviate from accepted rules of physics. Professor Chant was, however, puzzled by an article sent along with the bolide clippings:

"In conclusion I shall refer to a curious observation reported in The Toronto Daily Star for Monday, February 10. At about 2 p.m. on that date some of the occupants of a tall building near the lake front saw some strange objects moving out over the lake and passing to the east. They were not seen clearly enough to determine their nature, but they did not seem to be clouds, or birds, or smoke, and it was suggested at the time that perhaps, they were airships cruising over the city. Afterwards it was surmised that they may have been of the nature of meteors moving in much the same path as those seen the night before." 18.

The Toronto Daily Star also printed: "They passed from west to east, in three groups, and then returned west in more scattered formation, about seven or eight in all." 19.

While the Toronto Daily Star account agrees with the meteor theory by remarking that these objects seen on the 10th traveled in groups, the statement that the objects reversed direction rules out any connection with the bolides observed the night before. 20.

The editors of the English aviation magazine Flight, in March, 1913, expressed an opinion on the English airship mystery then in progress by noting that it was "grim humor" for the nation's Parliament to order the military to open fire on any more unidentified aircraft when there was no weapon in England's arsenal equal to the task. 21.

The specter of the German war machine cast its shadow over the riddle of the unexplained things in the air just as the Great War of 1914-1918 turned Europe into an arena of death and destruction.

Charles Fort occupied himself during the years of conflict doing research and putting thoughts to paper. From sober scientific journals Fort compiled lists of strange showers from the sky. Strange because they consisted entirely of organisms. Bugs, worms, fish, and bits of matter that were composed living cells, were discovered by Fort and sorted into categories. Hitherto ignored, the data once concentrated presented weird possibilities Fort was not slow to ponder.

Center for UFO Studies
P. O. Box 11
Northfield, IL

THE NOTES OF CHARLES FORT ARE PRINTED HERE *for the* FIRST TIME

THIS is the man who liberated minds. The Society founded to do him honor can express its appreciation in no more significant terms. At a time when the faith of Science in its own works was so absolute that it paralyzed the thought of the world and prevented any child from becoming aware of its own ignorance, this man wrote *The Book of the Damned* and set free a sufficient number of mentalities to prevent true intelligence from complete extinction. He is seated at a checkered board with hundreds of "men" before him. He used to say that his game, "Super-Checkers", was his chief claim to fame. In reality he was using the device as a means to investigate prognostics. In future issues of THE FORTEAN, the record of hundreds of "games", played solitaire, will be printed from his notes.

All Fort's books are out of print but the Society can supply them.

THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED (1919)

NEW LANDS (1923)

LO! (1931)

WILD TALENTS (1932)

Charles Fort died May 3, 1932 at the age of 57 years. This picture was taken in 1931



CHARLES FORT

1931 A D = The Year 1 P S

THE FORTEAN SOCIETY

Box 192 Grand Central Annex - NEW YORK CITY
3 Dale Hey, Hooton, Cheshire, England

No. 2390

Year 25 FS

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This Membership Card certifies that the person named on the reverse side is a member of The Fortean Society, in good standing for the period designated. Membership attests an active interest in the growth of human enlightenment and an abhorrence of all dogmatic assumption. The Society was founded to perpetuate that principle as a memorial to Charles Fort, author of *The Book of the Damned*, *New Lands*, *Lol*, *Wild Talents*.

TIFFANY THAYER, Secretary

An Extraordinary Meteoric Display

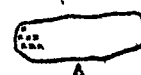


FIG. 7.—From a sketch made by Mr. W. H. Stevenson, Fenelon Falls. In the fore-part of A was a cluster of bright white stars; the rear was a reddish reflection, like glare from fire. B, a bright white star, of the size of Venus. C, reddish clusters. D, a shower of red meteors.

Fonthill (Welland Co., 40 miles, S. 10° E.).

ARTHUR GILBEY.

I saw several flashes reflected from the snow and seeming to come from the north. The sky being clouded in that direction, I could not see distinctly, but a few moments afterward I heard a rumbling, short and heavy, which I could not account for. I took no notice of it until a few seconds later I heard it again, and then for a third time. This was about 9.10 p.m. The rumbling was very plain.

Fort Frances (on Rainy Lake, midway between Ft. William and Winnipeg).

ROBERT MOORE, M.D.

Dr. Moore did not see the display, but on making his rounds in the Indian village near Fort Frances he obtained the following story from an Indian within 30 minutes after the phenomenon: "I saw them come slowly from the northwest; first, a string like candles, about forty of them; then, after 5 minutes, another string in the same line and about eight in number. They made the snow red quite a while after they had disappeared in the east. There was no sound, and they were lower than

Fort was particularly fascinated with the organism that made up the bulk of the 294 examples he had collected. Most the organic showers were falls of thousands of small frogs. Fort mused visions of odd cargos scooped up by craft from the starry regions, their nets brim full of squirming masses of amphibians. The fact that a fall of tadpoles had never been reported, and always frogs just a few months old, made his fanciful thoughts more credible.

Fort's pen raced across dozens of pages, leaving behind inspired passages. A cerebral fever gripped him:

"Once upon a time, when mine was an undeveloped suspiciousness, and I'd let dogmatists pull their pedantries over my perceptions, I nevertheless collected notes upon what seemed to me to be unexplained phenomena. I don't do things mildly, and at the same time much enjoy myself in various ways: I act as if trying to make allness out of something. A search for the unexplained became an obsession." 22.

He took up his place in the vast gloom of the New York Public Library. Dusty tomes gave up their secrets. There he discovered "Monstrator" and "Neith", while commenting:

"I think I conceive of other worlds and vast structures that pass us by, within a few miles, without the slightest desire to communicate." 23.

Forgotten proceedings were rehabilitated. An Admiral Collinson heads an investigation into a mystery of flying lights over the English coast in 1866. The culprit was determined to be a person or persons unknown. Fort pencils in a finish to it:

"If anybody wonders why, if these seeming navigators come close to this earth --as they do approach, if they appear only in a local sky --they do not then come all the way to this earth, let him ask a sea captain why said captain never purposely descends to the bottom of the ocean, though traveling often not far away." 24.

More and more periodical came under Fort's scrutiny; stacks of aged books grew ever higher; scrawls filled acres of paper.

Mutations, imposters, and irreconcilables were pried out of their pigeonholes and rearranged according to new tests. Bolides with brains, uncertain uranoliths, were followed with stumped selenographers and puzzled police, which then vied with astonished astronomers and excited editors. It was all there just waiting for someone.

Having proceeded chronologically, the pattern became clear to Fort by 1914. But the sands of time were running out on the easy shifting of data, for aside from the mischief of the press, real zeppelines and airplanes were either testing their wings or were well along on the drawing boards. Already by 1913, the mystery objects were ^{almost} prompting heated diplomatic notes.

The lights, by this time, seem to have altered their ways also. Over Hull, England, the luminosities in question hovered motionless for 30 minutes and then were seen "shooting away". Ipswich, England, had lights in its skies making a great number of turns in the air and then they were seen "dashing off" over the horizon.

In 1915 Fort's buddy, Dreiser, took to inhabiting the New York Library ^{himself} to take short, self-taught, courses in the sciences, seeking a simple cosmic scheme to the universe. Like more than one project Dreiser started, the try was a flop, but it did give him a keener appreciation of an important manuscript Fort would ask him to read a few years hence.

Meanwhile, unable to press on any publisher Fort's "X" and "Y", Dreiser still hit it big with one novel of his own: in 1916, which was the widely acclaimed work titled: The "Genius". This literary effort was attacked as immoral by the "New York Society for the Suppression of Vice", thus insuring the book's fast rise to the top of the best seller list. Fort shot off a letter to Dreiser saying: "...Highpriest of Evil...what shall I do to be lewd?... I write of the attractions of the planets, and of the affinities of atoms. These are lusts, yet, to save me, I can not convey evil notions of astronomic and chemic abscentities." ^{25.}

Only pretending to be annoyed at his lack of publishing success, Fort went his own unhurried way immersed in thoughts far removed from the distractions of literary fame. He penned: "There are gulfs of the unaccountable but they are bridged by terminology". ^{26.} And: "Conservatism is our opposition. But I am in considerable sympathy with conservatives. I am often lazy myself." ^{27.}

The conflict in Europe made the difficult chore of separating the inexplicable from rumors or misinterpretations of conventional phenomena nearly an impossible task in English newspapers. At one point during the Great War, eleven German zeppelins crowded the night sky over London on a single bombing mission. Added to such aerial traffic jams, was the further obstacle of blue-penciling censors of the Imperial War Office.

Likewise, little could be culled from the New York newspapers of interest to Fort, though the reason was not the war apparently, so much as a temporary lull in the sightings of anything unusual in the air. Equipped with a vital doggedness, Fort spent the war years putting the finishing touches to the new manuscript he had once promised Dreiser. By the time the European conflict was over, he had almost completed his task,

"In November, 1918, I made some studies upon light objects thrown into the air armistist day. I suppose I should have been more emotionally occupied, but I made notes upon torn-up papers thrown high in the air from windows of office buildings." 28.

In 1919, Fort finally submitted the result of years of hard thinking and tedious research for Dreiser's inspection. It was a manuscript Fort called the Book of the Damned. As Dreiser scanned the the work he became ecstatic at the construction built from 40,000 weird notes. The collection seemed to Dreiser an elephantine gadfly bearing down on the complacency of the cruel world that had tormented him ever since his poverty stricken, and generally humiliating childhood. With haste, Dreiser met with the publisher that handled his own works, to demand that Fort's book be published, or else the contract covering his own writings could be cancelled then and there. 29.

This aggressive rush managed to overcome any lack of enthusiasm that would have surely greeted Fort's eerie manuscript without a sponsorship of Dreiser's stature. Fort himself would have never triumphed like that with this modest manner and carefree philosophy, though his literary style took up the

slack with exotic explosions, capering comets, and descriptions of falls of frogs carpeting the land and making the ground come alive.

The presses rolled.

One can imagine the reception Fort's work recieved in the year 1919. It was like flinging a dead polecat into a crowd of stuffy aristocrats. Only the boldest bunch could field that kind of , football: writers, men with flexible and receptive minds.

Booth Tarkington, laid up ill at the time, just happened to find a few hours to spare to read the latest send over over from the bookstore, ^{and in the process learned} ~~learning~~ of another man's malady of cosmic size nightmares. Tarkington converted to the new improbabilities right off. ^{30.}

Many other men of letters were drawn toward the novelty of a fresh anarchy as the word spread. The Chicago Daily News assigned Ben Hecht to review the Book of the Damned and he titled the resulting article ^{31.} "Phantasmagoriophobia", praising Fort's work to the skies and coining the expression: "Fortean". Hecht designated himself as the first disciple to pay homage to the "Fortean" view of the universe. So intrigued was the editor of the Daily News, a telegram quickly arrived at Fort's humble Bronx apartment requesting information for a bibliographical sketch of the author of the fantastic new book to be run the following day, ^{31.}

One author-friend of Dreiser disputed with him about Fort's semi-cyptic answeres. That, for example, perwinkles, blood, snakes, eot., can fall out of the sky from a mysterious source high in the air Fort occassionally refered to as an "Upper Saragasso Sea", and not do violence to elementary science.

Dreiser fired back:

"To dub him enormously ignorant of anything is to use an easy phrase without correct information. Fort is not enormously ignorant of anything. He is so far above any literary craftsman now working in this country -your own excellent self exculded- that measurements are futile... to me no one else in the world -so far- has suggested the underlying depths & mysteries and possibilities as had Fort. To me he is simply stupendous & some day I really believe he will get full credit..." 32.

Fort became restless after draining what he could from the New York City Library, so setting his financial and personal business in order, he wrote Dreiser that he and his wife were going to sail for London in October(1920). Now a recognized writer of sorts, Fort expressed his thanks to his benefactor before leaving. 33.

In London the Forts set up housekeeping close to the British Museum where the strange American soon became a common sight as he resumed his self appointed task, a 8-5 workday of searching old journals and books. Once and while Fort would spend an afternoon debating with strangers in Hyde Park, exchanges of which, unfortunately, ^{no} records are extant. That park in London was probably the only place in the world Fort could go unnoticed.

Of their London life, Mrs. Anna Fort later told Dreiser:

"(Charlie)...used to stand in the street and gaze at the stars and point them out to me and tell me the meaning of it. Then up in our rooms he would throw open the windows and stand gazing at the stars. That was his delight for a long, long time." 34.

So far Fort had conquered only a part of the reading public, though an influential segment to be sure, with the likes of Hecht and Tarkington. His Book of the Damned, reluctantly printed by Boni and Liveright, numbered only about 1,000 copies in its first edition and the publishers were not sure they could unload all of that.

the author
Elsewhere, in the year 1920, H.G. Wells developed a fascination for socialism as a way to build a better world. He requested and recieved an invitation to call on the self-appointed prophet of one of the most extreme examples of the economic doctrine, Nikolai Lenin, who had overthrown the Kerensky government and was now in process of making Russia into the "Union of Soviet Socialist Republics". *When he met Lenin* Wells groped for a criticism of the Communist "wave of the future" to keep the conversation interesting, so he proposed the possibility that human technology might ultimately render Marxism obsolete. Lenin stared at Wells and proceeded to concede that fact, but with a surprising difference. There is an imagined limit on human potential, Lenin said, if one entertains the pretention that we shall never contact other advanced civilizations in the universe. If that occurs, the Communist leader continued, violence as a means of progress would face extinction. 35.

Meanwhile, back in London, Fort became greatly amused. He dashed off a letter to his brother, Ray, back in Albany, New York, saying that word had reached him of some persons, apparently readers of his book, proposing somekind of Lunar expedition to obtain evidence of his wild suppositions. With his usual jocular flair, Fort wrote that most assuredly a delegation of

spacesailers would soon arrived at his door bearing a sword and an Admiral's cap on a velvet cushion. ^{36.} The letter of Fort's was written some time in the month of January, 1921. Fort was probably refering to Professor's Robert Goddard's early experiments with liquid fueled rockets which the New York Times optimistically touted with an artical titled: "Moon Rocket Ready Soon". ^{37.} In actual fact, Goddard's pioneer efforts did make him the father of the modern rocketry, which eventually did lead to trips to the moon, but the Times was little premature with its estimation of a launching date.

Yet Fort had no need to roam the solar system to deal with matters of a cosmic nature. Something equally challenging seemed to exist on well chartered routes here on earth. After following a series of strange events in the New York Times, Fort wrote:

"It may be that if beings from somewhere else would seize inhabitants of this earth, wantonly, or out of curiosity, or as a matter of scientific research, the preference would be for an operation at sea, remote from observations by other humans of this earth. If such beings exist, they may in some respects be very wise, but supposing secrecy to be desirable --they must have neglected psychology in their studies, or unconcernedly they'd drop right into Central Park, New York, and pick up all the specimens they wanted, and leave it to the wisemen of our tribes to explain that there had been a whirlwind, and that the Weather Bureau, with its usual efficiency, had published warnings of it." ^{38.}

In early 1921 a secret terror stirred from its dark place of ambush. On January 29th, the 3,500 ton vessel Carol Deering drifted ashore at Diamond Shoals, North Carolina, inexplicably abandoned. When investigators boarded the ship, no trace of the twelve man crew was found, nor was there any clue to the cause of the mass disappearance. Old sailors were reminded of a similar riddle of the sea when it was disclosed dishes and eating utensils were discovered in the Carol Deering's galley ~~that was~~ arranged for an evening meal never eaten. The Deering case had an eerie resemblance to a near legend in sea annals involving the ship Mary Celeste, found adrift in the Atlantic, east of Portugal, on December 5, 1872. Still a seaworthy ship, the Mary Celeste's provisions, cargo, and longboat, were intact. In the galley a dish of food was found half consumed and numerous personal effects of the different crewmen, such as books, letters, and a razor, were discovered in such positions it looked as if their owners had set them down and walked away with every intention of returning in a minute or two. An intensive official inquiry failed to learn what had happened to the men aboard the Celeste and it became extremely difficult to find a crew to serve on the ship then on. No sailor with the slightest superstitious belief in his mental makeup would think of going aboard a "ghost ship".

Returning to the Deering case, it seemed the chronicles of the sea would have yet another unsolved puzzle without an ending. The captain of the Deering, however, had been married to a very determined woman. The wife of the Deering's skipper

traveled to Washington D.C. where she hoped someone in the government would be sympathetic and listen to her pleas for assistance in finding her husband. ^{39.} The minister of her church happened to be in the Nation's Capital and he knew a Senator representing their state quite well, so with his aid and a message found in bottle that had washed up on a North Carolina beach allegedly written by one of the Deering's crewmen telling of being kidnapped by pirates, the lady felt she could get someone in authority to give her an hour or so their time. ^{40. 41.}

Accompanied by her clergyman, the woman went to the Department of Commerce to begin what she believed would be a long, tedious campaign to get a hearing. Rature surprisingly, the two were promptly ushered into the presence of Herbert Hoover (later elected 31st President of the United States), the Secretary of Commerce. Secretary Hoover told his visitors the New York police had uncovered a scheme by a Bolshevist orientated group during a raid on the headquarters of a Soviet Worker's organization on East Fifteenth Street of that city. Documents that were seized in the raid indicated a possible plot to stir up rebellions aboard ships on the high seas. ^{42.} In fact, Secretary Hoover said, the vessel William O'Brien, a feighter that vanished in April, 1920, ~~in the same inexplicable way as the Carol Deering,~~ had experienced unrest among its crew just before its departure from New York harbor on its final voyage into oblivion. ^{43.} Mr. Hoover further related to the two that the Deering and O'Brien were not the only ships to come to the attention of the government because they met a mysterious fate. Up to ten ships had

been reported missing, and like the perviously named vessels, not a single trace could be found of the ships, much less of the the crews. ^{44.} With a promise he would do whatever was possible, Secretary Hoover dismissed the grieving woman.

Seen in its historical context Secretary Hoover's suspicions simply mirrored the almost irritational fear of Bolshevik conspiracies sweeping the United States at the time. Postwar strikes and disorders were widespread and many ^{people} were more than ready to put the whole blame on the alien, and therefore ^{Communist} sinister ideas, whose adherents were pictured as crazed, be-whiskered, bushy-haired, revolutionaries. Though the Bolsheviks did cause some trouble, they were feeble and confused, playing ^{only} a very small role in the labor unrest of the era.

True to his word to leave no stone unturned, orders went out from Hoover to every conceivable government organization that might help unravel the mystery. The State Department alerted every American embassy and consular post throughout the world and supplied them with full particulars on every seaman that had been on the missing ships, on the chance at least one sailor would turn up somewhere. The Treasury Department was instructed to have its subordinate branches, the Coast Guard and Lifesaving Service, to start a search of beaches and hidden coves along the eastern seaboard, looking for possible pirate hideouts. The Navy recieved orders to patrol the coastal waters, challenge suspicious vessels, and ^{to} pick up and examine any floating debris. Under Secretary Hoover's direct control, the Bureau of Navigation checked the records of the ships with the hope they might have had a bearing on the strange disappearances. Even the

Justice Department got into the act and assigned Secret Service agents to coordinate the total investigation. Not to be left out, the U.S. Weather Bureau drew up a report on past storms in the North Atlantic that might have caused the high loss of tonnage. ^{45.}

Though the full weight of the U.S. Government was employed, it was all for naught. What drives home the singularity of the rash of disappearances was the alarm of the marine underwriters in London. Pirates, storms, floating mines, and Bolshevik plots, didn't hold water with the experts on disaster at sea, Lloyd's of London. The editor of Lloyd's List was quoted in the New York Times to the effect that numerous details of the strange vanishments just didn't fit conventional explanations. Why, the editor asked, would the Deering cargo, for example, be left intact by pirates and just the crewmen taken away, and the ship, quite valuable itself, set adrift to publicized the deed? On the other hand, the English expert went on, if the ships reported missing, (by ^{that} ~~the~~ time ~~of this action~~ reaching twenty in number), had been sunk by misadventure or design, why hadn't the slightest bit of wreckage been obtained? The underwriter could only conceive of a fantastic conspiracy among ship owners to collect insurance money. As a result of such a belief, Lloyd's of London issued a mass cancellation of policies on ships plying America's Atlantic coast. ^{46.}

Vessels without insurance then vanished and much later aircraft began disappearing in the region. The whole area of ocean off the coast of southeastern United States became nicknamed the ghostly "Bermuda Triangle".

A Society of Forteans

By 1923 Boni & Liveright was again persuaded to publish a collection of weird data compiled by Charles Fort. This new accumulation was titled: New Lands and was created from newspaper clippings of pink hailstones, showers of charcoal, undignified comets, odd "will-o-wisps", and other unbelievable items. In New Lands Fort proposed that there are "lands" in the sky, suspect regions responsible for events that have been anathematized. The idea that someone, or something, trawls the atmospheric ocean about us. Super-epicureans, super-bats, and other phasing of staggering constellational visions filled the volume:

"Ships from other worlds that have been seen by millions of the inhabitants of this earth, exploring, night after night, in the sky of France, England, New England, and Canada...." I.

An editor of a Camden, New Jersey, newspaper, moved by Fort's conscriptions of eerie statistics to war against the lethargy of conventionalism in science, urged that those of a Fortean inclination should organize, a suggestion Fort discouraged on the grounds that group discipline would attract fundamentalists, occult, religious, and others of their ilk. Yet, an unconnected event led to just such a step. It was the arrival at Fort's address of a letter from a Mr. Tiffany Thayer in the year 1923. The letter marked the beginning of a long friendship between Fort and Thayer. Also a man that made his living with his pen, Thayer would become Fort's most devoted apostle, a regular St. Paul of Forteanism. It was the efforts of Dreiser that led to Fort's discovery by the reading public, but it would be to

Thayer most of the "Fortean" business would owe its perpetration. ^{E.}

The temperament of Thayer differed from Fort's, in that Fort did always take himself seriously, keeping some of his biggest laughs to direct at himself. Thayer's outlook was more serious in comparison, remarking in his first letter to Fort that Ben Hecht had humorously predicted the Book of the Damned would make a high percentage of its readers go nuts before they reached the last page. Fort replied, wisecracking, that he knew most people are mad anyway. After Fort's death, however, Thayer interpreted "Forteanism" as ^{little} more than witty swipes at "scientism", and, unfortunately, abandoned Fort's only significant contribution to history: the speculations about possible alien visitations.

While Fort snipped ship vanishment items out of the New York Times at his home in the Bronx and penned comments about beings from space fishing for earthly artifacts along lonely searoutes, his strange ideas gained support from an event at one of the most remote places on the face of the globe at that time. Regrettably the incident never came to Fort's attention.

Nicholas Roerich, an American explorer, glanced around at the rugged peaks of the Altai Mountains while ^{he} corrected the tilt of his hat and wiped some sweat from his brow. The horse-mounted expedition under his command was making its way deep into the desolate heartland of central Asia. The caravan plodded slowly south from Urga, Mongolia, ^{with} senses alert to possible attack by marauding bandits, as its train took it passed dry waterholes surrounded with animal cadavers, a grim reminder of the unforgiving nature of the country. At any moment the expedition

could also be threaten by powerful winds that sometimes blew with such gale force, small stones would be scooped up from the surrounding, smooth, unbroken, and varicolored slopes of the desert terrain and ^{be} sent flying through the air with the power to inflict painful bruises.

Roerich kept a daily record of the expedition's progress through this inhospitable land, and on the fourth of August, 1926, was assisting some Mongols in the erection of a religious shrine:

"We complete the Suburgan. The Elder Lama of Tsaïdam comes to consecrate it. Prince Kurlik Beise sends envoys; he offers his caravan. It is significant because the Prince usually molests travels". 3.

The following day's entry was far from routine:

"On August fifth --something remarkable! We were in our camp in the Kukunor district not far from the Humbolt Chain. In the morning about half past nine some of our caravaneers noticed a remarkably big black eagle flying above us. Seven of us began to watch this unusual bird. At this same moment another of our caravaneers remarked, 'There is something far above the bird.' And he shouted in his astonishment. We all saw, in a direction from the north to south, something big and shiny reflecting the sun, like a huge oval moving at great speed. Crossing our camp this thing changed in its direction from south to southeast. And we saw how it disappeared in the intense blue sky. We even had time to take our field glasses and saw quite distinctly an oval form with a shiny surface, one side of which was brilliant from the sun." 4.

After returning to the United States, Roerich published his daybook in 1929 under the title Altai-Himalaya. Within the

book an important paragraph remained undiscovered for over twenty years.

Fort labored for almost a decade in England, but his health went into a decline, so he returned to his old stomping grounds, New York, in 1929, where he spent his last days. Back in the states, he put together what ~~was~~^{was} left in his files. Most of the residue was of an occult flavor, haunted people and such, but, he did find a few more strange "aircraft" reports. Fort circled an item in the New York Times soon after his return dated August 29, 1929, concerning something large seen flying in the air by sailors aboard a ship cruising far off the coast of the United States in the north Atlantic. The Times mentioned the possibility the unidentified "airplane" might have been a "passenger craft" because of the array of lights visible. 5.

The year 1930 found Fort finishing work on a third book that he named Lo!, which one of Fort's admirers suggested should be titled: God is an Idiot. The suggestion was immediately rejected by Fort because he was very solicitous to the idea that God, and/or nature, was rational. Only human interpretations were seen by Fort as being less than bright at times.

Aside from writing on his manuscripts, Fort now carried on numerous epistolary friendships with people all over. One correspondent was a author of science fiction, Edmond Hamilton, probably the first writer to adapt Fortean material to his storytelling. The editor of Air Wonder Stories prepared the magazine's readers of Hamilton's tale: "The Space Visitors" in the March, 1930, issue, with the following remarks that appear

in a brief introduction:

"That such beings may have actually come near the earth, is asserted forcibly by Charles Fort in his amazing book, 'The Book of the Damned', in which he brings forward evidence of strange extraterrestrial activity, presumably from sentient beings.

As Mr. Hamilton so truthfully points out, we beings of earth are not at all isolated. Any day we may have plunged upon us an enemy from space that would have no more regard for our civilization than we have for those of ants and other insects." 6.

Hamilton wrote Fort asking what he would do if science suddenly accepted his strange theories. To which Fort replied, with typical irrepressible rebelliousness, that he would be the first to whip out his literary slingshot and pepper the "new conventionalities" with new heresies. 7.

Meanwhile, the editor of the New York Evening Post felt there may be merit in keeping modern scientists on their toes and that some kind Fortean group might fill the bill. This was the second time such a proposal was made, but in a way, such an organization had already achieved something of a start with a membership of three.

Fort honored Thayer by inviting him to pay a personal visit to his Bronx apartment in May, 1930, where the zany writer lived a hermit-like existence. It was a strange place with photos of scientific freaks adorning the walls and weird specimens stored in jars.

Thayer and Fort hit^{it} off and soon Dreiser joined them in spending many an evening at Fort's home on Ryer Avenue, where they gathered in a philosophical atmosphere, verbally sword fighting with their talented minds and prolific vocabularies. While the trio conjured up visions of topsy-turvy universes, 8.

Fort nonetheless resisted attempts by his two friends to shift the Fortean outlook on things to a cynical level, knowing full well his off beat jibes could only have a mild caustic effect, if any, on scientific opinion. Besides, that just wasn't his nature. Fort felt it better and more effective to offer his own special explanations folded in wit, after all, for example, a mischievous spaceship lingers in the mind longer to explain some episodes than a brain-equipped tornado picking up tiny toads one day and periwinkles the next. Dreiser and Thayer, nevertheless, sought to enlist Fort's frolicsome skies somehow into the service of social commentary, for the literary dominions were awash with contenting intellectual tides in those years we remember as the Great Depression.

January, 1931, marked the publication of Fort's latest book: Lo!, and to help sales Thayer rounded up some well known literary lights for the founding of a "Fortean Society". Fort howled with laughter at the tidings of a structured organization promoting "Fortean" thought, though he ~~was~~ meekly complied to put in an appearance at the founding dinner held at the New York Savoy Plaza on the 26th. J.D. Stern, Ben Hecht, Burton Rascoe, J.D. Adams, and the publishers of Lo!, Claude Kendall and Aaron Sussman, helped Thayer and Dreiser to get the group off to a good start. ^{all the while} Fort, ^{all the while} tried to look inconspicuous, hating the idea of being "limelighted". 9.

Thereafter, the group met informally and infrequently, which took the edge off Fort's dislike for the whole business, however he continued in his refusal to be named President or even

officially join. If his name was removed from the organization's letterhead and ^{they} changed ^{the group's designation} to something like: "The Interplanetary Exploration Society", he said would be less reticent about coming in. Thayer refused, but he assured Fort the Fortean Society would always have a fondness for rocket ¹⁰leers.

About the time of the official birth of the Fortean Society in New York, the ^{Congress} Congress of the British Association for the Advancement of Science met in London. The proceedings included a short speech by a mirthless image to the new Fortean cult, the speaker being a scientist in religious raiment, a sort of compounded orthodoxy. But this cleric-scholar was not content to be satisfied with conservative visitas. Communication with other worlds lies well within the domain of possibility and humanity must contemplate the aftermath of such a revelation, he said. A new era would stem from that moment, he continued, offering mankind a perceptivity to the purpose of the cosmos otherwise unattainable. This Bishop's utterance also predicted dramatic opposition to any alien pansophism, as any pretense to universal wisdom would find unequal acceptance and lead to something hopefully the world had permanently forsaken: world war. At that moment the aged, bemedaled leader of Germany, Hindenburg, recieved Adolf Hitler, to discuss the nation's political future in light of recent gains by the Nazi party in national elections.

March 1, 1931, Maynard Shipley praised Charles Fort and the book: Lo! in a New York Times review, promising potential buyers an adventure exceeding any of Verne's.

Dreiser did his part in spreading the word, by sending to the famous H.G. Wells, Fort's Book of the Damned. Wells glanced at the volume and denounced it as so much rubbish, writing Dreiser that he had thrown it out with the trash (April 9, 1931). Dreiser, outraged, shot back a missive that asserted time would justify Fort's labors. As a gesture, Dreiser dropped in on Fort at the strange writer's humble abode Christmas that year and left a \$100 check as a present, a small fortune in those hard times. 11.

Edmond Hamilton evangelized the readers of the pulps with another story based on Fort's works in the magazine Weird Tales, August, 1931, which Hamilton, taking a thought from Fort's musing, titled: "The Earth Owners". Hamilton envisioned a gaseous life form, black clouds from space, that attack the planet earth only to be driven off by some mysterious globles of light. On page 22 one finds this dialogue:

" 'They (the globles) might be intelligent as well as living, for all we know, coming in from outer space to explore our world. They might be coming for reasons incomprehensible to us. 'They might be the owners of the earth coming to visit their property!'

'Owners of the earth? What the devil do you mean, Randon? I asked.

For an answer Randon strode to a shelf and pulled down a thick red book, opened it rapidly and found a page. He looked up from it to us.

'Listen to these words of Charles Fort, whose mind has explored the dark gulfs from which most minds reel back'.

He read in a clear voice: I think we're property. I should say we belong to something. That once upon a time, this earth was a No-Man's -Land, that other worlds explored and colonized here, and fought among themselves for possession,

but that now it's owned by something. That something owns this earth --all others warned off.'

Randon shut the book, looked up at us. 'Its a strange idea, I said.'

Ending his story Hamilton has his hero say: "Somewhere out there they (the owners) are now." ¹² cc

October 11, 1931, the New York Times mentioned a ruckus near Point Pleasant, West Virginia. Citizens of Gallipolis Ferry had the police searching the countryside there, claiming that a flaming, 100-foot, blimp swooped low (300 feet) over the Ohio river. But all the dirigible companies denied any of their craft were missing or even flying in the West Virginia region. ¹³ Authorities were baffled that no trace could be found of the "crashed blimp" after an all day ground and air hunt. ¹⁴

Likewise people living in and around Hammonton, New Jersey, December 6, 1931, had firemen, State troopers, local police, and some 200 volunteers tramping the swamps in that area seeking a "parachute" in treacherous near jungle only Indians ventured into. Giant bonfires were lit to provide landmarks for search teams operating in the darkness. No trace of a distressed aviator was found. ¹⁵ Perhaps only what looked like a parachute ~~had~~ ^{been} seen.

New Jersey must be a spooky place because the New York Times stated that a "airplane" had swooped down and disappeared behind a treeline just off a road near New Brunswick, on Dec. 29, 1932. Police swarmed over the thick growth in the area looking for wreckage without success. The original witness declared that he didn't hear the plane engines, but the craft's

blinking lights were clearly visible as the "airplane" dropped down behind the trees. 16.

Things that appeared to have been parachutes, fiery blimps, or simply dark masses with blinking lights; things that liked to land in swamps; things that were assumed to be quite ordinary even when nothing was found to account for them; inspired Fort to spell out his most important legacy in his long list of interesting predictions:

"...I accept that, if explorers from somewhere else should visit this earth, and if their vessels, or the lights of their vessels, should be seen by millions of the inhabitants of earth, the data would soon be conventionalized." 17.

As the first months of 1932 slipped away, Fort felt his life force ebbing. He ^{took} notes on his decline, as he seemed to do on everything, and refused a doctor. Finally on May 3, 1932, an ambulance took him to Royal Hospital, the Bronx. There Charles Fort, the count jester of literary kings, lay dying as Aaron Sussman brought the last book by Fort's hand, Wild Talents, still smelling of ink and glue, to his bedside. Fort could only manage a faint smile hours later encountering the final mystery of death. He was 57. 18.

The New York Times gave him his passing a respectable column of type, terming Fort a "Foe of Science". 19. The marvel-monger was dead, but not forgotten.

In October, 1933, Astounding sciencefiction magazine chose to serialize Lo! to expose its contributors and readers to fresh off beat ideas. Lo!, the one work of Fort's with the largest printing up to that time (3,000 copies), reached

a readership of 50,000 which read all or part of the volume. Still many readers wrote in and complained that they didn't know what the author was driving at. ^{20.} Those in a quandary had only to wait for the slow march of events. ^{21.} Things were going into focus.

New Years Day, 1934, dispatches from Stockholm told of authorities there taking steps to intercept a "mystery plane" roaming at will for weeks over the Lagland region at night. ^{21.} By January 10th, the Swedish Air Force announced that three members of ground search parties had thus far been lost in a determined effort to clear up the puzzle. It was generally believed a secret base was located somewhere in the mountains. ^{22.} Similarly, the Finnish government, on January 12th, notified Sweden and Norway that its territory was also being overflown illegally and that perhaps it was the Russians up to something. ^{23.} On January 28th, the Swedish Parliament empowered the nation's Air Force to use any reasonable means necessary to stop the activities of the "ghost aviators". ^{24.} By February the New York Times carried the news that the Scandinavian powers were greatly alarmed by the continued reconnoitring of the unexplained "nocturnal aircraft" they had so far been unable to identify. Helsingfor and Viborg, Finland, described their night visitors as just mysterious lights, which was of no help in establishing nationality, yet one wonders if the Kremlin was snooping, why do it with an aircraft adorned with lights? Aviation experts were called upon to explain the "ghost aviators" that displayed, as the newspapers termed it, "exceptional" skill. The Soviets were unhappy over the uproar and steadfastly

denied accusations aimed at them. 25.

February, 1935, Thayer notified Dreiser he now had the time to give the Fortean Society the attention it warranted and, as Secretary of the group, was planning to put out a Society magazine for the enlightenment of the masses. Dreiser learned that Thayer wanted to use his picture for the cover of the first issue, but true to his unpredictable nature, Dreiser quarreled with Thayer over some minor matter and was never featured, nor did the famous author take any further interest in the Fortean organization. 26.

July 20, 1937, a Fortean correspondent in Europe send Thayer in New York some information from London. It seems the British Air Ministry gave orders to investigate a strange light in the sky paying a nightly visit to the heavens over Hendon aerodrome. Officials publicly aired puzzlement over this peculiar activity in the air and called the the mystery the actions of a unknown "stunt pilot". 27.

Also, the July 22th issue of the New York Times carried a report by the British ship Ranee, which stated that its crew had spotted an "aircraft" some 500 miles off the coast of the United States apparently making a trans-Atlantic flight which was not a minor achievement even in 1937. Identification of the plane could not be ascertained due to darkness but the "lights of the craft" were plainly visible. The press became interested in who the daredevil was, so American and Canadian seaboard air facilities were contacted. Nothing officially was learned, so wealthy individuals active in aviation were

polled to obtain some clue (one was Howard Hughes). All in-
 quiers to determine if an unannounced air feat was in pro-
 gress failed to clear up the matter.^{28.}

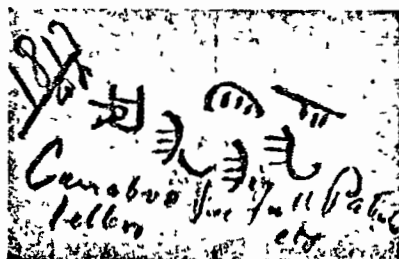
Tiffany Thayer began to fulfill his intentions by writing
 and publishing The Fortean Society Magazine, beginning in
 September, 1937. The cost came out of his own pocket, but this
 gave him almost complete editorial control. As a result, the
 vast majority of material in the first and subsequent issues
 did not deal with mysterious flying objects, though the Hendon,
 aerodome and Ranee incidents appeared in the initial publica-
 tions. Thayer commented on the two aerial riddles in this
 way: "(These are)...typical of much that Fort records. Something
 in the air -orthodoxy explains without evidence -'a stunt
 flight'".^{29.}

In England a Fortean Society member noticed an item in the En-
 glish press and sent it to Thayer in New York. Thayer commented
 on the clipping for the readers of the Society's magazine: "The
Daily Telegraph, February 8th 1938, carried letters from four
 readers, two of them scientists, describing things like glowing
 spheres which they had seen floating in the British sky. The
 same issue ran another letter from Mr. H. Bond, of Ringwood,
 Hampshire, describing one seen by himself and a friend, 'It
 resembled an enormous shield of brass lighted by a searchlight'".^{30.}

Thayer followed his September edition of the Fortean publica-
 tion with another in October, in which, for example, much ado was
 made of a chart of the eccentric changes in the level of water
 in New York harbor.

And then, for some reason, there was a two^{year} gap in the publication of the Fortean Society journal. Perhaps Thayer ; lost interest, ran low on money, or both. However, ^{the} inter-
national political scene ^{was} galvanized Thayer into a flurry of renewed activity.

There were reports of strange things in the sky over the German-Polish border in 1937# and descriptions of the phenomena were in keeping with the political tensions in the air. The objects were described as "swords" and "coffins". 31.



A typical note
made by Charles
Fort. Exact size.

There is an intriguing bit of data on page 122 of Donald Keyhoe's book: The Flying Saucers Are Real (1950). Keyhoe claimed that he learned for a confidential source, an unnamed aeronautical engineer, that there was some UFO activity over central Europe at the beginning of the war. According to Keyhoe this gentlemen asserted: "Some top Nazi scientists were convinced we were being observed by space visitors. They's searched all the old reports. Some sightings over Germany set them off about 1940."



CHARLES FORT

Playing a solitaire game of
super-checkers—his own invention

WOOLLCOTT

Ever since I first heard the startling and ominous trumpet blast—*The Book of the Damned*—twenty three years ago I have been full of enthusiasm for the works of this singular man

TARKINGTON

I read this vigorous and astonishing book straight through and then re read it for the pleasure it gave me in the way of its writing and in the substance of what it told. Retort must be left to the outraged astronomer—lay brethren must content themselves with gratitude to a man who writes such books

HECHT

He has made a terrible onslaught upon the accumulated lunacy of fifty centuries

He has delighted me beyond all men who have written books in this world. He has shot the scientific basis of modern wisdom full of large ugly holes

POWYS

Fort's books not only liberate the mind from those sublimated herd dogmas of science along the particular lines he deals with in his enormous pilings up of evidence to the contrary but they also liberate the mind from *all sorts* of other prepossessions and idolatries of the market place

RASCOE

You can read the Books of Charles Fort in almost any way you like or in any mood: your temperament dictates and whatever way you read it it is my expression that it is a great book

THAYER

This is one of the very few books in the world which make their readers think without ever telling them *what* to think in fact I can recall no other. It encourages the curious to question the prying to pry the inquisitive to inquire. If there is any higher mission on earth I don't know what it is

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Military Intelligence Takes Over

In 1938 the Democracies watched with horror as Hitler progressively took apart the treaty system that had kept European political boundaries intact since World War I and most felt there was no way of avoiding the coming bloodbath. Nazi Germany had at that time zeroed in^{on} Czechoslovakia, asking that country to meet outrageous demands by October 1, 1938. There was a general fear the ultimate madness would finally commence even though the deadline came and went without war. People's nerves remained —→ as taut as bow strings. Invasion was on everyone's mind.

October 30, 1938, was a Sunday eveing in an era when radio supplied a large measure of public entertainment, which in those turbulent days was spiced with shocking news bulletins of war escalations. Eight o'clock that night a popular program opened its show with an unknown singer. Bored, multitudes of American radio listeners switched stations, and in many cases belatedly tuned in to Orson Well's Mercury Theater of the air then in progress.

Ironically, H.G.Wells, who had scorned the work of Charles Fort, now could hear his fictional tale of intruders from space, War of the Worlds, treated as an actual news event, with the utilization of dramatic interruptions of recorded music to establish credibility. The play was the Mercury Theater's Halloween show and it turned out good, too good, in fact. One million members of the radio audience (confirmed by later surveys) became convinced of impending doom. Among those who got through

the jammed network switchboard was an angry Mayor in the mid-West, who shouted over the phone that armed and frighten mobs were running ^{though} the streets of his town and if the Martian invasion was a fake he would clobber Mr. Orson right on the nose. 1.

The dramatic power demonstrated by radio that eveing compelled the Federal Communication Commission to institute controls on any more realistic presentations of similar fashion. Furthermore, Princeton University conducted research on the episode to diagnose the causes of panic among the public. The august aacademicians determined that belief in the Martian attack was found to manifest itself in direct porportion to the general ignorance, superstitiousness, insecurity, and war tension proneness of the person in question. 2. (Overlooked, perhaps, was a gentleman that had actually rushed to the "Martian landing site" in New Jersey to chip off a sample of one of the space ship for study, which turned out to be a professor from Princeton!)

March, 1939, the chief Fortean Society correspondent overseas, Eric Frank Russell, living in England, gained fame in science fiction ciroles with a highly successful story he wrote for the magazine Unknown. In this tale, "Sinister Barrier", Russell proposes that globles of light secretly exist in the atmosphere as a werid kind of lifeform, and as their "food" they feed on the emotional energy of humans, becoming visible only under very special conditions. Apparently aware his "Sinister Barrier" story would be well recieved, Russell prefaced his work with

tributes to the Fortean organization and its Buddha, Charles Fort.³ The English author, with grateful zeal, set about combing the European press for data with more enthusiasm than ever.

The news in the papers was not good. Hitler had learned that England and France had firmly guaranteed the security of Poland, his next victim. The Fuehrer screamed to a gathering of his lieutenants that those countries that now dared to resist his will would: "...soon choke on a stew he was cooking up". General European hostilities officially started 04:45 hours, September 1, 1939.

The resulting insanity infuriated Thayer. He began anew to write and publish the Fortean magazine which now took on political overtones (January 1940). Thayer, like many others, frantically hoped the United States could somehow stay out of the widening conflict. He had an unusually strong fear that the press or a popular public figure would lead the Americans sheep-like into the war. But such dreams of American isolation in a world at war were dangerously in error, nevertheless the idea was so pleasant people in the U.S. were blind to logical arguments to the contrary.

On Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, Orson Wells was on radio again doing readings from the works of great American authors when he was suddenly shouldered aside by a member of the station's news staff. It was announced that Pearl Harbor had been attacked.

A few weeks afterward, President Roosevelt met Wells and remarked about how Wells had been interrupted. The President said: "...well you did that Martian thing so some thought this time it was a bad joke".

Meanwhile, an odd footnote

to the occasion was an article printed in the Fortean magazine.

Norman Markham,
During the last months of 1941, a Fortean correspondent, sub-

mitted a two page article to Thayer, who accepted it for publication in the Society's journal. The author of the article had listed the mystery planes reported over Europe, the phantom parachutes in New Jersey, and other unusual bits of recent information of similar nature. Thayer noted that this Society member had been studying strange maritime vanishments and their relationship to the orbital position of the planet Venus, so in the Fortean publication Thayer mentioned the forementioned facts and all but spilled the beans in regards to a request that he keep mum on a certain conclusion drawn from the reports of mysterious activity in the atmosphere and on the seas made by the investigator.⁵ The way the final article read made it clear the Fortean investigator believed aliens from Venus posed an imminent threat. The message was an accurate portent of sorts. A few Forteans may have been actually reading the article about a surprise aerial assault when a Japanese bomb exploded on a Pearl Harbor seaplane ramp at exactly 7:55, Oahu time, Sunday, December 7, 1941. America had been attacked, but not by any aliens from the depths of space, yet no in the Pentagon in their wildest dreams would have guessed how differently the Fortean article would appear in official eyes some five years later.

Fires were still raging in the Pearl Harbor area when the American government took steps to avoid another brutal sneak attack. It became instantly clear the U.S. had been too lax in its vigilance and much more exposed to danger than hitherto believed. Oddly enough there had been considerable advance warning of the Japanese blow. American radar had picked up the very first waves of Commander Fuchida's carrier planes, yet the flight was carelessly confused with friendly aircraft. Also, the

had
American minesweeper Condor detected enemy submarine activity just outside the harbor entrance well before the Japanese air strike. And, most importantly, U.S. Naval Intelligence had broken the Japanese secret code, so the Pentagon had available a good idea of the future moves of the aggressive Asian power, nonetheless, the processing and handling of the code information was so slow and inept it was almost useless. Furthermore, it might be said, American Intelligence could have had more up to date intelligence reports of Japanese strategic aims and military capabilities.

With a vigor that matched America's industrial mobilization, a series of orders went out from the White House to various government agencies, requesting that the Intelligence establishment be updated, strengthened, and better coordinated. 6

In subsequent months the reorganized Intelligence service had chances to redeem itself, but the biggest challenge it faced in the Second World War, however, was not Japan, but Germany.

The inventiveness of German scientists and the engineering skill of German industry teamed up to produce some of the best military arms of the entire war. Not content with creating tougher armour plate and faster fighters, the Germans pushed work on highly revolutionary ideas with the blessing of Hitler. One of the most spectacular achievement of German genius was the rocket program that developed the dreaded Vergeltung (vengeance) weapons, the V-1 and the V-2.

From the beginning it was vital for the United States and England to join in a coordinated effort to recognize and deal with such dangers as the rockets, since the interests of both countries closely dovetailed. It wasn't long before the smooth

Working efficiency of the Anglo-American Intelligence team matched that of other allied military operations in the European theater.

April 4, 1942, a small group of French troops was sent to garrison a military post in the middle of the Sarhara. One French officier remembered a curious event that took place shortly after the group's arrival:

" 'We had been there a few days,' ... (said) Captain Le Prieur, 'When one morning the meteorologist N.C.O. came in and drew my attention to a kind of "planet" which had appeared in the cloudless sky immediately above the fort. The object was visible to the naked eye and looked like a small aluminum speck. There were about forty of us and we saw it quite plainly, as the atmosphere was perfectly clear.

'When we examined it more closely through our field glasses and small telescope of a theodolite, the "planet" looked like a small moon or five-franc piece. It had a pale metallic glint and seemed to be suspended at an altitude of 15,000 -18,000 feet.

'It appeared to be motionless, but prolonged examination with the theodolite revealed that it was slowly rotating. We counted three complete revolutions in eight hours.

'The next morning it was still there immediately overhead, and we began to take it for granted, assuming that it must a stay star or a new satellite attracted by the gravitational pull of the earth, ...at dawn on the third day, there was no sign of it.' " 7.

The Americans and British, however, took nothing for granted. With the city of London hard pressed by Nazi air attack, anything that might possibly present a new threat, indeed, anything that was in the least suspicious, caused immediate and intense curiosity.

A valuable tool of British Intelligence and one the Americans quickly adopted, was the taking and analysis of three-dimensional aerial reconnaissance photographs. It was such pictures taken by swift long-range fighters that provided conclusive proof of the Nazi rocket work at a place called Peenemünde.

Unusual activity in the area where Germany's Peene river flowed into the Baltic sea had attracted the attention of English photointerpeters. And information from various other sources confirmed the fact that some kind of secret work was in progress there.⁸ By April, 1943, Dr. R.V. Jones, one of the top British Intelligence chiefs and a professor of astrophysics, who also had been following the experiments of the German scientists for years (He studied carefully papers written by Von Braun on liquid fuel rocket engines), was shown a report on the secret missiles and pilotless aircraft being built at Peenemünde drawn up by the British Secret Service. Dr. Jones confirmed the suspicions of the Secret Service agents. From what was available, it seemed that the Germans were making rapid strides in developing advanced weapon systems.

The British War Office felt the situation called for vigorous action to obtain more information, so it asked Winston Churchill's son-in-law, Duncan Sandys, who held a high post in the government, to head a special inquiry into the German secret weapon mystery. After a thorough discussion, The Sandy's Committee issued directives for an immediate and intensive photographic search of the Peenemünde

region and other suspect areas. 9.

By November sufficient photographic evidence had been obtained of ~~the~~ Peenemünde and ^{suspicious} ~~suspect~~ construction sites in northern France, to show that two types of "vengeance weapons" were nearing operational status. One was a small, winged missile called the V-1, which used an odd shaped launching ramp. These ramps were showing up all over the French country side that bordered the English Channel and were all aimed at London. The other missile seemed to be a large, high trajectory, long range rocket named (the V-2) which apparently was still in the process of being perfected at the elaborate testing station at Peenemünde.

Yet, even with extensive photographic evidence, uncertainties persisted as to the actual danger of the weapons and what steps were to be taken to counter the menace. Duncan Sandys and number of others favored a concentration of countermeasures against the big rocket experiments at Peenemünde, while another group, led by Lord Cherwell, ^{scientific adviser to the Prime Minister,} felt that the short range V-1 flying bomb in France was a more immediate threat and should be bombed at once, even if it meant a delay in hitting the V-2 target. Some experts even questioned if the evidence called for any military action at all, their thinking being that perhaps the supposed flying bombs and giant rockets were just fakes to frighten Germany's enemies, or to draw ^{away} blockbusters meant for vital industrial plants. 10.

Dr. Jones, as an Intelligence expert, was well aware of why there might be some confusion over the reality of the missile threat. He had learned from Danish fishermen that strange pilotless planes were crashing in the Baltic and the descrip-

tions of the wreckage being retrieved from the sea by German technicians seemed to indicate a small, automatically steered flying bomb, so there was reason to believe the V-1 ^{at least} did work. On the other hand, Radio Berlin had been raving about all sorts of secret devices which few experts took seriously, like, for example, a way of freezing the English Channel solid at will. Also stories of giant missiles had been planted in the publications of the neutral nations of Switzerland and Sweden by known Nazi sympathizers taking orders from Berlin. German agents even tried to mask their activities by phoning false eyewitness reports to Allied news agencies.

Before Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda clouded the picture, Dr. Jones's Intelligence organization had a simpler time of it, since reports were few and knowledge of the German devices restricted. Now faced with with a lot of low grade and false information thanks to Berlin's rumor machine, Dr. Jones hit upon a plan to goldpan the reports coming in by utilizing what he called his "touchstone" theory. He relied on only those reports which contained a certain fact he knew to be absolutely true. //

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Churchill was made aware of the disagreement over the nature of the secret weapon evidence, so he ordered the Minister of Aircraft Production, Sir Stafford Cripps, to hold a full scale conference on the matter to convene no later than November 8, 1943.

A panel of experts was chosen and it met on the appointed day. Besides Sir Stafford Cripps, present was Duncan Sandys, high

military officers from every branch of the British military and Intelligence services, and a scattering of civilian scientists.¹² One scientist in particular was one we must keep in mind. He was representing the United States and his name was: Dr. H.P. Robertson.¹³

The problem of information evaluation was reviewed for the distinguished panel which included ^{a deal of} great attention given to aerial photographs. After hearing the pros and cons and inspecting enlarged prints of selected areas, it was judged that the V-weapons were real enough to warrant air strikes by Allied bombers. This planned military blow was then authorized under the codename: Operation Crossbow.¹⁴

Of course the Allied capture of ^{an} actual V-weapon would have made the Intelligence problem simple and conclusive, and by a stroke of luck in the case of the V-2 this took place, though somewhat belatedly.

In June, 1944, German General Walter Dornberger received an urgent summons from the Fuhrer's headquarters at Rastenburg. It seems the Swedish Foreign Office ^{concerned about Sweden's neutrality} had made a formal complaint to Hitler about the crash of a German rocket in southern Sweden. General Dornberger, as head of the Peenemünde missile base, had been singled out to give an accounting to an angry Hitler, a kind of face-to-face meeting that made strong men cringe. Fortunately for General Dornberger, the Fuhrer's temper cooled before the General arrived at Rastenburg, as Hitler's warped mind came around to the idea he could now intimidate the Swedes at will.

General Dornberger's worries did not end with the Fuhrer's

pacification however, as there was the whereabouts of the wayward rocket to concern him. He knew if the Allies got their hands on the missile their Intelligence agencies could put together the whole V-2 picture. The British were on their toes and confirmed General Dornberger's worst fears by learning of the downed rocket and pressing the Swedish government for all the wreckage. As the Swedes looked the other way, the V-2 remains were ^{flown} ~~sent~~ to the British Isles in a slow cargo plane, making a risky crossing of airspace controlled by the Luftwaffe.

When the Anglo-American scientific Intelligence team watched the unloading of the Dakota aircraft, there were almost audible gasps. The V-2 looked like something out of sciencefiction. Hearsay had hardly exaggerated, and there was rumors of an even more advanced "V-3" on German drawingboards. Opinion of German talent soared. 15.

The Fortean, meanwhile, continued on their merry way with touches of whimsy in their comments on the latest odd news-clipping and the like, blissfully unaware that much of the data they so lightly entertained and considered their own, had an important appointment to keep at General Eisenhower's Headquarters in Paris in the fall of 1944.

After a strenuous effort, Thayer and the Society managed the reprinting of all four of Fort's ^{works, which had originally been} limited editions, in a 1,200 page tome in May, 1941. Book reviewers greeted the volume with mild approval and created a number of new titles for the king of the inexplicable: "clapperclawer of science", "the Mad Genius" and the "author of the errie". No stranger to Fort's scientific idolatries, Ben Hecht, a long time avid Fortean,

outdid them all and made the most of a rare opportunity to praise the man that ^{had} ridiculed accepted herd-dogmas. Hecht wrote in part:

"It is possible that our master was a little mad, and given to seeing chimeras where only crackpots existed. It is possible too, that there is a touch of Flash Gordon in his vision of sky monsters, cloud demons and astral were-wolves bedeviling the earth. But the looney fringes that hang from his sacerdotal robes are a minor matter (and)...There is room in the Fortean Society for some high and clacking tongues to cut loose in behalf of our master, and plenty of room for members to provide the proper niche in the world for this Apostle of the Exception, Keeper of the Ghosts, Observer of Secret Rays, Avenger of Forgotten Theories, Lost Causes, and Strayed Comets; Jocular Priest of the Improbable and Demonstrator of Idiocies." 16.

One writer that wrote for popular periodicals became interested and began doing a regular feature for Coronet magazine based on information found in Fort's book's. The writer, R. DeWitt Miller, titled the feature: "Forgotten Mysteries". To his credit he stated his case in plain language, which avoided the confusion Thayer's opinions and unusual writing styles were creating in the Fortean journal.

If one watched the papers close enough, he could still find data of the "forgotten" variety:

"A large light with a tail, resembling a comet, was observed in Transylvania in September, 1943. It was visible for five minutes.

Witnesses reported that the head dissolved and the tail took the shape of a scimitar before vanishing". 17.

And:

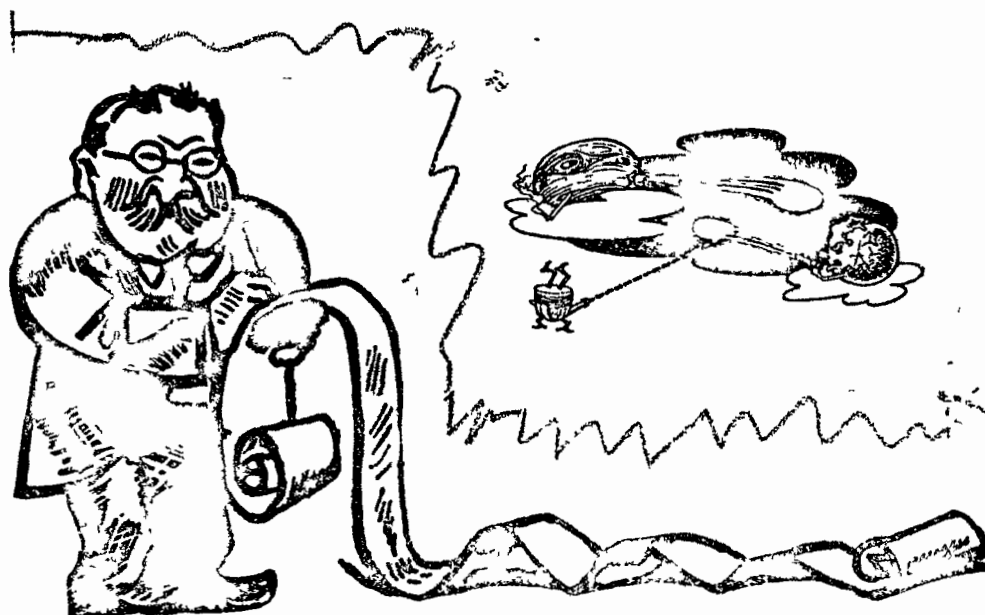
"June 27, 1944 - (a) brilliant red and green meteor (was seen) over Cass County, Ind. A witness near Kewanna stated that it flashed across the road just above the telephone wires (it was) bright green with a tail of red sparks." 18

Around the latter part of 1943 a gentleman by the name of Arthur Louis Joquel II established "The Society for the Investigation of Unusual Phenomena". An index to R.Dewitt Miller's Coronet features was included in the new group's initial newsletter, an eleven page miltigraph publication that also carried a tribute to Charles Fort and the Fortean Society. ¹⁹

Neither the Coronet series or the "investigators of unusual phenomena" offered anything like a strong challenge to Tiffany Thayer's dominance of Fortean-type material though the days of such a situlation were numbered. While Thayer still continued to print a few items about things in the air like the strange moving light in the sky over a town in Missouri on May 23, 1944, the vast bulk of the Fortean magazine was still given over to such confusing non-aerial oddments as "Cosmic Constants", "Anti-

DOUBT

THE FORTEAN SOCIETY MAGAZINE
Vol. III Whole Number 59



←
Left: The cover of Doubt, #59, (here not full size) showed Charles Fort compiling his list of the "damned". The cartoon to the upper right illustrated the heavens baffling conventional science, the inverted observatory.

Einstein Theories", "Atom-anatomies", or "Butterfly Map Projections".

The Society, nevertheless, had at least one member still staunchly devoted entirely to the theory of visitors from space and mysterious vanishments, but he was rarely referred to in the Fortean publication's columns. One rare occasion was soon after a strange fireball flashed low over the midwestern United States on August 8, 1944. The editor of The Fortean Society Magazine, renamed Doubt in the mid-1940s, Tiffany Thayer, light-heartedly coupled the bolide story with a newsclipping from Mattoon, Illinois. Thayer noticed that some 40 people in the town of Mattoon became infected with mass hysteria when a rumor started that they were breathing a deadly invisible gas. He then scribbled the following for the readers of Doubt:

"The Mattoon business began on (September 2nd)...when a 'tall thin man in a skull cap' is alleged to have sprayed a mother and child...If the sprayer was a visitor from one of Fort's New Lands, who arrived in a fiery chariot about two weeks before, he is going to have a hard time getting spare parts for the return journey. The Society's expert on celestial visitors has not peeped on this subject. We more than half suspect that he had a rendezvous with this interplanetary Hesse." 20. #

#Who knows but that there might be more to this episode than meets the eye at first glance. On the remote chance there might be something to this case let's quote some lines from the Herbert Schirmer, Ashland, Neb., contactee case. According to Schirmer, the aliens were: "wiry" and wore "tight-fitting helmets". Also: "One (alien) in front of the car (shot)...funny stuff, like a greenish gas...all over the car..."

What, one rightly asks, does such ~~data and speculation~~ have to do with the harsh realities of the war then raging around the world? The answer is that strange things began to happen in the war zones which could not be easily explained as mere "mass hysteria".

Civilians were generally unaware of anything that could not be shrugged off as just a wartime phenomenon. Fortean Eric Frank Russell, on watch in ^{war ravaged} Europe, summed up the problem thusly "The skies became so full of exploding, colliding or collapsing fruits of world technology that many a valuable item was overlooked or discarded because it bore too close a resemblance to common events." 21.

Yet thousands of well trained and equipped military personnel more than filled the gap. Whole organizations had as ^a single task, the collecting of facts and the solving of puzzles, but as these groups of intelligence experts increased their influence, power, and efficiency, one riddle swelled apace.

One American pilot testified:

"I was on a mission from Ceylon, bombing Palembang, Sumatra. The date was August 10, 1944, the time shortly after midnight. There were 50 planes on the strike going in on the target at about 2 or 3 minute intervals. My plane was the last one in on the target and the assignment was for us to bomb, then drop photoflash bombs, attached to parachutes, make a few runs over the target area, photographing damage from the preceding planes. The weather was broken clouds, with an overcast above us. Our altitude was 14,000 feet, indicated air speed about 210 mph.

"While in the general target area we were exposed to sporadic flak fire, but immediately after leaving this area it ceased. At about 20 to 30 minutes later the right gunner and my co-pilot reported a strange object pacing us about 500 yards off the starboard wing. At that distance it appeared as a spherical object, probably 5 to 6 feet in diameter, of a very bright and intense red or orange in color....My gunner reported it coming in from about five o'clock position at our level. It seemed to throb or vibrate constantly. Assuming it was some kind of radio controlled object sent to pace us, I went into evasive action, changing direction constantly as much as 90 degrees and altitude 2,000 feet. It followed our every maneuver for about 8 minutes, always holding a position of about 500 yards out and about 2 o'clock in relation to the plane. When it left, it made an abrupt 90 degree turn, up and accelerating rapidly; it disappeared in the overcast." 22

In Europe mysterious occurrences slowly built up to a point where military intelligence became greatly concerned. A strange series of events during the fall of 1944 had its beginnings in October:

"In mid-October, 1944, a M. Nordstern of Mittainvillier, Eure-et-Loire(France), saw an enormous object shaped like a shell flying at an altitude of 35,000 to 45,000 feet. Seen through glasses, it showed a marked scintillation rature like that of a mirror reflecting the rays of the sun. It was rapidly revolving horizontally. The object moved in an up right position with the point directed downwards. The diameter of its upper part was from 100 to 200 feet and its height at least 350 feet.

When it first appeared it was moving at the rate of 125 miles per hour. M. Nordstern could now distinguish a slight oscillation which was frequently repeated. The upper cylindrical extremity, less distinct than the lower pointed one, was surmounted by a thin dark cloud.... The machine flew horizonatllly, maintaining its vertical position, from the north-west to the south-east. However, when approaching Chartres, it made a slight turn toward the south and then suddenly ascended vertically at terrific speed and disappeared.

At this moment a second (object) appeared, identical in form but flying a good deal higher. It was following approximately the same course as the first one and then made the same slight turn to advoid Chartres and disappeared in the same direction as its leader." 23.

The Allies were not the only ones puzzled. The Axis forces were encountering similar phenomena:

"It was a September night in 1944. Somewhere near Epinal in the French province of Lorraine, Private Immel and 500 other German soldiers were dug in, waiting for the Allied advance.

Suddenly, Immel saw an object hovering nearby. There was neither light nor sound.

'It was silver-white, like dull alumium,' recalled Immel ... 'It stopped a few feet from the ground, above some railroad tracks near us... It was round and about 6 feet in diameter. But as it got closer the shape changed to oval. I raised my rifle and fired. As soon as the bullet struck it, it flared up into the brightest sunlight I'd ever seen.

'Every one of the 500 men in my company opened fire on the ball of light. However, the next morning, when we searched the area, we found nothing.' " 24.

One of Germany's Axis partners, Romania, also had a visit from a strange aerial object:

"On a summer day in 1944, engineer George Zmeuranu was near the Vage refinery, Ploiesti, immediately following a bomb raid and 'one of the oil tanks was burning...'

'Then I (Zmeuranu) noticed a pointed object coming from the north,... It was yellow... but with a whitish tail which, when it met the clouds of smoke, seemed to shorten and vibrate in a strange way.'

(The object) traveled at a high rate of speed. Over the burning refinery it turned, stopped momentarily, then zigzagged toward the north and disappeared." 25

The American homefront was not exempt from strange things in sky. On the banks of the Clinck River at Oak Ridge, Tenn., a huge, black, windowless, building, 525 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 75 feet high, was constructed in record 70 days. In the middle of September, 1944, this structure, a gaseous- diffusion

plant, began operations. This unusual factory was designed to prepare sufficient quantities of fissionable material for the United States' most important secret weapon: the atomic bomb. Shortly after the plant started operations the area had a very odd visitor:

"...about dusk on a September evening in 1944 a Mr. Nelson in the company of two other Oak Ridge workers, A.C. Butler and Albert Profitt, were driving from Oliver Springs into Oak Ridge. At a point about two miles out of Oliver a strange object showed up about fifty feet in front of the car and at about the height of the windshield. Nelson said it was glossy white in color, and the reflected light had a dimension of about thirty feet long and four feet wide. When Nelson eased the car up to the object, it moved slowly away, and when he stopped the car, it also stopped. Nelson claims that he called people out from a house by the roadside to see what they were observing, and they were as dumbfounded at the sight as the three men were.

Finally, after Nelson had moved forward and stopped again several times, the light rose high into the air and disappeared over Black Oak Ridge. The men reported the incident to the superintendent of schools, and the FBI was contacted in Knoxville. Nelson said that

at first the FBI was very interested in the report but then they seemed to lose interest in it completely. He assumed that they found out that the object was some sort of secret weapon being developed at Oak Ridge and so it was no longer of any interest to them." 26

On November 23, 1944 an American B-17 swooped down to make a sloppy emergency landing close to a British anti-aircraft battery in a Beligum field. The British gunners rushed up to the downed bomber to rescue the crew but were greatly puzzled to find no one aboard. The bomber had apparently landed itself, something that was not unknown to happen once in a while after being abandoned in the air if conditions are right. After managing to turn off the engines by experimenting with the controls, the soldiers examined the plane's interior to learn why the crew had bailed out of a seemingly undamaged plane. The Tommies were astounded to discover all ten of the crew's parachutts still in the aircraft! 27

That very evening an American night fighter rolled down ~~the~~ a runway with ever increasing speed, and with a swelling roar climbed into the night sky over Dijon, France. Lt. E. Schueter, the plane's pilot, set a northern course to begin a search and destroy mission over the Nazi held Rhineland region down river from Strasbourg (Not far from the ^{last} fix in the navigator's log of the B-17 that had mysteriously lost its crew). Manning the "electronic eye" of the big night fighter was a Lt. D. Meier, an experienced combat radar operator. A third officer, intelligence expert Lt. F. Ringwald, rode along to keep tabs on any final hour secret weapons of the Germans.

Widely spaced clouds a ghostly grey against the black heavens formed a backdrop as the deadly flying machine skipped over treetops and smokestacks. Lethal fireflies arched through the darkness in a vain effort to seek out the speeding plane, as the pilot dodged machine guns hidden in shadows of the landscape. The three Americans also kept their heads on swivels to prevent being pounced on by the Luftwaffe.

Suddenly they spotted nine orange lights moving fast, one behind the other, off to their left. A quick check ^{for} possible ground lights and reflections ~~from familiar sources~~ failed to account for the glowing points, so Lt. Schueter jerked the controls and stood his plane on a wingtip in order to turn into a possible attack by enemy night fighter ^{with} his thumb hovering over the gun button of his own weapons. The strange lights winked out only to reappear far out of range.

Seventy-two hours later, a Lt. H. Giblin and a Lt. W. Cleary were on another night fighter sweep, when a red globe was seen by them sailing through the air at better than 200 miles

28.
per hour.

More such reports were compiled by military debriefing officers and vouched for by men like intelligence officer Ringwald.

Soon Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Expeditionary Force at Paris issued a statement which officially recognizing the phenomena, explaining the lights as probably due to a new and nature novel German secret weapon. The communique described the "Nazi device" as basically a silvery sphere like a large glass ball, which it was guessed, had some, as yet, unknown air defence function, for the structure, purpose, and mode of propulsion had completely eluded Allied intelligence up to that point. 29.

Tiffany Thayer didn't yet know it but the usefulness of the Fortean Society was now on the wane. Military intelligence was now formally collecting and conjecturing on what Thayer once admitted was: "typical of much Fort recorded". Yet Thayer had also accurately echoed the words of Fort when he stated that the mortal sin of the orthodox powers-that-be (science or in this case military intelligence) would continue to attempt to explain mysterious phenomena in the air without adequate or accurate evidence.

The military was now interested in Fortean lights in the sky and not far behind would be modern science. A New York Times military affairs writer speculated on the strange phenomena in the heavens over Europe in an article dated December 15th which suggested that the puzzling behavior of the odd flying spheres probably indicated that they were a new type of German radar window. 30.

On December 22, 1944, around 0600, under dark morning skies, ~~the~~^{some} airmen of the haunted 415th night fighter squadron were again in the air scrutinizing the Rhine area for enemy targets, when two lights rose from somewhere below the plane, ~~and~~^{and} leveled out at the same altitude (10,000 feet). The lights paced the American can warplane for a time and then dived to a lower altitude.

The following evening the same airmen in the forementioned account, a Lt. D. Mc Falls and a Lt. N. Baker, claimed something glowing red shot up at their fighter and flipped over before plunging downward. One of men said the light "changed into an airplane" at the top of its climb. This was the only time anyone claimed the lights resembled something conventional. It might have been one of the small experimental rocket propelled interceptors the Germans were working on, and then again, it has been proposed years later, that perhaps the airman might have seen just an edge of something flat, since he used the words "wing-over". Anyway, it's unlikely the details of that one, particular sighting will ever be cleared up.

By early January, 1945, the whole 415th squadron buzzed with shop talk and wisecracks about the strange, but as yet, harmless flying lights. The desk jockeys at the night fighter headquarters generally felt the same as many of the uninitiated 415th pilots who were inclined to jost their buddies "that saw things". 31.

At Air Group level a more somber view set in ^{as} pilots flying the P-47 Thunderbolts reported an increasing number of objects in the air they described as "golden balls". Since the P-47s flew only daytime missions the phenomena being seen could not be tricks of light in the darkness.

New Years Eve, 1944, a newsman stopped in to visit the men of the 415th to help the fellows there celebrate, and in the course of the night's gala atmosphere the subject of the aerial ghosts came up. The newsman listen far into the night until 4 a.m. and the following day the reporter cabled a full story back to the states.

A Science editor of one newsservice in the United States commented on the strange "foo fighters", as the men of the 415th squadron had nicknamed them, by questioning conventional explanations so far proposed. He wrote that ordinary ball lightning, for example, couldn't match the reported movements of the mystery globes, since the things often flew independent of the air craft had was supposed to have attracted them. Furthermore, he doubted that the Germans could have perfected ~~a~~ a radio controlled device of such capabilities.

Some unnamed scientist's statement, merely datelined New York, nevertheless called the foo fighters a product of St. Elmos fire, a phenomenon of static electricity. That explanation

angered the pilots of the 415th, one of which exclaimed: "Just let the sons come over here and fly a mission with us. We'll show 'em." **32.**

A 415th Beaufighter helmsman was quoted in the New York Herald Tribune on January 2, 1945, that he had powerdived at 360 miles per hour without shaking a foo fighter ^{which} ~~that~~ tagged along like a friendly puppy. Another exasperated pilot suddenly braked his plane, and, sure enough, the following lights overshot, ~~if only~~ for a moment. A third flyer entered a towering cloud and then powerdived 2,000 feet, emerging on a different heading, but to his great surprise, as if tied with an invisible string, the foo fighter tailing him was still there. **33.**

A complicating factor to the question of whether or not the lights were due to some trick of nature peculiar to the skies over Germany appeared, when it was suddenly revealed American B-29s were reporting similar mystery globles ^{changing color from white, to orange, to red and then orange again} stalking their aircraft on missions over Japan. The B-29 pilots had no better luck than those flyers in the European theater in shaking off the phenomena, fishtailing and yawing to no avail. Near Turk lagoon in the Pacific, early in 1945, a pair of red spheres gave chase to a B-24 Liberator. An hour seemed to be limit for one of the globles which flew away without encouragement. The more stubborn globe, however, stayed with the B-24 most of the way to the target, but never closed to more than 1,000 yards. **34.**

Sources of information on the Foo Fighters are few so we can only guess at the full extent of phenomena. About the

on this aspect

p.169

most remarkable statement ^{statements} was a claim by the author Frank Edwards. He makes some interesting ~~claims~~ ^{statements} about when the Foo Fighter problem was first recognized by the British. Perhaps reports of glowing spheres floating around in the British sky back in February of 1938, when the threat of war loomed, initially attracted the attention of English Intelligence, and as a result censorship imposed until sometime in 1944. According to Edwards the British eased up on the matter ^{earlier} in 1944, ^{which was} just before the Foo Fighters appeared in great numbers:

"As early as 1943, the British had set up a small organization on these objects (foo fighters). It was under the direction of Lieutenant General Massey, and it had been inspired to some extent by reports of a spy who was in reality a double agent, working under the direction of the Mayor of Cologne. He had confirmed that the foo fighters were not German devices but that the Germans thought they were Allied ranging instruments, which of course the British knew they were not.

The British Air Ministry in 1966, told me that the Massey Project was official terminated in 1944. Perhaps it was only coincidence that the double agent was exposed and executed in the spring of 1944." 35.

When the Foo Fighters appeared in large numbers in the Fall of 1944, who should show up but Dr. R.V. Jones, who proposed that the lights were single engine German night fighters with lights in their noses, an explanation that Allied pilots found to be as puzzling as the strange fiery balls of light.

A major Leet recalled that a small disc-like object, yellow in color, followed a B-17 he was piloting as he returned from a mission over Germany. The object stayed with his bomber for 100 miles. When an intelligence officer suggested that the mystery object might have been a German fighter during his

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debriefing, Major Leet wondered why his bomber experienced no hostile fire. ^{36.}

Years later Dr. Jones admitted that the German fighter theory was unsatisfactory and even offered evidence against it, yet he insisted in substituting a hypothesis equally unacceptable: light reflections from wingtip eddies, even though the Foo Fighters often paced aircraft at distances of hundreds of yards. For reasons best known to himself, the British intelligence expert preferred the guidance of a certain Dr. Donald Menzel:

"When I did get a chance to ask a German nightfighter crew whether they knew what the explanation was they said that they also knew that no single engine fighters were flying but that they had seen much the same thing as I described to them. American aircraft, later in the war, also saw what may have been the same phenomenon, both over Europe and over Japan. One theory, advanced by Professor Menzel (1953), who has studied such incidents in detail, is that it may have been some effect of light reflected from condensation in wing tip eddies." ^{37.}

Over Tierquin, Ireland, January, 1945, a big firey ball moved slowly through the sky in a western direction. Witnesses were impressed by its size, saying that it looked larger than the moon. It is hardly likely the object could have been a German fighter so far from bases in France or a reflection from a wing tip eddy of an Allied plane. ^{38.}

Though the Foo Fighters remained unexplained, no more mention of them was made in the press in the year 1945. Meanwhile the post war fate of the German secret weapon program was being determined. In January, 1945, a large meeting of Peenemunde scientists

convened secretly in a farmhouse near the Baltic rocket base to decide which nation they would surrender to, for the Nazi propaganda machine could ^{not} conceal the coming defeat from the learned gentlemen and they cared less for politics than for the continuation of their rocket projects. The specialists had to decide which country of all the Allied powers could best utilize their talents. The vote was unanimous in favor of the United States. Confidential plans were drawn up to flee to American lines as a body with most of their vital equipment just before Germany's collapse. 39.

The Russians had their own ideas about the matter ^{and in the} spring of 1945 the Soviets were making plans themselves. Georgi Malenkov had been appointed to lead a special team of looters and kidnappers. The first thing the Russians did when they stormed Berlin, for example, was to dismantle and ship to the Soviet Union the cyclotron found in the basement of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute.

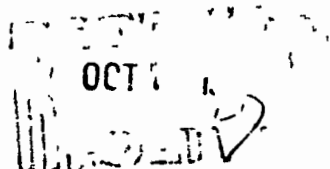
The Peenemünde area had been assigned to the Russian zone of occupation and when Soviet infantry commanded by a Major Anatole Vassilov overran the Baltic test base on May 5, 1945, no Americans or Englishmen were there to meet them, however the facilities were a complete wreck and most of the top German rocket scientists had made good their escape as planned. The Russians had to be satisfied with rounding up minor technicians and salvaging what could be found in the installation's ruins. Later the Soviets received a pleasant surprise when the American forces withdrew from certain territories to conform with an agreement Truman made with Stalin on the division of Germany

WAYNE-THOMAS, JR.

P O BOX 831

PLANT CITY FLORIDA

October 3, 1963



Mr. Richard Hall
NICAP
1536 Connecticut Avenue N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hall:

Pardon my delay in answering your letter of August 27 requesting information on UFOs seen by B-29 crews during World War II.

I was a group intelligence officer stationed on Tinian, and the cases I recall were all night-time sightings.

These lights, ranging from green to orange and yellow, would approach and move along with the bombers for several minutes at a time before breaking off. The crews were sure they were not reflections on plexiglass, or stars, or the moon.

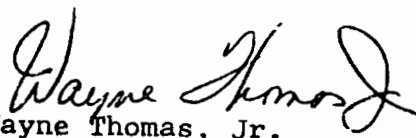
I recall of no case where an aircraft or form was distinguished as such, just the lights.

These "Foo-fighters" were so common, that they were discussed in the various unit publications around the island.

I also remember no discussions about the possibility of space-craft, just strange unidentified lights.

It is hoped that this small bit of fragmentary information may be of help.

Very truly yours,


Wayne Thomas, Jr.

WTJr:v

and a complete V-2 assembly plant was discovered in the vacated region around Niedersachswerfen. Furthermore, a complete combing of the east German zone turned up stores of documents and equipment that had been overlooked before or cleverly hidden.⁴⁰ ~~but~~ The United States seemed to have gotten the better of the deal, because not only did it have dozens of functional V-2s ready for testing, ~~it~~ also had the very cream of German brainpower.

In March, 1945 a weird report was made by the crew of the attack transport Delaraf at sea off Alaska's Aleutian islands. It was claimed that a dark colored sphere rose out of the sea and flew around the Delaraf. After circling the ship, the mysterious globe sped out of sight over the horizon.⁴¹

The foregoing report reminds one of another strange occurrence that had taken place nine months before in the same area.

The book: The Thousand -Mile War, by Brian Garfield, is a scholarly, factual account of World War II military action in the Aleutian theater.⁴² On page 318 author Garfield felt compelled to use the word:"errie". Researching the logs of the warships involved, Mr. Garfield was able to reconstruct what he called the mysterious"battle of the pips" which he says:"...has yet to be explained."⁴³

According to Garfield, on July 22, 1943, a Catalina recon plane picked up seven unidentified objects moving on the surface of the ocean southwest of Attu. No visual contact ~~was~~^{ever} made because of thick clouds, but since the whereabouts every American Navy ~~was~~^{ship} known, it was assumed that the objects

were Japanese ships. The regional American Commander, Admiral Kinkaid, dispatched a task force to intercept the enemy. Though the PBY maintained radar contact for six hours before losing the targets, U.S. Naval units ~~were~~ failed to arrived in time to sight and engage the apparent enemy vessels.

On July 26th, almost an hour after midnight, a battleship force under the command of Admiral Griffin, was steaming 90 miles south of Kiska island when the radar antennas on the taller ships: Mississippi, New Mexico, Portland, San Francisco, ^{picked up some unidentified targets} and the Wichita, ^{just over the horizon to the northwest of} the fleet's position. Bearings on all radar ^{scopes} indicated a group of seven objects at a distance of 22,000 yards. The targets were over the visual horizon but well within gun range. Admiral Giffen ordered the task force to take up attack formation and to fire at will. During the resulting confusion as the heavy 14 and 16 inch main batteries salvoed away at the unseen foe, messages were received at the various combat centers of the different ships which ^{indicated} apparently activity on the part of the enemy: "...below decks, men felt cocussions like near-misses by enemy shell. The Portland sighted what looked like a torpedo wake; soon afterward she spotted illumination by star shells, source unknown". ^{44.}

After 30 mintues of gunfire the targets on the fleet's scoops began to wink on and off and finally disappear altogether. The American fleet then headed straight for the ^{last} position of the

"enemy vessels" to pick up survivors. Upon reaching the area where the Japanese ^{ships} had apparently gone down, the American fleet could find no trace of floating debris, no survivors, and not even traces of oil on the water. Moreover, after a thorough check, verifiable evidence of enemy counterfire was ^{found to be} nonexistent. The U.S. Navy officially concluded that the mysterious radar targets had been due to: "...peculiar atmospheric conditions". Another theory, that the targets were Japanese subs running on the surface, did not correlate to everyone's satisfaction when the records of Japanese Navy were examined after the war. 45.

On May 7, 1945 it was V-E day. In Paris a group of war correspondents were:

"...sitting at the center table in the bar of the Scribe Hotel, jovially engaged in a victory celebration. A colonel from the War Department was introduced to the journalists, he then became miffed when they began to express skepticism about his story of the Nazis working with 'heavy water' in Norway and being on the verge of perfecting an 'atom bomb'...The colonel, piqued at being doubted, moved to a table of his own. His place at the correspondent's table was taken by a much forceful person, an Air Force major.

'Hey, you guys, are you war correspondents?' this man wanted to know. 'Then why haven't you told the folks back home about the flying saucers?'

The major had a chest full of medals and combat stars that marked him as a B-17 pilot with fifty missions.

'The last five or six were over Berlin,' he said, 'and on every one of them these things popped up out of nowhere.

'Suddenly they'd be on our wing, six or eight of them, flying perfect formation.

'You turn and bank; they turn and bank; you climb; they climb, you dive, they dive -you just couldn't shake 'em. Little, dirty grey aluminum things, ten or twelve feet in diameter, shaped just like saucers; no cockpits, no windows, no sign of life. Now isn't that a story and why haven't you put it in the papers?'

Curious, the correspondents asked the major if the saucers had ever attempted to shoot down any of the Allied aircraft. The major said that, as far as he knew, 'when the things finally got sick of the game, they would just take off into space and disappear, flying at the most incredible speeds, five thousand miles an hour or more.'

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When the newsmen asked the major what the pilots thought the flying saucers were, the officer said: 'Some of us think they're more of Hitler's V-weapons, something the Germans were only able to get up in the closing days of the war. Some of the boys think they're Russian...some think they must be from outer space because they maneuver so uncannily and fly at such superhuman speeds.'

The correspondents put major's tale of flying saucers into category as the colonel's story about an atom bomb. They suggested that the two officers get together and compare notes and leave a group of war-weary journalists to their victory champagne." 46.

Back in the States unexplained glowing globes were seen in the air over Fisherville, Kentucky, April 17, 1945. A fellow named Hendry complained that a strange sphere descended from the clouds to a point just above his residence where it hovered and lit up his home and yard with a brilliant, pulsating, light. 47

Even though the Germans were out of the rocket business by April, 1945, and the American and Russians were just getting organized, a couple of queer things happened. On June 1, 1945, a shiny tubular object, nudged along by a blue flame, sped over Morganton, North Carolina. The "rocket" passed out of sight and reportedly exploded in the air in the vicinity of Lake Jones to the southwest of Morganton. 48. Also, something zoomed over Vaesterbotten, Sweden, at 10,000 feet altitude on July 9, 1945, alarming the Swedish General Staff. 49.

Elsewhere, what has since been called "a small dress rehearsal", took place out over the Atlantic:

"Every air-sea rescue unit in South Florida and the Royal Air Force from the Bahamas had been mobilized to hunt for a missing PB-4Y, 4 engine, Privateer with 4 officers and 11 enlisted men on board.

Lieutenant William C. Bailey of New York piloted the big plane off the runway of Miami Naval Air Station on a routine training mission. The single-tailed version of the Army's B-24 headed out to sea at 12:26, Wednesday morning, July 18, 1945, and never returned.

A gigantic but futile air-sea search was conducted without turning up anything, either in the sea or on the beaches." 50.

Thayer's resistance to giving the visitors from space idea much attention in Doubt probably prompted the creation of a couple of new attempts to play up the theme.

A group in southern California, with chapters in San Diego and Los Angeles, set up shop in 1945 and called itself the "Borderland Sciences Research Associates" dedicated to the study of unorthodox happenings ignored by science which they said resembled that of the "damned data" listed by Charles Fort. Two primary fields of interest to the the borderlanders were the ideas that an undiscovered civilization existed in caves deep in the interior of the earth, and the mystery of "ether ships" which visit the earth periodically coming from a source in outer space.

Similarly, the science fiction pulp Amazing Stories began publishing elaborate ^{"true"} stories of a secret subterranean race responsible for a lot of unexplained mischief on the surface of our world and stories of another ethnic stock that lived among the stars, occasionally spending their time tormenting mankind by carrying off ship crews in their spacecraft and causing unexplained airplane crashes.

Both concepts had a close likeness to the ~~two~~ ideas Charles Fort amused himself with back in the early 1900's just before the final arrangement of his collection of esoteric information: Fort had disowned ^{the ideas} the two crank manuscripts X and Y, and dealt with only what was printed as fact, and just punctuating the data with his perspicacious observations.

The poorly conceived and executed attempts by amateurs to deal with the bizzare information gathered by Fort, and the fact that strange things were still occurring, made the transfer of the job to professionals imperative if any progress was to

be made, but experts in that line of work had a lot of troubles.

It was late May, 1945. Germany had capitulated some weeks before on May 7th, but in the Far East Japan still resisted Allied forces. On May 23rd and 25th, American B-29 Superfortresses made heavy incendiary-bomb raids on Tokyo. After the B-29s passed over, Mr. Tomoyo Okado, a Tokyo businessman, emerged from his bomb shelter to observe some strange objects in the air following the U.S. planes. He said the things were: "...like hot cakes -about 20 square yards(in size) ... (and) were followed several times by six feet wide and 30 feet long colored air waves".⁵¹ Also, he noticed that: "The objects flew noiselessly and did not crash."⁵²

An American bombardier of one of the B-29s of the 52nd Squadron, 29th Bombing Group, also saw some strange objects himself during the July 23rd and 25th raids. U.S. airman Gerry Dumphy sighted⁵³ "...round, speedy balls of fire". He said the objects paced the B-29s on their way back to the bomber's base on Guam. Machine gunners fired on the fireballs without apparent effect.

Throughout the Marianas island chain, every B-29 outfit eventually claimed its share of fireball sightings. As time wore on, the fireballs paced the bombers farther and farther out to sea and became more active in their maneuvering.⁵⁴

On August 6, 1945, some events relevant to our story were set in motion when President Truman announced that the United States had dropped something called an "atomic bomb" on Hiroshima, Japan. Three days later a second such bomb leveled the naval and industrial Japanese city of Nagasaki.

The Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's capitulation in a personal broadcast address on August 8, 1945, ordering the termination of hostilities on all fronts. World War II had finally come to close, but the mystery of ^{the} unidentified flying objects remained.

Twenty days after the Japanese surrender, August 28th, U.S. occupation forces were scheduled to land on Japanese soil, but a typhoon delayed troop movements. Out at sea on a flight between Okinawa to Iwo Jima, a C-46 carrying some occupation personnel experienced some engine trouble while flying through the bad weather. The plane began to lose altitude and the crew and passengers watched the sputtering engine with great concern, hoping it would not be necessary to ditch in a storm tossed ocean. While everyone's attention was ^{drawed} ~~drawn~~ to one side of the plane, one passenger, ^{an} Army Air Force officer named Leonard Stringfield, glanced out the windows on the opposite side. To Stringfield's surprise he saw three brilliant, white colored fireballs pacing the C-46. Just then the aircraft's balky engine started to run smoothly ~~again~~ and the plane rose to its former altitude. The fireballs did not stay with the plane in its climb and Stringfield eventually lost track of them in the clouds below. 55.

The death and destruction caused by the ~~atomic bomb~~ was staggering, a quarter of a million casualties and two entire cities obliterated. The sensitive and highly intelligent men that were persuaded to create the bomb in order to save the world from the satanic rule of the Axis dictatorships were, nonetheless, filled with loathing over the results of their work. Now that the powers of the atom were revealed to the public, the

scientists of the Manhattan Project could alert the world to the frightening implications of the invention that marked a new era in history. The famous scientist Niel Bohr lost little time in speaking out, and his warning to mankind was contained in the essay: "Science and Civilization" printed in the London Times on August 11, 1945, in which he urged that some sort of control be placed on the nuclear monstrosity. Following Bohr's example, other scientists banded together in an organization to spread the word ^{that} civilization teetered on the brink of a precipice. Politicians were not deaf to such pleas and on November 15th, 1945, President Truman, Prime Minister Atlee of Great Britain, and Prime Minister King of Canada, made a joint declaration of a proposed agreement to limit the use of atomic energy to peaceful ends. The big drawback to an immediate settlement of the issue was the future intentions of the Soviet Union, and for an indication of that, the West had to take a wait and see attitude for the Russians ^{always} play their cards close to their chest.

The clocks in Oakland, California, showed 5 p.m. on November 29, 1945, when a large fireball sped over the Bay Area, passing from the west to the east. The odd bolide at first glowed blue-green which then changed to an intense crimson hue as it dropped toward the eastern horizon. The meteor seemed to be going so slow and so low the police and military were called in to search the hills in back of Oakland to find the remains of a "plane that exploded and crashed". A professor at the University of Nevada at Reno, collecting sightings of the spectacular meteor, expressed puzzlement when the bolide was reported five

hours after it passed over Oakland, speeding through the skies of western Nevada! The disparity of time was attributed to some confusion on the part of the observers, so the attention the episode received from the scholar was transitory. 55.

The foregoing was not the only unusual sky phenomenon to occur during this period:

"August 4, 1945 --In the sky over East Lansing, Michigan, a mysterious glow was reported. Police were notified by curious citizens. The weather bureau was also alerted, but like the police, could offer no explanation." 56.

And:

"August 18, 1945 --a meteor(?) zoomed low over the states of Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio. The fiery object blazed through the heavens with a speed exceeding that of a airplane, but so slow for a meteor astronomers in Chicago expressed doubt the thing was in fact a bolide. So spectacular was the strange object's passage police were swamped with phone calls. Some witnesses swore the object actually flew a zig-zag course. The odd sky visitor screamed through the air with a high pitched sound and as a result set windows panes rattling. Military security squads rushed to war plants in region because of wild talk of the U.S. being under attack by robot flying bombs. 57.

Also:

"September 5, 1945 --Over Indianapolis, Indiana, people spotted a funny bright object in the heavens to the northwest. The thing caught everyone's eye because witnesses claimed it changed colors and moved about. Mr. Emsley W. Johnson, president of the Indiana Astronomical Society, was notified and he suggested that the object must have been the star Arcturus. Movements and color changes he said were due to overactive imaginations.

(This news account fails to mention, however, whether Mr. Johnson went outdoors for look himself.) 58.

Still another:

"January 23, 1946 --The Cincinnati Enquirer ran the following story under the heading: "Spook?" The Enquirer printed: "A fiery warning or divine manifestation was visited upon persons living in the neighborhood of Draper Street, Central Parkway and Western Hills Viaduct last night.

The phenomenon was described variously as a streak of fire, a ball of fire, or a big flashlight going on and off. The visitation struck terror into the hearts of some for electric lights became dim for a moment and houses quivered as if in the grip of an earthquake.

A denial that any weather phenomenon had occurred was issued by the Weather Bureau. Police and the Highway Safety Bureau denied that any accident or explosion had occurred near the Parkway." 59.

The December, 1945, issue of the American Legion Magazine called attention to the World War Two sky riddle with an artical titled: "The Foo Fighter Mystery", reminding the nation's veterans the military still had enigma on its hands left over from the war. . . .

The nation's security still weighted on many military minds and already there existed a conviction among a lot of generals the United States was now confronted by an enemy as dangerous as Hitler's Germany. The Pentagon worried that the rapid demobilization ^{the} in process and the attitude of the war-weary public would result in an America with an insufficient defense force, especially since technology had shrunk the world like a prune.

On December 5, 1945, Army Air Force Lieut. General James H. Doolittle, now a Presidential advisor on foreign intelligence activities, adressed a luncheon at the New York Waldorf Astoris. Present was a distinguished array of influential gentlemen that had banded together to form an "Air Power League" dedicated to the establishment of the Air Force as a separate service branch and the general promotion of more aircraft for America's defense.

After the dishes had been cleared away, General Doolittle rose to outline the needs of the country's military forces for the foreseeable future. The New American Air Force, he said, must have at least 400,000 men and 5,000 first line aircraft as a permanent peacetime strength. The next war, he went on, would take place over the artic regions, be extremely brief, and see the employment of jets planes, plus rockets tipped with atomic

warheads and powered with nuclear engines. 60.

At that very instant five Navy torpedo bombers roared down the runway at Fort Lauderdale Naval Air Station, Florida. The planes gained altitude and then set out on an eastern heading over the ocean for a brief training flight. The aircraft were large, three man planes, particularly buoyant by design and the crews trained for operations over water.

The sun shone in a sky strewn with scattered clouds as the aircraft sped out to sea on what promised to be a short routine flight, however somewhere out in the blue-green expanse off the southeastern United States, a region where Herbert Hoover had difficulties back in the twenties, the military now its ^{own} rendezvous with limbo.

Just prior to 5 o'clock in the afternoon ^{strange} radio traffic between the five planes was monitored at Fort Lauderdale. The dialogue heard was alarming. The five planes seemed to lost. Panic gripped the pilots as command of the flight was relinquished from one to another. The Avenger torpedo bombers radioed Fort Lauderdale around 5:25 that they believed they were about 75 miles northwest of the Banana River. That would put the lost flight around 50 miles due west of Daytona, Florida, yet a radio message said they weren't sure if it was the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic below them.

The Weather Bureau reported winds gusting up to 40 miles an hour and scattered thunderheads in the general area of the last reported position. The Naval Base Commander, Comdr. H.S. Roberts, was summoned to deal with the emergency and he surmised that freak winds had blown the five planes off course. Still it

^{that}
seemed odd if five planes couldn't even find Florida.

When time came for the fuel of aircraft to run out, nervous personnel at Fort Lauderdale waited for radio fixes of the location of the ditching of each plane. No radio messages were received. Somehow every plane had stopped transmitting without warning.

A big Martin Mariner flying boat, with 13 air rescue men aboard, set for the last estimated position of the missing torpedo aircraft. Shortly afterward Fort Lauderdale radioed the flying boat for a progress report. The big Martin Mariner did not answer.

Now frantic appeals were sent via radio to a ship in the area, the U.S.S. Gaines Mills, requesting that its crew make a visual check of the sky. The Mills sent back a reply that an explosion had been seen high in the air followed by the spiraling seaward of some apparent burning residue about 7:50 p.m. ^{61. 62. 63.}
Furthermore:

"The vessel's captain was unable to give the exact location, but at the time of the reported incident the Gaines Mills was off the coast of New Smyrna Beach, Florida.

Dozens of planes and surface craft were dispatched to the reported area, but no wreckage, oil, or other clues were found. The aerial hunt was then farther extended 200 miles out to sea in a 400-mile front down the Florida coast, from Jacksonville in the north to Miami in the south.

The three-day-old hunt for the lost fliers was suddenly intensified when an Eastern Airlines pilot, Captain J.D. Morrison, reported to the Navy that he saw red flares and flashing lights "in the middle of a swamp" at about two o'clock Saturday morning, ten miles southwest of Melbourne, Florida. Captain Morrison, piloting a northbound passenger plane, was quoted as saying he saw human figures standing in the light of the flares but could not discern any wreckage. "I'm sure they were flares, not a fire," he said.

Five minutes after his first communiqué, Captain Morrison reported he saw a fire burning in the dismal, sparsely populated region some 20 miles north of the spot where he had seen the flares.

A Naval plane was dispatched from the Banana River Naval Air Station. At 2:30 A.M., the pilot radioed that he also observed a flare about 50 miles inland.

At dawn, a dense fog limited the visibility of aerial searchers to almost zero. The main hope of a rescue was centered on a small land army of wartime assault craft, weasels, marsh buggies, alligators, and jeeps that groped their way through the bleak swamplands of north central Florida. Throughout the day, shuttling sweeps of Army, Navy, and Coast Guard planes, plus a Navy blimp from Lakehurst, New Jersey, flew over the wild, desolate region. A helicopter also made a number of landings and sent men out to comb the marsh on foot in an attempt to locate wreckage or survivors.

Commander H.H.J. Benson of the U.S. 7th Naval District said, "We don't want to get any hopes too high, but I would like to report that we are moving everything up there to find those men if they are alive." He went on to say that the hunt was being pressed with all available forces and disclosed that farmers in the Melbourne-Orlando area reported hearing an explosion on the night the six planes vanished. Commander Benson was quoted as saying, "This is the first time a whole flight of planes ever disappeared without a trace."

A pilot of an Army Air Corps plane reported seeing two men aboard two life rafts. He stated that the men waved as he flew toward their rafts, but when he made his run over their crafts he could no longer see the men.

A Naval spokesman cast doubt on the report by saying that two survivors, no matter how exhausted, would never collapse simultaneously with rescue so near at hand after seeing a plane. The Navy's position was supported when the alleged rafts were found to be nothing more than packing cases bobbing in the waters some 300 miles due east of Melbourne.

Hope was raised again when a report was received stating that two survivors had been rescued at sea by the tanker Ervin Russell. This too turned out to be erroneous. The Navy said the tanker's original report in effect read, "Lowering lifeboats to pick up survivors from raft." Subsequently, the tanker radioed air-sea rescue headquarters in Miami stating that they had made a mistake; instead of survivors or life raft, it had only found a tow-target used by the Navy for gunnery practice at sea.

A further report was received from the Army airfield at Boca Raton saying that the pilot, copilot, and 9 crewmen of an Army B-24 had found 2 life rafts close together in an area 290 miles east of Melbourne. They were almost sure they had seen two men huddled in one of the rafts.

The pilot, Leonard Bostick, and his copilot Eugene B. Hollander, were quoted as saying they flew over the rafts for about four and a half hours before a failing gas supply compelled them to return to base. An extract from their official report reads as follows: "At 10:45 (EST) we located rafts and circled over them. While circling we saw two one-man rafts apparently tied together. At the beginning every man in the crew believed there were two men in the rafts. However, as the day wore on we could not be sure." Bostick related how they flew down to an altitude of several hundred feet, but heavy winds prevented them from going lower for closer observation. He said they tried to direct surface vessels to the rafts but no contacts were made by the time they were forced to leave the scene.

An extensive air-sea search was conducted in and around the reported area but again without success.

The Coast Guard cutter the Vigilante reported sighting "something which could have been a parachute," 180 miles east of Melbourne. Later the cutter radiced that it had scoured the particular area without locating anything that might be remotely considered a clue. 65.

After a full day of futile searching, a press conference called by the Navy at which time the names of the officers and enlisted men that were missing were made public. It was the morning of December 7th, the anniversary of Pearl Harbor. 65.

The search continued:

"As hope for rescue faded, only 66 planes took to the skies at dawn on December 10. Most of the aircraft, a number of merchant ships, and one destroyer-tender had been released from further search operations.

Naval officials announced that the air-sea rescue operation would be called off at dusk unless new evidence could be discovered. They expressed fear of ever finding any of the fliers alive, but added, "we have not given up yet; if those men are still alive we'll do everything to find them."

Search craft carried out orders of the last day of the quest by combing 25,000 square miles, yard by yard, for even a sight clue." 66

No trace was ever found of the six planes and 27 men.

After months of fruitless effort by the Navy, a Board of Inquiry was held on the mysterious vanishments. Without the slightest bit of evidence as to the fate of the missing six planes, the members of the Board confessed that no one could offer any explanation or even make a guess at a solution. .

A reporter for the Associate Press rechecked with Navy authorities at Fort Lauderdale some time after the Board of Inquiry had made its official report on the strange incident. The newsman was informed by a Navy spokesman that nothing new had turned up, adding that the mass aircraft disappearance was so complete ^{that} for all the Navy knew the planes may have ended up on Mars. 66.

1.) In his book: Flying Saucers (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1953, pp. 97-98) Dr. Donald Menzel states: "...a scientific mission sent specially to study these foo balls, to find out if possible what they were, spent many hours in the air, waiting in vain for one of the mysterious lights to put in its appearance....this expedition completed its mission (this mission must have included a rature complete check on sighting reports by pilots) and returned to the United States without even having seeing a single foo fighter." Considering the foregoing it is ~~bit~~ a bit difficult to believe that scientists working for the U.S. Government were caught flatfooted by the later ghost rock-et and flying saucer furors.

2.) Another thing to remember is that Dr. H.P. Robertson, who headed the important UFO CIA review panel in 1953, could hardly rate as a surprise choice for any later investigation of unexplained aerial phenomenon requiring, if it was so decided, a careful handling of certain data and conclusions draw from it. In the volume: Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects, Dutton, 1969, pp. 909-910, it states: "Robertson (Dr. H.P.) and (a censored name) had been concerned in the investigation of these (Foo Fighters) phenomenon, but David T. Griggs (Professor of Geophysics at the University of California at Los Angeles) is believed to have been the most knowledgeable person on this subject. If the term "flying saucers" had been popular in 1943-1945 (Here is an admission that the Foo Fighters had been reported as early as 1943.), these objects would have been so labeled. It was interesting, that in at least two cases reviewed that the object sighted was categorized by Robertson and (a censored name) as probably "Foo Fighters," to date unexplained but not dangerous..."

3.) Writer Donald Keyhoe, in his book: The Flying Saucers Are Real (Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1950, p.36), relates the following exchange between himself and a friend who was a Pentagon intelligence expert. Keyhoe said: "Didn't the Eighth Air Force investigate the foo fighters?"

Friend: "Yes! and they found nothing to back up the pilot's yarns. Just war nerves, apparently."

Keyhoe: "How about a look at the Intelligence report?"

Friend: "Wait a minute." (Keyhoe's friend was taking on the phone from the Pentagon. After a short time he returned after apparently checking some index.)

Friend: "Sorry, its classified."

Chapter Eight

Rockets, Radar, and Atomic Energy

The first inkling of a wild Fortean year was something that took place February 26, 1946. Finland announced on that date that an unusually large number of meteors had been reported lately in that country's northern districts near the Arctic Circle.[#]

Later on, around May 24th, persons in northern Sweden began to noticed unusual sights in the heavens which they also at first dismissed as just inordinate ^{meteor} activity.²

Meanwhile, the United States Army Air Force made a statement on February 28th which stated that a bombardment of North America by improved versions of the German V-2 might be possible soon if technology kept up its fast pace of advancement. Brig. General W.L. Richardson, Chief of the Air Staff Guided Missile Division, declared that the military was planning to test means of detecting and tracking approaching rockets speeding through the upper layers of the atmosphere at more than 3,000 miles per hour. It was further revealed that a test range at White Sands, New Mexico, would send up captured German V-2 rockets to aid experiments with radar in hopes of per-

[#]The Fortean Society was able to obtain information not printed in American papers because of its European membership. The February 26th item from Finland, for example, had been obtained by a Fortean Society member who had been monitoring Helsinki radio.

fecting an electronic warning system. The General stressed the extreme urgency of finding a proper high altitude radar surveillance method to eliminate the threat of a sneak attack by rockets armed with atomic warheads. He went on to say that the U.S. had been interested in long range rockets since 1943. 3.

The American military also had worries about the possible spread of nuclear secrets to many less responsible governments, though many experts felt it would be useless to hope that restrictions on the secret of the atomic bomb and related military projects (which would no doubt have included schemes for nuclear powered rockets) could be successful for any extended length of time. The best Congress could do was to try, so legislators became embroiled in a protracted debate over policies covering important scientific information. During the controversy Hanson Baldwin of the New York Times reported:

"...the worst manifestation so far of the secrecy complex that every now and again assails our democracy was a recommendation made recently to the Senate Atomic Energy Committee. It recommended that the espionage laws be tightened by making it a crime for any official to reveal, without authority, any military 'secrets' and for reporter, radio commentator or publisher to publish or broadcast such information. The definitions, as reported, were broad enough to include under military 'secrets' many classifications of news of vital importance to the public and to the nation." 4.

Besides the disagreements over controls on scientific information, an intense interservice rivalry took root over the control of the nation's long-range rocket program.

During a radio dramatization of a future war fought with rockets, Lieut. General Curtis Le May, head of the Army Air

Forces's Research and Development, and Gen. Carl Spaatz, Army Air Force Commander in Chief, boldly asked NBC's listening audience to back their bid to obtain exclusive authority over guided missiles. Later, an Army Air Force spokesman even came right out and bluntly told the Navy that it was "finished". The Army's non-flying departments such as the Ordnance and the Signal Corps, also felt the sting of the air arm pronouncements that they had no role in the new missile technological revolution. Critics of Army Air Force dominance urged that each service or agency be free to pursue missile research along lines that would be functional in the carrying out its particular military mission . 5.

A compromise was reached and work went ahead with a great deal of waste and duplication. A few even felt that the \$300,000,000 earmarked for the huge White Sands, New Mexico, test facility be spent instead on basic research grants, but they were overruled.

The U.S. military had a dream of someday perfecting a rocket utilizing atomic energy. It was theorized that the almost unlimited temperatures of a nuclear reaction might be harnessed to increase the momentum of the gases ejected out of the rocket's nozzle. Using the fission of uranium for a rocket's thrust also had the added advantage of possibly combining both the warhead and part of the missile fuel supply into one explosive package.

← Back in 1946 even the perfection of the Sanger type glide bomber, which ^{will} be mentioned in greater detail later on, required rocket engines of greater thrust than what the Germans had so far perfected. Yet even with more efficient engines, the chemical fuels in use in 1946 seemed to hold little promise to increase the 250-300 mile range of the V-2 rockets. On the other hand atomic power seemed to offer a way to surmount the fuel problem:

"The limits of range and load for rockets are caused by the enormous increase in fuel required to obtain an extension in range. For a chemical fuel, the ratio of fuel to total weight rapidly approached as range is increased. If research makes possible the application of atomic energy to rocket propulsion (which would be very difficult), the weight of fuel will no longer be a serious limit on distance of flights." 6.

At this time, July 3, 1946, serious squabbling ~~erupted~~ between the different American military branches was abruptly ended by the establishment of a Joint Research and Development Board that recieved its power directly from the civilian posts of the Secretaries of the Navy and War. The various boards and committees with their overlapping authority and independent spheres of operation concerned with military research were reorganized into just four subcommittees: 1. guided missiles, 2. electronics, 3. atomic energy, and 4. medical science. Moreover, various civilian research groups were to be better co-ordinated with Defense Department projects, such as the National Advisory Committee on Aeronautics and the Bureau of Standards.

At La Grange, Florida, in May, 1946, a Mr. Titcomb was out working in his yard when he heard a whistling sound. He looked up and saw something flying overhead at 1,000 feet. The ^{object} seemed to be traveling ~~only~~ a little over 100 miles per hour. Mr. Titcomb claims the thing was a dark football-shaped object about twenty feet long with a perfectly smooth body with no wings or engines of any kind, furthermore no exhaust trail was detectable. No noise could heard with the exception of the whistling sound, which Mr. Titcomb attributed to the disturbance of the air from the object's passage. The weird aerial "football" flew off in a slightly cruved course, disappearing into a cloud bank in the southeast. 7.

During the months of June and July, 1946, there were a couple of interesting personnel shifts within the U.S. defense establishment. This, together with the fact of large scale military hardware experiments, indicated a tightening of security measures ~~and~~ and a readjustment of emphasis by the Pentagon. This must be kept in mind when we return to mystery plagued Europe.

Early in June Rear Admiral Sidney W. Souers, who had ^{just been} chosen to head the newly created Central Intelligence in January, was suddenly replaced by an Air Force General, Hoyt S. Vandenburg. 8.

And Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, one of the key men of the Manhattan Project, was withdrawn as a member of the scientific commission to observe atomic bomb tests at Bikini atoll in the Pacific. The removal of Dr. Oppenheimer may have had no

significance, but as ^{early} as the very beginning of the Manhattan Project, the professor had been under fire for associating with left wing persons and organizations (The security clearance of Dr. Oppenheimer was taken away on December 22, 1953, but after an inquiry was found innocent of all charges of disloyalty). If any left wing associations were distasteful during the war, one can imagine how any such taint was viewed in 1946 with the Cold War building up. Replacing Dr. Oppenheimer was a gentleman we will refer to again: the Director of the Bureau of Standards, Dr. Edward U. Condon. ⁹.

The Bikini atomic tests, ^{with} one nuclear explosion on June 30th and another on July 25th, were military in character rather than scientific, exposing everything from K rations to Battleships ^{to} the phenomenon of nuclear fission. It was a complete evaluation of the nature of the revolution in warfare.

The Bikini tests ^{are} probably remembered best because of the spectacular underwater explosion set off amid a fleet of outmoded warships. ^{Towering walls of water} engulfed the vessels near the center of the blast, and those farther away that escaped most of shock waves and heat, were, nonetheless, subject to a deadly drizzle of radioactive oceanwater. This blast was also something of a blow to the prestige of seapower. The Pentagon must have wondered if there was a future ⁱⁿ the massed fleets of World War II.

General H.H. Arnold, retired wartime Commander of the Army Air Force, addressed the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco, July 6, 1946, echoing General Doolittle's assertions made the previous

December, when he stated that the defensive frontiers of the United States ^{were} ~~was~~ no longer the Pacific and Atlantic coasts, but the Polar regions to the north.^{10.} The editor of Radio News, a Mr. Oliver Reed, gave support to another contention of General Doolittle's, when upon returning to the U.S. after witnessing the Bikini test on June 30th, he told the Chicago Daily Tribune there could be little doubt as far as he was concerned that atomic tipped guided missiles would be used in the next war.^{11.}

A month after the last Bikini explosion on July 25th News-week magazine printed a remarkable statement: "This was the Russian reply to Bikini. Such was the conclusion drawn by many from the continued flight of self-propelled missiles over Sweden..."^{12.} These two sentences introduce the most mysterious crisis of the East-West Cold War: the riddle of the "Ghost Rockets".

Dr. Louis Alvarez[#], a professor of physics at the University of California, secretly suggested at this time that liquid hydrogen be considered as the fluid propellant in any atomic powered rocket because of the element's favorable ratio of mass compared to the exhaust velocity at certain temperatures. The technical details are too complex to list here, but one important point of this theory should be remembered. Professor Alvarez believed such a nuclear driven missile would speed across the sky leaving large quantities of super-heated  >|

[#]Dr. Alvarez was also the chief scientist in charge of the development of microwave warning radar for the United States during World War II.

and highly inflammable hydrogen in its wake, creating an explosive hazard.¹³ The eventual development of such an atomic-hydrogen missile was felt to be far in the future, so, in May, 1946, when mysterious missile-like objects trailing strange illuminous smoke and accompanied by loud unexplained denotations, appeared over the Baltic, the Pentagon must have been both amazed and greatly alarmed. It suddenly seemed that the Russians had brought off a masterpiece of scientific espionage and/or were making fantastic scientific strides independent of America's pioneer nuclear discoveries, to say nothing of apparent achievements in rocket technology. Some important persons in Washington must have asked themselves whether the United States was in danger of becoming within direct military reach of the Soviets.

Sunday, June 9, 1946, a rocket-like light lit up the night sky over Helsinki. People there rushed into the streets just in time to see a smoke trail in the heavens and hear a distant rumble. An illuminious afterglow lasted 10 minutes. This "ghost rocket", as it was dubbed by witnesses, had passed toward the southwest at about 1,000 feet altitude.¹⁴

Before the Finns could recover from the phenomenon on the Sabbath, a "V-2" roared over the town of Tammerfors in western Finland, on Monday, June 10th, only to reappear the same night on a southeast heading over Helsinki. A correspondent of the London Daily Mail wrote that Monday's "V-2" was an "unidentified luminous body" giving off glowing smoke and that the "thing"

had come in from the direction of the Baltic sea only to then wheel around and retrace its course. ^{15.}

Between July 9th and 11th six more reports of strange aerial objects were tabulated. The press became unsure in its interpretations and variously called the phenomena "rockets" and/or "meteors".

The Chicago Daily Tribune overseas newsservice said that an important Stockholm newspaper had firmed up its view on the odd missiles, overflying not only Finland but Sweden, declaring on July 10th: "Shining missiles seen in the last 24 hours traveling at great altitude with high speed caused speculation today by the newspaper Aftonbladet that the Russians are conducting rocket experiments on Baltic bases. The missiles were described as 'greenish blue shining balls giving off a tail of light of the same color'. * Similar sights two months ago (May) were reported from about 10 places in Sweden and several places in Finland. The Aftonbladet quoted a Swedish bomb expert as saying the sights occurred too frequently to be celestial phenomena. The paper said the Russians *likely* are, trying out giant rockets by remote control, making them return to the starting point. Instead of explosives, the newspaper said, they would contain radio transmitters registering altitude, speed, direction, and the amount of fuel." ^{16.}

This speculation resulted in a "find" of evidence. A half a dozen "crashes" were reported, yet the only items claimed to have been found were, a piece a paper that some said might be of a graph type used in recording devices, a small strip of movie film, and some metal with a "density less than water".

* Similar green fireballs were reported in the U.S. in 1943.

Another newspaper printed: "metal as light as paper". London's Daily Telegraph carried this version on the matter dated July 12, 1946: "...there had been 'seven strange crashes' in Sweden and that a well-known Swedish physicist, Doctor Binger Facklund, had declared that 'he had found paper among the fragments indicating that it was not a meteorite' ".^{17.}

The Manchester Guardian (England) printed what was probably the clearest account of the find of physical evidence:

"After passing for hundreds of miles along the Swedish east coast, where it was observed at numerous places, including the suburbs of Stockholm, one of these mysterious objects fell on a beach near Sundsvall, making a small crater in the sand about ten inches deep and three feet wide. Bathers collected about seven pounds of fragments which resembled slag, but one piece showed traces of having been part of a cylinder about one inch wide."

The fragments have been sent to a military laboratory for analysis, and a preliminary report says that a microscopic test showed the existence of a fragment of a film divided into squares(?).^{18.}

Nothing definite came out the "rocket parts" announcement and it was subsequently denied any such hardware had been traced to a "ghost rocket crash".^{19.} Anyway, it seem very odd that such a small amount of evidence had been recovered from "seven crashes" unless, and this can only be alledged, Swedish authorities permitted confused statements to

#It should be said here that it is quite possible the bathers picked up some debris having no connection whatever with the object that made the crater.

circulate about finding rocket parts in order to alarm the Russians so they would put an end to the testing in the Baltic.

The London Times summerized the murkey situlation on July 12th, printing that glowing balls trailing smoke were annoying inhabittants along Sweden's east coast and that the Swedish General Staff had taken a formal interest in the matter. The Times now said that no definate meteoric evidence had been found so a radio-controlled V-bomb theory was being entertained. ^{20.}

The United Press' July 12th offering described one of the aerial phantoms as a big torpedo with a very bright headlamp. ^{21.}

Switerland's Rhone Valley region had a visit from a flying object that crossed to the northeast, the phenomenon was labled as either a Soviet buzz bomb or a shooting star by the London Daily Mail. ^{22.}

Around the 14th of July inhabitants of a small Norwegian town on the coast south of Oslo spotted a smoking fireball zipping overhead at an altitude of about 400 feet. The London Telegraph reported on the "Oslo mystery star" and the news that Norway's newspapers were urging future witnesses of strange aerial phenomena to contact authorities immediately and to keep on the lookout for any weckage. ^{23.}

Norway had more univided aerial guests on the 19th of July, as a darken pair of mystery rockets zoomed across the countryside at only a 50 foot altitude before plunging into lake Mjoesa. ^{24.}

On the 19th there was also an article in the French newspaper Resistance that told its readers that people all over central and southern Sweden had been shook up for the last three months by bright bolides that seemed to be diving in and out of the earth's atmosphere with a deep roar.²⁵

The Norwegian High ^{Command now} asked the public to aid them by calling police or the nearest military establishment.^{26.}

Sweden listed up to 500 sightings in less than a month, but the multitude of cases still led to confusion as to what the objects were and from what direction they were coming from. Some information indicated the objects were not following the free-falling path of a meteor or the ballistic arc of a long-range missile. Instead, the phenomena appeared to be a low flying object under somekind of control. Sweden's military chiefs became so uneasy that some foreign power was ranging in Swedish targets they suddenly forbid the publication of the location of "ghost rocket" sightings from the 27th on.^{27.}

The correspondent of the London Daily Telegraph cabled his office on July 29th that Norwegian authorities had censored information on the ghost rockets still falling on Norway. The previous evening a light like a giant flashbulb lit up Oslo, with an accompanying loud explosion. Rumors were rife, he reported, that the blasts were due to aerial bursts of the ghost rockets which disintegrated into fragments so small they escaped detection. Personnel at an air base north of Oslo reported something rushing overhead just before the detonation.^{28.}

rocket

that was

There was one sighting at this time far from Europe. Army Air Force Captain J. Puckett was stationed at Langley Field, Virginia in 1946. Besides being base Safety Officer, he was in charge of pilot training and was supervisor of flying operations. Also, Captain Puckett had completed a tour of combat duty during the war.

On August 1, 1946, Captain Puckett was on a flight between Langley Field to Tampa, Florida:

"At approximately 6 p.m. while flying a C-47 at 4,000 northeast of Tampa I observed what I thought to be a Shooting star to the southeast over the Atlantic Ocean. My co-pilot, Lt. Henry F. Glass and my engineer both observed this object at the same time.

This object continued toward us on a collision course at our exact altitude. At about 1000 yards it veered to cross our path. We observed it to be long, cylindrical shape approximately twice the size of a B-29, with luminous portholes.

The object trailed a stream of 'fire' about one-half its own length, and remained in sight 2½ to 3 minutes." 29.

The very next day (August 2nd), the following was carried in the Stockholm press:

"Eyewitness descriptions of a soundless rocket projectile of silvery hue, slowly skimming the tree tops over northern Sweden, appeared today in the newspaper Dagens Nyheter. The paper added that seven or eight persons had seen the object, which they said resembled an aircraft.

The paper also contained an account of two other missiles seen moving toward the Baltic. It said that when the projectiles got out over the sea first one then the other exploded, creating a glaring, yellow-white light." 30.

On August 3rd sources in Denmark confirmed that persons had seen some unexplained objects over that country. P. 181 31.

The situation had deteriorated to such an extent the Chicago Daily Tribune's man in Paris cabled his home office on August 4th, that he had obtained an admission from American and British intelligence services ~~that~~ the Russians had reopened the Peene-muende facilities in spite of Soviet assertions the Baltic base was still in ruins. The most intriguing paragraph of the Paris dispatch attributed a belief to an American source which proposed that the Russians were probably rushing work on the ex-German missiles to counter the advance the U.S. processed, ^{as} being the sole nation with atomic weapons. 32.

As early as July 28th the strongly anti-communist Hearst newspaper chain gave a lot of space to its Paris correspondent who warned of new "V-type" rockets being constructed at Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm Institute, attributing the scoop to some unnamed but "trustworthy sources". 33.

Yet, once the accusations of Russian mischief was baldly and repeatedly stated, military authorities then seemed to waver instead of flocking to what was the most logical answer to the ghost rocket mystery.

Sweden's Air Defense Chief, General Nils Ahlgreen, made public an official communique on August 6th, that had been promised a week before, but for some reason, had been delayed. The General confirmed that the "rockets" were coming in mostly from the south at low altitudes and followed flightpaths that curved. One object was reported to have dived into Sweden's Lake Overelid.

he said, and that three hundred sightings were compiled in just the four days of July 9th through the 12th. 34.

An eyewitness of one of the objects flying in Sweden's airspace was a lieutenant of that nation's air defence command, who told of a bright fiery sphere cruising casually at a 1,000 feet. This account certainly didn't fit the meteorite hypothesis. 35.

On the 8th an English correspondent at Stockholm sent a wire to his editor which read:

"One of the mysterious bombs which in recent weeks have been passing across Sweden was seen last night by an officer of the Air Defense Department of the Defence Staff. He reports that the bomb looked like a fireball with a clear yellow flame passing at an estimated 3,000 feet and at a considerable but quite measurable speed.

This first observation made by a trained expert dispels any remaining doubts that the phenomenon really is some sort of bomb or rocket and not just a meteor. No trace of one having fallen in Sweden have yet been found, but in the far North one is reported by several trustworthy witnesses to have fallen into a lake, and the search for it continues in the lake's muddy bottom...

(The missiles) change direction either in a slow curve or sometimes very abruptly. This is believed to indicate that they are radio-controlled. After following the Swedish coast-line many of them seem to bear off towards the northeast --that is, in the direction of northernmost Russia. Sometimes it has been possible to follow their course by radar..." 36.

Meanwhile,

Major General Aurand, General Eisenhower's expert on rockets, called a newsconference to put to rest ^{any lingering} rumors of sharp differences within the War Department over research and development of guided missiles, evidently to shore up public morale at home and to restore confidence in American technical superiority abroad. General Aurand said jurisdictional disputes between the military services were overrated and a hearing would be held soon to iron out any minor disagreements and to lay down some ^{formal} ~~form~~ guidelines. Apparently with an eye on the "mysterious demonstrations" over the Baltic regions, Army Air Force General Le May joined General Aurand in boasting that the United States would soon produce an "airrocket" that would be capable of zooming to 700,000 feet altitude ^{and be equipped with an "anti-meteor gun"}. The press asked General Aurand if American and British research was being coordinated concerning missiles. The General replied: "I cannot answer you that". 37.

News from Paris, August 11th, told of more unusual occurrences in the atmosphere. The Puy du Dome Observatory said a strange cloud of unnatural composition had been lingering over the French capital at 20,000 feet for the last three weeks. Airplanes with special instruments had flown through the cloud up to 20 times. A rumor circulated that the vapor may have had some connection with the American atomic tests at Bikini. 38.

Hints that Russia was making strides in the rocket field hardly failed to raise eyebrows in Western Capitals. Dr. R.V. Jones, _____ >

(a) a key figure in the the World War II V-weapon detective story. was a British Director of intelligence at this time. Once again it fell to Dr. Jones to determine the reality of a reported V-weapon. Like the situation during the war, the professor was faced with divided opinion on a problem confronting British intelligence. Many staff members under the director were unhappy because Dr. Jones did not readily accept that artifical devices (Russian) were being seen. Dr. Jones based his scepticism on the fact that no convincing weckage had been found. In light of the fact that something like 500 plus sighting had been catalogued, the percentage of technical reliability would have to meant many crashes because of machanical failer. Evidently Dr. Jones was thinking in terms of another rocket capture like that that ^{Rad} made trouble for Germany's General Dornberger in 1944, however the only reliable fragments so far discovered turned out to be pieces of carbon or coke which seemed to point toward a meteoric solution as the logical answer. 39.

And then there was another difficulty. During the V-weapon hunt back in 1943, evalulating reports had been a simple task when the V-weapons were not public knowledge. Only later, when Germany put its propaganda mill in high gear and the Allied press began speculating on the matter, did British intelligence become swamped with fake and low-grade sightings. Now in 1946 the Swedes and Norweigans had created a monster by making offical public appeals for anyone and everyone to contact the

government when they thought they saw something. With the resulting deluge of letters, phone calls, and crank visitors, it became difficult to examine, let alone evaluate such a mess.

Swedish newspapers had been carrying ghost rocket reports almost daily, from the first of July until August 11th, at which time a dispatch from Stockholm sent out by the Associated Press summed up the situation as of that morning. The Associated Press stated that the rocket phenomenon had reached a peak between July 9th to July 12th when reports had numbered a 100 a day. Since July 12th the sky phenomenon had settled down to appearing at a much lower, though daily, rate. The Swedish public had taken the alarming barrage with "surprising calm", observed the Associated Press, which the news bureau suggested was probably due to the lack of harm the flying objects had caused so far, and the fact that Swedish scientists had found only evidence of the "presence of coke and other common materials" at the site of the mysterious explosions. However, the complacency of the Swedes underwent a severe test beginning the evening of the 11th and started to reach a crisis point in days following. Stockholm itself came under fire, the military was placed on alert, and worst of all, some deaths occurred.

The beginning of the crisis was important enough to make the front page of the New →

York Times: "Swarm of Mysterious Rockets Is Seen Over The Capital Of Sweden". A large number of "missiles" were reported to have passed low over Stockholm 10 o'clock in the evening of August 11th, pushing interest in the phenomena to a new high. A summary of the ^{current} rocket situation was cabled to the Times, mentioning that the Swedish General Staff expressed great alarm by now since over 300 more reports had been received in just 24 hours. The ^{most} ^{Swedish} popular rumor still → blamed the Russians as testing rocket shells for a future generation of nuclear-

tipped missiles. Why the Soviet Union, with the greatest land mass of any nation in the world, chose to test ^{top secret} rockets over Sweden and the waters of the Baltic continued to puzzle many in Stockholm, who, nonetheless, believed ^{firmly} in the Soviet missile theory. Furthermore, the Times reported that the Tidningen, a Stockholm daily, carried an editorial titled: "Ghost Rockets and the Future War" in an attempt to explore various ^{military} possibilities. Moreover, the Swedish military stated that army units were ^{busy} probing a lake bottom in northern Sweden, hoping to find the remains of a ghost rocket that plunged into the waters of a lake there. An additional mystery was encountered when a newly constructed barn, strongly built, fell apart with a sudden crash just prior to a ghost rocket passage overhead. The Swedish military showed enough interest to rush an investigative team to the scene. 41.

The American magazine Time ^{noted} ~~summed up~~ the Swedish excitement by commenting: "...a picture released by the Army last week finally convinced all the papers (except the Communist) that the rockets were real, and that a foreign power (Russia) was using Sweden as a testing ground. Blustered Stockholm's Social Democratic Morgantidningen: 'Intrusiveness must not be allowed to continue.' " 42.

Dated August 12th, the New York Times received a second dispatch from Stockholm that described the tension in that Swedish Capital as near "the boiling point". The Swedish General Staff had requested new radar equipment from Britain and it was unofficially announced that Lieut. General James Doolittle

would be visiting Sweden to give advice to that rocket beleaguered Scandinavian nation.

One well qualified observer, a gentleman that was both an astronomer and a meteorologist, gave a rather complete eyewitness account of a ghost rocket which was printed by the New York Times:

"I was studying some clouds through a telescope when suddenly I observed a luminous point on the horizon.

I first believed it to be an airplane, he said, but soon I noticed it was traveling much too fast for that, and within ten seconds I got a full view of the projectile. I managed to get a clear view of the bomb's body and estimate that it was at least 90 feet long. The body was torpedo-shaped and shining like metal. No sound could be heard, although the bomb was only two kilometers away. At the explosion, a terrific light flashed up that for a moment completely blinded me. No fire, smoke, or sparks were noticeable." 43. 44.

According to the Christian Science Monitor the scientist who had witnessed this passage of a ghost rocket also said the mystery missile had: "...a tapered tail that spewed glowing blue and green smoke and a series of fire balls..." 45.

As of August 12th Swedish military authorities began a new intensive investigation under tight security:

"An Army source said the visitations were regarded as 'most serious. He said the time had come for an all-out effort to establish the origin of the rockets....The rockets streaked in over Sweden beginning about 9 o'clock last night (August 11th). Newspaper in South and Central Sweden were besieged with calls from alarmed and curious citizens. Hundreds of callers reported the passage of comet-like objects within an hour's time....Witnesses said that one of last night's rockets passed ~~~~~>

directly over Stockholm and exploded north of the city. An editor of the newspaper Aftontidningen, one of many persons who reported seeing it related: 'A brilliant light suddenly appeared on the southern horizon, on a straight course at an altitude of some 600 feet. Although it could be seen sharply against the dark night sky, a determination of its size and construction was impossible because of its blinding, sparkling tail of blue fire.' "46.

Events in Sweden on the afternoon of the 12th went this way, according to the local press:

"The Sweden army today rushed experts to three points in Central Sweden where unidentified rockets, rumored to be results of Russian experiments crashed last night...unconfirmed rumors said the Russians were experimenting with rockets and flying bombs, probably launching them from some point in Estonia on the Baltic, but the Swedish army clamped a tight blackout on the results of its investigation.

Reports from hundreds of Swedes who sighted the fiery missiles shortly after dark last night (August 11th) flooded newspapers in Southern and middle Sweden....A Swedish air force lieutenant, after observing another bomb in Central Sweden, estimated the body length at about 20 meters (65 feet). He said the bomb was shaped like a cigar with a green foremost projecting part and white sides. He said it moved at exceptionally low altitude with terrific speed.

One eyewitness to an explosion in Central Sweden said fragments rained down after a great blast in the air above him. Previous explosions have left hard, black metal objects similar to coal clinkers. Some experts believe these bodies are not the bomb itself but fragments of the explosive used to propel the missiles, which supposedly are radio-directed back to their launching site after flying over Sweden. Witnesses said they flew at altitudes ranging from 600 to 1200 feet, but that some were much higher. Speeds were estimated as high as 600 miles per hour." 47.

The Daily Telegraph carried the following on August

13th: "Several rockets were seen from Mariehamn, on the Aaland Islands, between Sweden and Finland, it is revealed. They were similar to those seen over Sweden." 48.

While many "rockets" came from the direction of Russian occupied Peenemunde to the south, eyewitnesses also claimed that some of the mystery missile were coming out of the north.

The behavior of the phantom bombs also puzzled the Swedes, who felt that the observed antics of the missiles did not match what could be expected of the design capabilities of the German V-1 or V-2, so the objects were nicknamed: "V-4s". News-week magazine reported: "Swedes...claimed to have seen the missiles backtrack, loop, barrel-roll, dive, and climb... (which) indicated they were radio-controlled." ^{49.}

The United Press compiled the following for its August 13th report which read:

"A spokesman for the Swedish defense staff said people throughout the nation apparently had been 'seized by a real ghost-bomb psychosis' and that preliminary investigations had proven useless.

The newspaper Dagens Nyheter said the latest (August 12th) missile was observed moving across southern Sweden from the northwest last night.

'Shaped like a giant torpedo and emitting a blinding light from its foremost part, it moved soundlessly with great speed and at a high altitude.' " ^{50.}

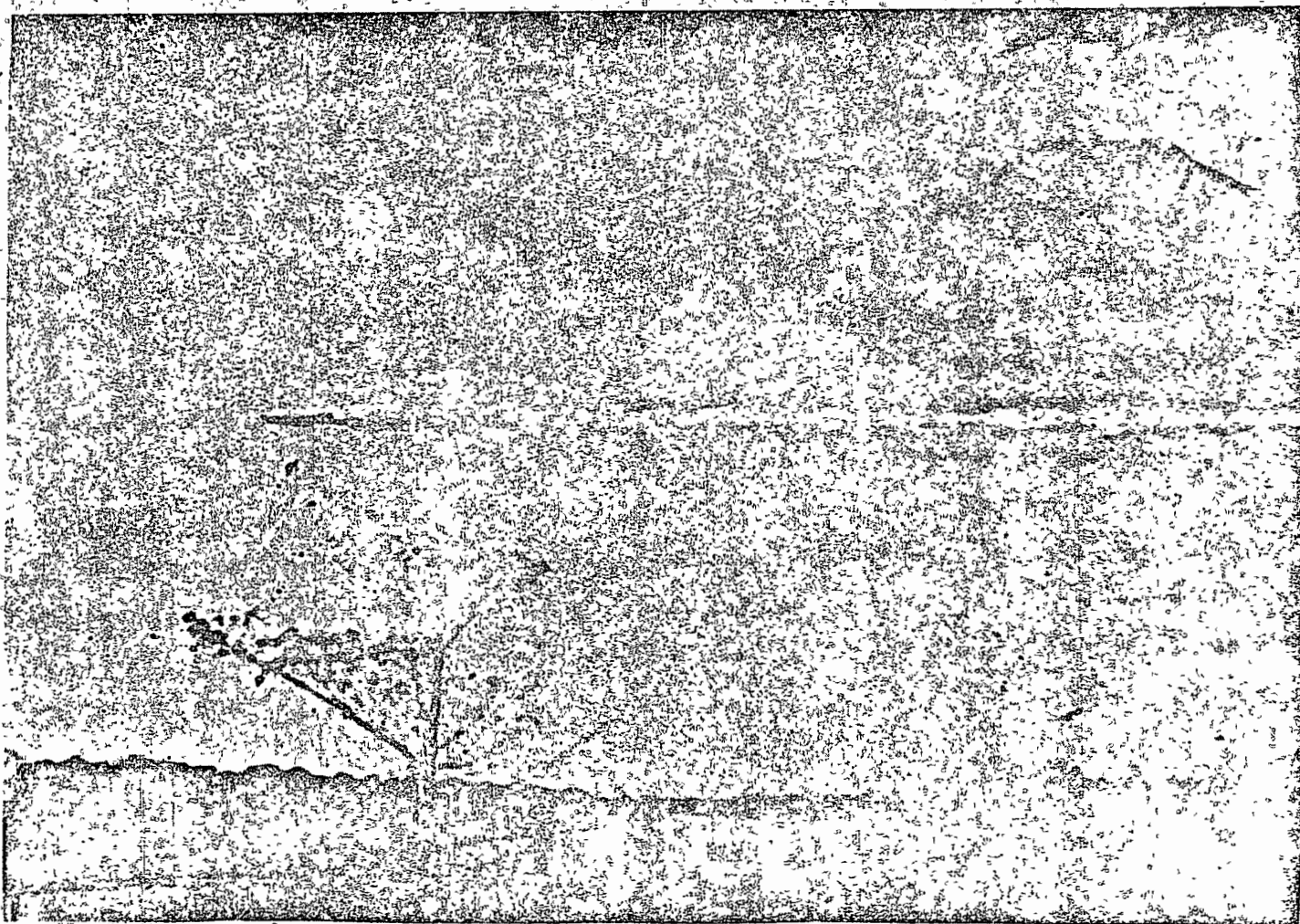
On the other side of the world a Soviet scientist, who was observing the American atomic tests at Bikini, told the western press that his country would explode its own nuclear bomb in the near future, ^{51.} a claim which must have ^{sent} chills down the spines of those in the Pentagon following the ghost rocket story.

Swedish troops were now mobilized to make exacting ground sweeps over central regions of the country looking for any sort of ghost rocket wreckage that would be conclusive evidence, while Sweden's Foreign Office prepared a strong note of protest for a certain "neighboring country". ^{52.}

News out Stockholm on the 13th reported that one unit of the Swedish military search team, a reconnaissance plane, had been struck headon by a ghost rocket and the three man crew killed

instantly. Likewise, the Swedish daily Aftonbladet revealed the suspicion that yet another plane might have been struck down near the town of Vaggeryd. The Aftonbladet claimed it had received its information from official investigators. The report said that a search plane had radioed that the crew had just sighted a ghost rocket, and then, suddenly, contact was lost with the aircraft as an explosion was heard in the area. No further details were given.

To add to the Swedish military headaches, an army ground search team, making a sweep along the Swedish-Norwegian border, mysteriously vanished.



A ghost rocket(?) photographed over Peru in the 1950s.

Sweden had now reached the crisis point. The military was placed on nearly full alert. The question now was: "should Sweden fire back at Russia, or wait until a ghost rocket bomb exploded in downtown Stockholm? Sweden paused at this critical moment. Though little is known exactly, on August 14th:

"The newspaper Aftonbladet said yesterday that a 'ghost bomb', bursting over a Swedish lake, had nearly caused casualties and criticized military authorities for their failure to explain the nature of the missiles, which have been reported almost daily by observers for the last two months.

The paper said that two persons boating on the lake, located in central Sweden, were nearly hit by the bomb, which burst into many parts.

The paper also reported that a rocket had been observed near Goetaberg by a group of Boy Scouts, who saw the flying missile turn and then return to its original course.... From Copenhagen came the first report of a 'ghost rocket' explosion over Denmark. Briand Jensen, a night watchman in Struer, Vest Jutland, said he saw a speeding missile, approaching from the northeast, explode with a blinding flash.

Swedish military authorities said yesterday that they had received no tangible proof that the frequent celestial phenomena observed over the country resulted from foreign experiments with aerial missiles.

In retort Aftonbladet said 'it ought to be possible to state whether they are meteors or not, and if they are rockets, one should be caught,' The paper added that if they were rockets and of Russian origin, as has been suggested, there were two possible explanations for their appearance over Sweden:

(1) Sweden is systematically being dotted in on a Russian artillery map.

(2) Sweden is being used as an object of demonstration, directed not at us, but to the Big World.

Military authorities said little attention was paid to a rumor a bomber which crashed Monday had been hit by a rocket bomb. 55.

The last comment in the forgoing account is interesting. Did it mean the earlier account concerning the crash was in error, or

did it mean the episode was being suppressed?

The New York Times printed on the same day an item datelined Washington D.C., which reported: "Under-Secretary of State Dean Acheson said today he personally was very much interested in reports of rockets flying over Sweden but that the Swedes had not sought any American advice on the subject." 56.

It didn't seem significant at the time, but the United States had a mystery of its own near Grants Pass, Oregon, on the same date. Red and green lights, so intense they were compared to flares, were spotted in the air between the Serpentine and Onion mountain peaks. For 30 minutes the lights swayed in the atmosphere accompanied by odd towering clouds. Oregon police called the lights very mysterious after a check failed to show there was any missing aircraft that might have been

dropping flares. 57. The Grants Pass Daily Courier said that the Civil Aeronautics Administration and the Army Air Force could not identify the lights since no red or green flares were carried by civilian or military aircraft on overland flights. 58. Tiffany Thayer noted the Grants Pass items and humorously warned the readers of Doubt to place their caviar under guard.

Returning to "rocket menaced" Sweden, the Prime Minister there postponed a protest to a certain foreign power because of continued puzzlement over the "nature and origin" of the mystery missiles. Only a six inch metal fragment had been found during the all-out ground search and it apparently failed to have a connection with the problem. 59.

The Christian Science Monitor's London representative put the dilemma in plainer terms by saying:"...without proof the Swedes are unable to take any action."^{60.}

However the ghost rockets still kept up their relentless barrage. On August 16th a mystery missile zipped to a position over Malmo, Sweden, where it produced a blast that broke a great number of windows. Authorities sent out search teams, on what proved to be a fruitless quest, to find particals of the exploded missile reported to be seen raining down. At the same time, citizens at Denmark's capital, Copenhagen, reported seeing another rocket during the night, speeding through the heavens.^{61.}

Between the 14th and the 21st of August, almost a dozen rocket sightings were recorded over Danish territory. Following the lead of Sweden, the Danish War Ministry ordered all of the nation's newspapers to censor the exact locations of any mystery missile reports.^{62.}

Rumors became so rampant in Stockholm by this time that the "low flying luminous bombs", as they were termed, dominated conversations throughout the city. Imaginations were becoming more and more inflamed.^{63.}

Yet, strangely enough, when windows were smashed in Tromso, Sweden, on the 17th, by another aerial blast of suspicious origin, the Swedish Defense Staff insisted that lightning had been the cause.^{64.}

The Associated Press then issued a newswire from Paris that told of whistling rocket-like objects leaving red-orange glowing trails of vapor which had been alarming the district of Chatillon-sur-Seine nightly for a week.^{65.}

Meanwhile, the international situation was anything but bright in the East-West cold war. The United States had delivered an ultimatum to Communist Yugoslavia over the shooting down of an American airplane, and ^{America} ~~the~~ had backed up Turkey in that nation's refusal of bilateral control with the Soviet Union of the Dardanelles. Diplomatic reporters in Washington D.C. expressed opinions that America's relations with the Russian had sunk to a post war nadir. Strangely enough diplomatic relations between the Soviets and the Scandinavian powers was one of the few bright spots in an otherwise dark European picture. The Russians had a track team touring Sweden and the Soviet's publicly supported Sweden's and Iceland's admission into the United Nations "with pleasure", as the Reds themselves termed it. The Finnish border dispute with Russia had been settled in the latter's favor, the Soviets gaining the major part of the Karelia territory, Petsamo in the arctic, and the Baltic port of Pekkala near Helsinki.

The large Danish island of Bornholm, just a short distance north of the Peenemünde test base, had been occupied by Russian troops after the war, but the Communists evacuated the island on March 18, 1946 with little hesitation. Surely that island would have been of value if rockets were being launched on test flights from the old German missile installation.

Therefore diplomatic observers called the "Swedish rocket barrage" mysterious and mentioned that there was "undercover" concern in Washington. ^{66.}

A special dispatch to the New York Times datelined: Stockholm, August 20, announced that American intelligence officials were now on the scene in Sweden. The visit was thinly veiled, evidently for the benefit of the Soviet Union:

"Two United States experts on aerial warfare, Gen. James Doolittle and David Sarnoff, arrived in Stockholm today, apparently independent of each other. The official explanation is that General Doolittle, who is now vice president of the Shell Oil Company, is inspecting Shell branch offices in Europe and selling oil and gasoline, while General Sarnoff, who is president of the Radio Corporation of America and a former member of Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's London staff, is studying the market for radio equipment.

The two men arrive here as reports on 'phantom bombs' are more numerous than ever. The Chief of the Swedish Defense Staff, Col. C.R.S. Kempf, said tonight he was extremely interested in asking the two general's advice and, if possible, would place all available reports before them.

General Doolittle, who arrived from Oslo, where he saw King Haakon of Norway, said on his arrival that he was merely on a business trip but was willing to place his knowledge and experience at the disposal of Swedish authorities in case they wanted his advice. He pointed out that it had been possible in England during the war to detect the range of German planes, the place where they took off and their height. He was highly surprised that the Swedes had not yet found a trace of a rocket and also that no theory had been advanced.

General Sarnoff said definitely that it was possible today by means of radar to detect the range, height and even the place from which rockets are fired. He said he was willing to give advice if the Swedes wanted it." ^{67.}

A professor at the California Institute of Technology spoke up on August 21st, ^{saying} that a German scientist, Eugene Sanger, had proposed a variant of the V-2 rocket by suggesting wings for

the missile which enable the rocket to reach 2,000 to 3,000 miles in range by skipping along through the atmosphere like a "flat stone on the surface of a body of water". He added that an earth orbiting space station, or a ground based radio direction station utilizing a line-a-sight principle was needed to direct it. ^{68.}

Meanwhile, reporters interviewed a Swedish scientist that had just arrived in the United States to inspect American scientific facilities:

"...Dr. (Ragnar) Woxen said that an Atomic Control Committee of leading physicist has been set up in Sweden under supervision of the Government. There are no military men on the committees, he added.

Asked about rockets seen over Swedish territory, he said they had fallen into lakes." ^{69.}

At the same time General Doolittle turned up in Stockholm:

"General Doolittle met the commander of the Swedish Air Force and several of his staff to discuss the phantom bombs and he read the reports that the Swedish General Staff had received.

Simultaneously a spokesman for the Swedes had obtained certain results with radar, which registered the presence of bombs over the country.

Registrations were made during days when reports on the bombs were most numerous. It is believed that in the future they will reveal the type and identity of the bomb..." ^{70.}

The Swedish Air Force Command denied the statement made by the British Foreign Office that stated: "There has been no question of foreign help... (and) the report may have arisen through confusion over negotiations now proceeding in Britain and the United States for the purchase of echo-radio-radar equipment for the normal use of the Air Force. These negotiations had been proceeding for a long time and had nothing to do with projectiles flying over Sweden." ^{71.}

Perhaps the most important part of the story in the New York Times, the August 22nd issue, was contained in the last sentence which read:"...certain new measures were discussed with Doolittle."⁷² No more ghost rocket accounts datelined Stockholm appeared until September 17th.

A correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor stated on August 22nd that not only were the locations of ghost sightings being censored, but even the publication of reports themselves.⁷³

The British Foreign Office admitted the day after the August 22nd Doolittle newsitem, that British radar experts had been to Sweden to investigate the ghost rockets and they had now returned to submit secret reports[#] to the British as to the origin of the strange flying objects.⁷⁴

[#]This writer suggests that an impenetrable curtain of censorship descended on the UFO subject as early as August, 1946, and not sometime in 1947, or later, as others have asserted. In fact, considering that UFOs were believed to have been either of German manufacture(during the war) or Russian(after the war), various degrees of censorship have no doubt always veiled the problem.

While attention was attracted to Swedish skies, the heavens over the United States could also count on attracting some attention too. On August 24th, 1946, a strange fiery sphere sailed over Wilmington North Carolina in a northern direction. A quarter of a hour later, the fire-ball, or ^{one} just like it, was seen cruising in a southern direction in sky over ^{Durham} Durham, North Carolina.⁷⁵

ROCKETS SAIL OVER SWEDEN

Terrorized People
Demand Action.

SWEDEN UNDER ROCKET SHOWER

Hint Experiments by
Russians.

Stockholm, Aug. 12.—The
army sent investigators
centrally.

SWEDES STUDY MYSTERIOUS AIR MISSILES

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Aug. 12.—
The Swedish army today rushed
to three points in Central
Sweden where unidentified rockets,
thought to be the results of Russian
tests, crashed last night.

Swedes Annoyed By Bursting of "Ghost Bombs"

STOCKHOLM, Aug. 14.—(AP)—
The newspaper Aftonbladet said
yesterday that a "ghost bomb,"
bursting over a Swedish lake, had
nearly caused casualties and criticized
military authorities for their
failure to explain the nature of the
missiles, which have been reported
almost daily by observers for
the past two months.

The paper said that two persons
boating on the lake, located in
central Sweden, were nearly hit by
the bomb, which burst in two
parts.

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3 SWEDES DIE AS ROCKET BOMB HITS WAR PLANE

STOCKHOLM, Sweden, Aug. 12.—
Three fliers were killed when
a Swedish military reconnaissance plane
collided head-on with a rocket
yesterday.

SWEDES WATCH SILENT ROCKETS

STOCKHOLM, Aug. 2.—(AP)—Eye-
witness descriptions of a soundless
rocket projectile of silvery hue, slowly
gliding the tree tops over northern
Sweden.

RUSSIANS OBSERVE UNUSUAL METEORITE

London, Nov. 20.—(AP)—The
reported Wednesday
which resembled
ing cannon ball.

SWEDEN TARGET A MYSTERIOUS "GHOST ROCKETS"

Sights Hundreds Of
Missiles In Air

STOCKHOLM, Aug. 11.—(AP)—Ghost
rockets — mysterious spool-shaped
speeding objects with fiery tails—have
become a common sight in Sweden,
and military officials no longer doubt
that the country is in a target area
for experimentation with remotely
controlled missiles.
Since July 1, newspapers have pub-
lished reports of the flying fire balls.

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1.) At this time some interesting speculations were carried in the March, 1946, issue of the Soviet magazine Vokrug Sveta, proposed by a Russian named Alexander Kayantzev. He had visited Hiroshima after Japan's surrender, and while inspecting the ruins of the shattered city, he noted the effects of the atomic blast. The nuclear explosion had been an airburst so it was vital to determine the height at which the bomb was detonated, in order to evaluate the military power of the American weapon. He checked the area around ground zero and found it almost totally flattened except for trees and chimneys. The very tops of the trees had been snapped off as well as the branches, but the main trunks remained upright and sturdy. It was apparent that vertical pole-like structures, represented in this case by trees^{and} chimneys, offered the most resistance to the shock waves coming from a high altitude.

While turning this fact over in his mind, Kayantzev was jolted by an old memory. Something had exploded over Siberia back in 1908, a "unique" natural catastrophe generally supposed to have been a meteor. The curious nature of the explosion over the forested Siberian Tunguska region just after the turn of the century had long puzzled Russian scientists. Now Kayantzev entertained the thought that the Tunguska "thing" may have contained uranium, possibly the 1908 blast was history's first atomic explosion.

Some years later, after further investigations into eyewitness accounts of the 1908 "meteor" revealed its odd shape, speed, course, and other unusual aspects of the devastated^{crash site, it was suggested} that the 1908 phenomenon might have been an atomic powered "cosmic ship" from outer space that met disaster braking to a stop in the earth's atmosphere. The Russian professor B. Lapunov passed on the remarkable idea to the French writer M.X. Velathcourt who wrote about the startling hypothesis in the magazine Semaine du Monde in the periodical's June 5, 1953, issue.

"Are Men From Mars Knocking?"

Giant question marks exist at this point in our story. Were intelligence experts beginning to consider a "non-Russian" origin? Would any new developments in ^{such} official thinking call for "new measures"? With the foregoing thoughts in mind, let us return to what was printed in the American and European press.

Norway notified the press on August 31, 1946 that in the future all rocket sightings were to be sent to the intelligence department of the Norwegian High Command. Any discussion of ghost rockets in the Norwegian newspapers was banned.^{1.}

In Sweden, where only limited censorship was in effect, the Swedish High Command let it be known it $\rightarrow$ had developed a "New Explosive Theory" to explain why the radar-tracked mystery rockets explode and yet leave nothing for metal detectors to find. The Swedes had the idea that an unusual explosive was being used in an extremely efficient self destruct system which fragments the parent device into particles as small as dust.^{2.}

The Russians ^{then} issued a denunciation of Western allegations in the Soviet ^{weekly} ~~foreign affairs~~ New Times. That the ghost rockets were Russian missiles meant to intimidate the Swedes, the News Times called: "anti-Soviet slander" designed to "poison the international atmosphere". The Moscow journal further stated: "...that although one Swedish newspaper had concluded that the alleged missiles were nothing but a mirage, the 'panic' spread by the reports was not a mirage but real fact."^{3.}

A curtain of silence descended over the Scandinavian area, but you can't just apply the brakes on public interest that

quickly without settling on a firm solution,^{As} the London Daily Mail sent one of its crack reporters to Stockholm to ferret out something solid. The Daily Mail's representative, Alexander Clifford, cabled a report on the ghost rocket mystery from Stockholm around the first of September. He found that Swedish public opinion varied from mass hallucinations to luminous balloons. Scientists that he had contacted expressed bafflement, and the Swedish and Danish military staffs were deeply worried. Generally, the phenomenon seemed to be wingless, low flying, ^{shaped} tube-like that moved silently through the air, except for an occasional whistling, at 100-200 miles per hour, sometimes trailing flame and smoke. Furthermore, the phenomenon had its beginnings in the northern region of Scandinavia's Lapland back in May, and then slowly shifted its activities southward.^{4.}

The "southern shift" idea gained increased credibility when the ghost rocket phenomenon moved beyond the news restrictions of Scandinavia in the month of September and appeared in the Mediterranean region.

The New York Times reported: "Acting Foreign Minister Stephanos Stephanopoulos (of Greece) supported a statement in London by Premier Constantinos Tsaldaris that flying rockets had been seen in northern Greece (the night of September 1-2). He said that Greek divisional commanders and British officers had seen them both east and west of Salonika traveling from north to south."⁵ Also: "He said that rockets estimated to be flying at the heights of 15,000 to 30,000 feet, had been spotted at Drama, 130 miles northeast of Salonika, and just below the Bulgarian border. The Foreign Minister added that an investigation was under way."⁶

Curiously, the very next day the English issued a statement about the strange luminous activity, which differed from their Greek ally's interpretation. The New York Times quoted the the Associated Press: "The British Embassy issued a news release tonight discounting reports that flying rockets had been seen over northern Greece." The release, emphasizing that no British officer had reported seeing such ~~such~~ missiles, said the rockets could have been a type of flare, such as a Very pistol, a number of which had been reported in the same area." 7

The Manchester Guardian's special correspondent, stationed in Salonika, giving his version of the incident, blamed the reports of rockets seen over that city as the result of the war of nerves being waged against Greece by that country's hostile Communist neighbors to the north, although he admitted that none other than the British Consul himself had witnessed a strange light in the sky the evening of September 1st, but dismissed the phenomenon as probably fireworks since the lumination was so near the ground. 8.

If there did exist some complacency among the British at this time it must have surely been shattered in the following weeks. The following reports appeared in the press, and the locations of the sightings were remarkable:

- 9-11-46 Srinagar, Kashmir: "Luminous body resembling a squash racket", headed west, left smoke-like trail.
- 9-15-46 Alemtejo, Portugal: At dawn, "a strange bluish ball of light" visible for over five minutes.
- 9-16-46 Tangier, North Africa: Between midnight and 1:00 a.m., "for three successive nights", large balls "of fire with huge green trails streaked with red."

9-17-46 Fez Para, North Africa (near Casablanca): "Long thin trails of yellow-green light followed the projectiles." 9.

Meanwhile, tensions and uncertainties were beginning to bedevil America's intelligence establishment. Major General William Donovan, wartime head of the Office of Strategic Services, on September 17, 1946, attacked the National Intelligence Authority, calling it a "phony" by stressing the charge that the service had yet to be truly intergraded while the Soviet Union edged to a forward position in Europe.¹⁰

At the same time, a storm was raging between the Pentagon and a group of concerned atomic scientists. The control of important scientific information became one of the most sensitive issues confronting the U.S. government. The time of extraordinary security precautions had arrived. The scientists felt that there was really no sure defense against the spread of nuclear secrets and another war when atomic weapons might be used. The only hope of mankind, they believed, would be the formation of a strong United Nations organization that would encourage world cooperation between members of the scientific community. The United Nations concept was accepted, but the Pentagon disagreed on a free flow of information, imposing restrictions on the foreign travel of American scientists and the exchange of their scientific papers.¹¹

As early as the 19th of August, 1946, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, had flown to Ottawa, Canada, to confer with that nation's chief of state *while* enroute to Washington D.C. to discuss plans for future "combined thinking" on all defense matters between Britain, Canada, and the United States. *On* the 16th of September, the Field Marshall spent the day cruising the Potomac river aboard the ship Sequoia with the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, consisting of the Generals Leahy, Eisenhower, Nimitz, and Spaatz, *discussing how they would lay* ~~laying~~ the foundation for post war cooperation. ^{12.}

The timing would have been perfect to make policy decisions regarding the ~~suspense of the~~ potentially dangerous threat to Western security which appeared to be the amazingly swift perfection of a Russian long-range, radio controlled, and possibly atomic powered, rocket. However, the confidential nature of the conference prohibits any good guesses as to whether or not the rocket matter came up, *though rockets may have been the prime reason for the conference.*

The day following the get together of Montgomery and the American military leaders the New York Times informed its readers:

"Dr. Manne Siegbahn, 59-year-old Swedish nuclear physicist and Nobel Prize winner, who arrived here yesterday from Goeteborg, Sweden, on the Swedish American liner Drottningholm, expressed doubt about recent reports that rocket bombs had been fired over Sweden.

'There is no clear evidence that any guided missiles have been flying over Sweden,' Dr. Siegbahn declared. 'I, myself, examined one reported to be such a missile and found it was a meteorite. I am very suspicious about the existence of any such thing.'

Dr. Siegbahn, who came to the United States to confer with American physicists, and as a Swedish delegate to the forecoming bicentennial celebration of Princeton University, declared that 'hysteria' might have been a factor in reports about the missiles." 13.

Almost as if in defiance, from September 22th through the 24th, the rockets, meteors, hysteria, or what have you, appeared in the sky all over Italy; ^{the cities of} Rome, Turin, Bologna, Vercelli, Modena, Imola, Florence, Naples, and Bari, were subject to overflights. The rocket seen flying over Florence was distinctly discerned changeing direction in the air. 14. If these "Russian rockets" could fly from the Soviet base at Peenemunde to Naples and back, why not London, or possibly, the North American continent? And if these "Russian missiles" flew level instead ⁱⁿ of a ballistic arc, this feat of crusing ^{roundtrip} from Peenemunde to Naples ~~and back~~ would take a fuel of considerable potency, perhaps of a nuclear nature. Furthermore, the Swedish "New Explosive Theory" might indicate some kind of nuclear engine of an unstable nature. Unstable perhaps, but apparently with the advange of reducing the missile to a cinder, thereby foiling Western intelligence. ^{However} ^{such a} If there was belief in the Soviet missile concept among American experts, there still seemed to be no reason to worry about a direct treat to the United States, unless the new rocket was adapted to the Sanger glide bomb principle to achieve great range, as the Cal Tech professor described the process, by "...skipping along through the atmosphere like a flat stone on the surface of the water."

One big drawback to official silence on important matters is

that it leaves a vacuum the public^{imagination} is usually more than willing to fill. Remember, for example, Amazing Stories magazine with its bizarre twin "true" story of subterraneans and interplanetarians? Well, the July, 1946, issue of Amazing printed an acknowledgment of the publication's debt to the work of Charles Fort, and the editor commented somewhat prophetically:

"If you don't think space ships visit the earth regularly, as in this story, then the files of Charles Fort, and your editor's own files are something you should see. Your editor has hundreds of reports (especially from returned soldiers) of objects that were clearly seen and tracked which could have been nothing but space ships. And if you think responsible parties in the world governments are ignorant of the fact of space ships visiting earth, you just don't think the way we do. 15.

Amazing magazine exceeded its editor's expectations in having an influence on the aerial riddle. That result was achieved quite unintentionally when one of the publication's writers tapped a most profound and fundamental theme: the problem faced by mankind in coming to terms with the swift pace of the conjoint revolutions in science and philosophy. The gifted philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, foresaw in these two revolutions the coming of new and difficult times when the human intellect would attempt to reconcile its pampered dogmas to the ever swelling flood of novelties from laboratories and lecture halls. Whitehead explored some basic principles in his book: Science and the Modern World written early in the twentieth century. The Whitehead essay is heavy reading for the average mind, but a simpler illustration, that embodied the gist of the basic problem, was successfully popularized in the the Hollywood film Inherit the Wind, which received its inspiration from the famous, real-life, Tennessee "Monkey Trial"

By the Second World War the supreme deity of the Bible had receded from many personal philosophies, becoming simply the "Prime Mover", a god that had set clouds of hydrogen in motion eons ago after establishing the basic rules of atomic interaction and then paying no more heed to his creation. It had become difficult for the average man to believe in a divine spirit so near and concerned it would listen to humble supplications or influence events for the sake of one individual.

On the other hand, the great disaster of two world wars since the beginning of the century ^{also} diminished faith in human institutions directing man's destiny.

The peace of 1945 brought no real relief ^{because of} the enormous destructive power of the atomic bomb ~~and the~~ ^{that} increasing signs international political problems had not been resolved.

Something that could bridge the gap between science and religion, and cure the world's political ills quickly and firmly, would have been an ideal medicinal tonic. The world got what it wanted, but only in a fictional sense.

During the summer of the ghost rockets, 1946, author Harold M. Sherman mulled a portraiture of a character he had in mind for a future science fiction tale for a fall issue of Amazing. Sherman envisioned a role played by a tall, strong, handsome ~~type~~ ^{as} a very familiar character in countless novels, however the difference in this case was that the hero possessed exceptional power and wisdom because he was a visitor from outer space. While many science fiction writers were still under the spell of H.G. Wells' conception of aliens from other planets being ugly monsters, Sherman

made only a minor physical concession in portraying the alien as different from humans, and that was ^{the} color of the being's skin. It was green. The close likeness to humans was critical to the subconscious appeal of the resulting story.

October, 1946, the pulp Amazing Stories appeared on the news-stands with Sherman's idea as the cover story. The tale was titled: "The Green Man". The lead sentence of Sherman's work proclaims to the reader that in California: "...anything can happen." 16.

The plot was concerned with the reception mankind gives to a Messiah-like alien from 'another world. To start off, a professor of astronomy is depicted motoring down a winding road along the side of the mountain in California that is topped with Mount Wilson Observatory. It is late at night as the professor has spent most of the evening giving a lecture to a group of colleagues at the Wilson Observatory about the possibility of other worlds in space being abodes of intelligence life. Suddenly an invisible beam of energy directed at the car paralyzes the engine. Unable to fix the trouble the elderly scholar leaves the stalled vehicle to seek aid, unaware he was being watched by a pair of alien eyes.

After walking a few paces, the professor notices a large, silver, cigar-shaped object, floating in the air behind some trees. And then, suddenly, there emerged an impressive figure

garbed in a loose fitting robe from nearby shrubbery. ^{The creature} appeared to be ^ahuman with a greer ^{complexion}.

The professor was calmly told in the best of English that he had been selected by aliens from another civilization to ^{an}act as ^{an}intermediary between the extraterrestials and mankind. After the world at large learned of its guest ^{from} the universe and the trauma of the event wore off, curious crowds were quickly won over by the alien's benign disposition. The Christ-like similarity of the being extended even to alien ability to heal the sick by a mere touch, the curative power leaping from his fingertips ^{the of} in ^{an}form a special electrical energy.

The strange visitor and his human assistant were entertained by all the heads of state and quized as to the purpose of the unusual arrival. The extramundane fellow met suspicions, of course, that he was the vanguard of an ^{hostile} invasion. One U.S. Senator in the story ^{to the alien that} explained ~~he~~ had never quite gotten over the Orson Wells Martian broadcast of October 1938, but the benevolent ambassador from the Milky Way assured the nervous legislator. "Numar", as the alien was called, told everyone he had come to the planet earth ^{only} to act as an "awakener", to herald the advent of a ^{moral} change in mankind that would soon have the squabbling nations on the globe working together in peace with a cosmic outlook. 17.

Charles Fort made a number of comments in regards to the reactions of alien visitors to mankind and its civilization. He did not indorse the bellicose theory made famous by H.G. Wells, nor did he consider the messiah concept later proposed by Harold Sherman. Instead, Fort's thinking was guided by the data he had compiled on strange things seen in the sky as it was recorded in newspapers and various publications. Besides what is probably the best known of Fort's ideas on the matter: "I think we're property", he left us several others. For example, as for Sherman's storyline which contents that a superior race from the stars would try to mend the ways of humans, one of Fort's comments disputes that view: "I accept that, though we're usually avoided, probably for moral reasons, sometimes this earth has been visited by explorers." 18.

But Fort did made a concession ^{to} on the possibility aliens might trouble themselves to land and mingle with us: "If lights that have been seen in the sky were upon the vessels of explorers from worlds -- then living in New York City, perhaps, or in Washington D.C. perhaps, there are inhabitants of Mars, who are secretly sending reports upon the ways of this world to their governments..." 19.

Wise in the ways of human nature Fort anticipated events like that envision in the story: "The Green Man". So he wrote: "If beings, like human beings, from somewhere else, should land on upon this earth, near New York, and parade up Broadway, and then sail away, somebody, a year or so later, would 'confess' that it had been a hoax by him and

some companions, who had dressed up for their parts, and had jabbered, as they thought extramundanians should jabber. New Yorkers would say that from the first they had suspected something wrong. Who ever heard of distinguished foreigners coming to New York, and not trying to borrow something? Or not coinciding with propaganda in the newspapers?" 20.

Returning to that period just after the Second World War we had left earlier, the fall of 1946, we should take a closer look at preparations being made for a possible future conflict between the Western powers and the Communist block.

At 4:44 in the afternoon of October 8, 1946, the right honorable Ellis Smith(Stoke) gained the floor in England's House of Commons. The Parliament was in the process of debating the Atomic Energy Bill. A sore point of the bill was the broad provisions that would greatly restrict the flow of scientific information. While discussing the issue, M.P. Smith happened to drop the remark:

"The Manchester Guardian of the 9th September said that General Eisenhower was to have conferences with the Imperial General Staff when he visited England. It was understood that close Anglo-American cooperation in the development of guided missile was being sought.

We heard a great deal last week (Oct. 1-7) about General Eisenhower's visit, but nothing about the report to which I have referred. I would ask the Minister whether that report was correct."

No answer was forthcoming.

On October 3rd the Kremlin ^{had} used the Moscow magazine New Times to deliver a very strong protest against allegations made in the Western press about the production of "mysterious kinds of weapons" supposedly being manufactured in the Soviet zone of

Germany. A story attributed to the Reuter newsservice on August 22nd asserted that the Russians were developing a "new and very powerful rocket --the German V-4" and that "the Russians(were) continuing German experiments". Reuters gave as its source of information some unnamed Germans and "particularly officers of the Russian-favored Socialist Unity party."^{22.}

For some reason the Soviets had waited five weeks to lash out at what the Kremlin called:"savage and absured gossip(and) fantastic stories". The sources of information mentioned by Reuters the Communists termed:"some mythical representatives of the Socialist Unity party".^{23.} Why did the Soviets wait five weeks to answer this particular charge? Did Washington and White Hall just then, at the end of September, deliver ^{a secret} an official complaint against Moscow, warning Stalin of the dire consequences if the ghost rocket were attempts at intimating Western Europe? Had Eisenhower been sent to London as a military precaution to await a Russian reaction?

Perhaps the issue was not pressed for the simple reason that the scientists advising Washington and White Hall were not yet sure just what the ghost rockets were. Nonetheless, considering all the phantom rocket reports, there seemed to have reasonable grounds for the problem to remain a sensitive one until further investigation shed more light on the phenomena, or the phenomena itself revealed its nature, either deliberately or by accident.

In any event the ghost rocket question did not publicly become an official problem seriously affecting international tensions. #

In 1946 Yugoslavia delivered stiff diplomatic protests to the United States government over alleged violations of that country's airspace by American aircraft. Many of these alleged violations concerned "unidentified aircraft" which the Yugoslavs could not even classify as single or multi-engine planes. There was no question, however, over the identity of one U.S. aircraft pounced on by Yugoslavian fighters and shot down. The result of the unprovoked attack was a crisis in U.S.-Yugoslavian relations. It is unclear if UFO activity in the area was responsible for misunderstandings or if the belligerent actions by the Yugoslavians was a Cold War tactic. Yet, it must be mentioned here that U.S. intelligence did order, about that time, the flying of secret short range incursions into Soviet held territory on aerial spy missions using stripped down bombers. The aerial spy missions were so successful a special aircraft was later designed for deep penetrations of the Soviet Asian land mass. This special plane was the famous high flying U-2. Until the Gary Powers fiasco in 1960, the aerial spying program was a top secret project and was considered an invaluable source of intelligence on Russian missile development. The extent to which UFO activity has affected East-West relations remains a significant and unexplored area for future historians.

Journalist Marquis Childs, in his newspaper column "Washington Calling", made the following statement on October 7, 1946:

"I (Childs) have talked to many people here (Stockholm) about the flying bombs. Some put the whole thing down to postwar hysteria. Others take a serious view of what they call, half in jest, "Russian hail".

One thoroughly reliable American observer with whom I have talked saw flying bombs in broad daylight over this city. It was a cigar-shaped object which streaked across the sky with great speed and seemed on the point of shooting eastward(?). Careful Swedish observers have seen what they believe to be rockets.

Official opinion is that nothing is really known about the phenomenon, which has now more or less subsided. Recently, at any rate, very few reports of the bombs have been received. If the government has found any fragments, that fact is being kept a careful secret." 24

Swedish Inquiry Fails To Solve Rocket Case

Meanwhile, interesting speculation on rocketry was being made in journals accessible to the public.

The use of atomic energy to propel missiles had been discussed in the September 1945, issue of the Journal of the American Rocket Society. The article on the subject even had something interesting to say about a proposed radar trigger:

"Instead of dropping the atomic bomb by parachute thereby enabling the bomb carrier to vacate the vicinity before the explosion, an atomic warhead rocket could continue on to the target. Employing the principle of radar, a radio-operated trigger could set off the explosion at a predetermined height above ground. Exploding the remaining fuel with the bomb load, or the fuel and bomb load consisting of the same substance, are very possible." 25.

The suggested scheme to devise nuclear propulsion eventually did not prove to be technically feasible, yet in 1945-46 no one felt they could put a limit on revolutionary developments of atomic power after the seemingly impossible feat of producing the devices dropped on Japan. Not only were arsenals of atomic rockets envisioned, armed and propelled by nuclear fission, but even the question of defense measures against missile attack was considered a valid worry for the U.S. military. The rocket threat was debated during a meeting of the American Rocket Society on March 15, 1946. The editor of the society's journal made a short presentation of the problem which was then followed by a spirited discussion. Some of the members were military personnel acquainted with current government work on rockets and thus were in a position to contribute the latest unclassified information. One salient difficulty argued was: "The need for further development of

radar equipment to plot the course of a rocket at great distances." ^{26.}

One active member of the American Rocket Society as of October 1946, was a gentleman described on the society's roster as: "E.U. Condon, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, 25, D.C. Former Research Director of Westinghouse.

Now on research work on military rockets." ^{27.} If anyone knew something about atomic powered rockets or atomic weapon systems, it would probably have been Dr. Condon.

Dr. Condon had been active in war time research and development of micro-wave radar as well as aiding work on America's first efforts in rocket research and development, though his best credentials were in the field of applied physics which enabled him to make significant contributions to the Manhattan Project. In three areas, radar, rockets, and atomic energy, Dr. Condon could boast of considerable knowledge and experience. It may be further noted that the distinguished professor attracted considerable attention to himself in 1946 because of his outspoken opinions on scientific information and the military. Dr. Condon apparently thought little of the military's attempts to control ~~certain~~ exchanges of important scientific knowledge. Some ^{exchanges of} important data of pure science were, he felt, and this the impression given in the volume Current Biography 1946, hampered by the restrictive practices of scientifically unqualified Pentagon censors. An interesting question left unasked was Dr. Condon's view on certain scientific information and the public's right to know.

While men like Bernard Baruch were warning the world in
 scare headlines ^(October 8th) that an atomic war would fling mankind
 back beyond the Dark Ages, scientists were greatly interested
 in investigating the capabilities of radar in detecting and
 tracking meteors. # The ionospheric station at Sterling,
 Virginia, operated by the National Bureau of Standards, trained
 its large radar antenna on that part of the sky which would
 be the origin of a meteor shower caused by the Giacobini-
 Zinner comet due the night of October 9, 1946. The director
 of the bureau, Dr. Condon, told the press the next day on the
 10th, that the ~~meteors~~ were clearly visible by electronic
 means and the experiment could be considered a success. 28.
 Now what does Dr. Condon, radar, rockets, and meteor.

have in common? And, we must add, UFOs. .

A large *article* in the Christian Science Monitor, on August 16,
 1946, titled: "The Great Swedish Rocket Mystery", by that news-
 paper's Washington correspondent, indirectly suggests a few

#On page 175 of Captain Edward Ruppelt's book: Report on
 Unidentified Flying Objects, it states that in February 1952,
 the Royal Canadian Air Force Intelligence, for reasons not
 mentioned, came to the conclusion it would be fruitful to de-
 vise instruments to check on the entry of objects into the
 upper layers of the earth's atmosphere. Reported results were
 officially negative and the scheme terminated in 1954. Ruppelt
 put the word: officially in quotation marks.

interesting points. The *article* recognized the fact, and cautioned the public, that guided missile development was still largely composed of drawingboard schemes in spite of the rash of optimistic press releases, then being handed out by the Army and Navy Pentagon spokesmen, which promised artificial satellites and rockets to the moon. The sudden appearance of so many press releases by the Pentagon, the author suggests, was probably prompted by feelings of insecurity taking hold in the Pentagon because of the mysterious missiles over Sweden. Also, the correspondent *emphasized* that though experiments were being rushed to develop a defense against atomic-tipped, long ranged rockets, the possibility of devising an adequate defense was nil and that it looked as if non-military solutions to political problems was the only way to avoid world disaster.^{29.}

This view, that there was no defense in the atomic age, was shared by a group of prominent scientists led by Albert Einstein. They put together the booklet: One World Or None. Among the experts that contributed to the booklet was Dr. Condon, who wrote a shory essay of how simple it would be to smuggle a small atomic device into the United States and conceal it within a mile of a selected target, which would be quite near enough to be effective.

It is interesting to note Dr. Condon's preoccupation with methods of atomic weapon delivery and defense.

There were five recognized means of atomic weapon delivery that ~~could~~ ^{might have} threaten the United States in 1946:

- 1.) Conventional bombing planes.
- 2.) V-1 type flying bombs launched from the decks of submarines lying off the coasts of U.S.
- 3.) The smuggling and concealment of small hand-carried atomic devices.
- 4.) A-Sanger type, "V-3", glide bomb (not recognized as perfected, but seemingly within reach of 1946 technology).
- 5.) V-2 type ballistic missile of intercontinental ^{believed to be} range (not [^] within the reach of 1946 technology).

The first four methods could be successful in theory, but only the V-2 type ballistic missile was ideally suited as an atomic offensive system. Ballistic missiles travel too fast and too high to offer any reasonable expectations of devising a ^{really effective} defensive warning and interception apparatus. The British could vouch for that with ^{the} experience of German V-2s raining down on London still fresh in their minds.

While American scientists with German help began the big job of perfecting long range missiles, the Pentagon, meanwhile, could get some comfort from the fact that the United States' giant, 10,000 mile range, B-36 ^{bomber was} then nearing the final stages of development.

30 With the startling news of the Swedish ghost rockets, the Pentagon ^{was} seemingly faced with a possible threat by long range missiles. The only hope for any warning of such an attack was the perfection of long range radar equipment. At this point we might ask if the Army's feat of bouncing a radar signal off the moon in January, 1946, a test conducted in secret, was just a scientific stunt or a serious military experiment. Commenting on the 1946 moon radar test, Life magazine stated that the test was felt by authorities to be valuable in that: "...experiments could already be used to detect enemy rockets which might travel above the atmosphere." 30. One might add here that a certain Dr. Menzel was one the two scientists that produced the mathematical calculations that made the moon radar test possible. In May, 1946, with the rank of Commander in the U.S. Navy, Dr. Menzel left the service and returned to Harvard University where he took over as head of the astronomy department. When in June, 1951, the U.S. Air Force financed high-altitude observatory at Climax, Colorado, needed a ^{new} director, Dr. Menzel was appointed.

← However, a much better test of long range radar in the developement of a missile detection system would be the scanning for meteors entering the earth's atmosphere.

30 By December 1948 U.S. scientists had perfected a workable meteor detection system. Three high-powered radars were set up twenty-five miles apart aimed at a point about 60 miles above the earth. At an altitude of 60 miles, or 100 kilometers, meteors plunging earthward begin to produce a trail of electrified particles which can be detected by radar. Height,

velocity, and the direction of meteors could be determined by this system. The application of this system to the detection of long range ballistic missiles was possible if similar disturbances occurred in the atmosphere during a missile's passage. # 31.

#These facts were taken from a source at Harvard Observatory. The mention of Harvard ^{again} brings to mind a name of a certain professor associated with that institution: Dr. Donald Menzel. Dr. J. Allen Hynek of Northwestern University, on page 171 of his book: The UFO Experience, wrote: "The Pentagon's official attitude (on UFOs) was largely dictated by the scientific fraternity. After all, not even a major general wishes to be laughed at by highly placed members in the scientific hierarchy. One example was, of course, Harvard astronomy professor Dr. Menzel, who took a seemingly compulsive interest in the flying saucer question, even though this subject was far removed from his scientific field. He loudly proclaimed that UFOs were nonsense and particularly championed the "mirage theory" of flying saucers."

Perhaps of additional interest ^{is} ~~was~~ an article in Time magazine, ^{debunking UFOs,} in the June 9, 1952 issue, authored by Dr. Menzel titled: "Those Flying Saucers". The Time article mentioned: "During World War II, Menzel had left astronomy to become a radar expert. One job (as Chairman of the Wave Propagation Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) was to study the effects of atmospheric irregularities on radar waves."

There is a number a references that bear on the relationship of UFOs, radar, and rockets. For example, if one checks the October, 1957, issue of Amazing Stories, one can find an article titled: "Other Space Saucers -- A Myth", by Oliver P. Ferrell. In the article Mr. Ferrell staunchly defended the official Air Force position that no tangible evidence of UFOs existed and ^{he attacked rumors which claimed} that facts about the UFO mystery were being kept from the public. A short bibliographical sketch introduced Mr. Ferrell's essay. His background is interesting, particularly his past association with the Air Force:

"Oliver P. Ferrell is credited with having independently discovered the radar detection of meteor trails (published in Physical Review, January 15, 1946). His plan for tracking and sizing mysterious ionic clouds some 65 miles above the surface of the earth (published in Science & Culture, Calcutta, India, May, 1944) was adopted by the U.S. Air Force in 1948.

From 1949 through 1952, he served as Project Supervisor under Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratories contracts AF(122) -72 and AF 19 (122)-242.

These projects evaluated the radio observations of 600 observers scattered throughout the western hemisphere. The results of these contracts (135,000 observations) have not been published, but information obtained during this period has become a guide to research during the International Geophysical Year." 32.

There is yet another fragment of information that might shed some light on UFOs and long range radar projects. In the University of Colorado book: Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects there is an interesting reference to the matter on page 553. In Canada, we are told, UFO reports are filed under "Non-Meteoritic Sightings" and are the responsibility of the "Upper Atmosphere Research Section of the Radio and Electrical Engineering Division of the National Research Council". 33.

According to an article in the September 6, 1952, issue of The New Yorker magazine, Project Sign, the U.S. Air Force UFO investigation conducted between 1947-1949, had the following personnel assigned to determine a possible physical explanation of UFOs:

"...an assortment of physicists and aerodynamicists who specialize in the study of the stratosphere and the space beyond it; and the electronics experts attached to the Cambridge Field Station." 34

A further note on this matter is of considerable importance. In August, 1946, a correspondent for the Christian Science Monitor learned the following about British radar assistance to Sweden:

"It is expected that the latest British radar gear developed as a result of experiences during the rocket bombardment of London (during World War II) will be loaned to Swedish military authorities.... Using radar, it should be possible to backtrack the rocket's ~~and pinpoint~~ ^{their} firing positions to within a few miles. In the early stages of the rocket bombardment of London it was found difficult to pick them up -- traveling at 3,000 m.p.h. -- on aircraft warning radar sets, but research workers have made considerable advances. At the time the bombardment ended it was within the bounds of possibility to pick up rockets and give local warnings of impending arrival in time for persons to seek shelter." 35.

If this report is correct in stating that radar of reasonable capability for detecting ballistic missiles already existed, would there be any unusual motive for doing further research on ^{mature's} meteors, visitors arriving from deep space?

← On October 10th, the Swedish Defense Staff spoke up on the ghost rocket issue after a long silence. The New York Times carried the Associated Press' account of the official announcement:

"Swedish military authorities said today that they have been unable to discover after four months of investigation the origin or nature of the ghost rockets that have been flying over Sweden since May.

A special communique declared that 80 per cent of 1,000 reports on the rockets could be attributed to 'celestial phenomena,' but that radar equipment had detected some objects 'which cannot be the phenomena of nature or products of imaginations, nor be referred to as Swedish airplanes.' 36.

The official admission that something besides imagination, rockets, airplanes, or 'celestial phenomena' (meteors?), was responsible for the a sizeable portion of the ghost rocket reports is quite astonishing. A resulting silence on the part of American and British authorities on the mysterious portion of the Swedish investigation is also quite astonishing. This would not be the last time data of a truly inexplicable nature in official investigations would be ignored. As might be expected, Charles Fort had not overlooked even this difficulty. He left us this opinion:

"I don't know to just what degree my accusation, in these matters, is of the laziness and feeble-mindedness of scientists. Or, instead of accusing, I am simply pointing out everybody's inability seriously to spend time on something, which, according to his preconceptions, is nonsense. Scientists, in matter of our data, have been like somebody in Europe, before 1492, hearing stories of lands to the west, going out on the ocean for an hour or so, in a row-boat, and then saying, 'whether exactly in these words, or not: 'On hell! there ain't no America'." 37.

Scientists associated with the 1946 ghost rocket investigation may have lacked curiosity, energy, or even intelligence, in conformance to Fort's old accusation, however we must give them more credit than that and consider other reasons for the the silence that descended over the ghost rocket mystery, a silence that still prevails. No scientific papers, for example, have ever turned up in scientific journals on the big 1946 mystery.

Apparently the ghost rockets of 1946 caused something of a stir in Belgium, though there seems to have been ^{little} ~~no~~ mention of such activity in American or English newspapers, the two prime sources of unusual data available to the Fortean Society and to anyone doing research on the matter only understanding the English language. We do know that there was a report, dated September 25th, which told of a ball of fire plunging out of the sky over Ostend, Belgium, trailing a dense smoke trail. The ball of fire almost rammed a house, but whether or not the object was determined to have been a meteor, was not disclosed.³⁸

← Without knowing ^{exactly} ~~that~~ what was in Belgium newspapers, we can indirectly guess that something ^{must} ~~might~~ have happened when a notice turned up in the British press on October 15, 1946, issued by the Belgium Defense Minister, which insisted that after an official inquiry nothing of an unknown nature had over flown that nation's territory.^{39.}

Although little appeared in the press, Ed Creagh, an Associated Press staff writer, stated that the ghost rocket reports continued in great numbers right up to October.^{40.}

minds on how the "rockets" were being propelled. Thayer also was puzzled by the "radio bombs" habit of blowing up and their uncanny marksmanship for bodies of water. Even though he couldn't tie up these loose ends, Thayer was certain who was behind the excitement and why. He blamed the whole mess on the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, thinking that the organization was concocking scientific trash to scare the public into believing those "Damned Reds" could send Atomic Bombs raining down on America from a half a world away. [#] "Malarky", he snorted, referring to rockets in general, "before you know it the Pentagon will be burning up billions". Financially ^{speaking,} Thayer's aim was dead center. 42.

Only casually did Thayer make a reference to the possibility ^{ghost rockets as} of interplanetary visitors and ^{of} those members that might prefer that kind of theme. See page 242 under "Ghosts" ^{his editorial said}

[#] Author Bernard Newman, a well traveled and adventurous gentleman who penned many spy novels as well as serious works on international politics, wrote an interesting fantasy-thriller titled: The Flying Saucer (Macmillan, 1948) which was a curious mixture of H.G. Wells' plot in War of the Worlds and actual UFO news items ladled over an idea of his own. The theme of Newman's fiction story was that a small band of scientists had faked the ghost rocket and flying saucer reports in order to create a Martian invasion scare, thus unify the world and bring peace.

in issue number 16. Sure enough, on that page there was a Reuters dispatch that told of a "strange luminous figure" wandering remote beach areas at night on Sweden's Tarn Island. Cattle, for some reason, avoided those areas and the lush grass there.

Elsewhere in that issue there were items about a shower of worms during a temporary lull in a storm in Philadelphia and an unexplained light seen in the ^{sky} by a couple of policemen at Weatherford, Texas, just 13 days after (as Thayer put it) the Navy "misplaced" six planes off Florida. 43.

As the ghost rocket story came to a temporary close, the curtain went up on another episode that seems to have an interesting relationship to some earlier information we have covered.

From what information that is available this is what apparently happened. On the night of October 9, 1946, people all over the nation were outdoors watching for a meteor shower that marked the approach of the Giacobini-Zinner comet. During the meteor display "something" appeared near the moon in the dark evening sky over San Diego, California.

One of the witnesses in San Diego of the strange object in the sky, a medium named Mark Probert, immediately phoned the head of B.S.R.A., Meade Layne; a Fortean, ^{and} a believer in interplanetary travelers visiting the earth as indicated in the writings of Charles Fort. Layne asked Probert to attempt psychic contact with the object in the sky.

Other witnesses in the San Diego area notified the newsmedia and soon the aerial mystery story was being broadcasted over the radio. Sometime during the evening Meade Layne phoned the radio station and told about Probert's attempt at contact with the object in the sky. As a result Layne began to receive sighting reports at his Borderland Research headquarters. One sighting reported to the local newspapers

and later printed in the Los Angeles press stated: " 'You must think I'm a nut, but I know what I saw'...(also)'I'm sure it wasn't a shooting star. It looked like a rocket ship, trying to make contact'...(and) 'The object appeared on the right hand side of the moon at about 8 p.m. and remained in view for nearly three minutes'...(moreover)'It was shaped like a bullet and it left a thin vapor trail behind it.' " 44.

Meanwhile, just north of San Diego; at the small community of Palomar Gardens located at the base of Palomar Mountain, the leader of a cult that called itself the "Royal Order of Tibet", Mr. George Adamski, an amateur astronomer who was waiting impatiently for the completion of the giant 200 inch telescope atop the mountain, was scanning the heavens like other people hoping to see the meteor display. He also claims he saw something near the moon. After the strange object disappeared, Adamski went indoors and turned on the radio. He soon heard the radio announcer say that there had been numerous other witnesses to the object in the night sky. There could be little doubt that he checked the newspapers to learn more.

Sometime between October 10th and the 11th, an alledged message received by Mark Probert from the mysterious thing in the sky was given to the press. The Los Angeles Daily News headlined its artical on Probert's mental message: "Are Men From Mars Knocking?" 45. The News printed that Probert alledgedly learned that the dark object blotting out a portion of the lunar face was piloted by creatures from outer space that were seeking contact with mankind but wary of the hostile instincts of mankind. The spaceship, which was suppose to be called a Kareeta, or Corrida, used a very efficient anti-gravity engine according to the alledged telepathic message, and its pilots sought a meeting with earth scientists at a remote site. 46.

Tiffany Thayer, who felt that the newspapers served up quite enough fiction as it was, noted the whole business with a trace of a humorous sneer, proposing that the so-called bashful extramundanians might yet land and close in on the White House in droves.^{47.}

Several weeks passed, according to Adamski's testimony, before he heard the expression "San Diego spaceship" mentioned again. He claimed that some military officers happened to be traveling through the town he lived in near Mount Palomar and that he happened to overhear them talk about the interplanetary idea in regards to the San Diego manifestation. Furthermore, he declared he never saw anything else inexplicable in the sky until August of 1947,^{48.} yet the philosopher in him began to stir and the world would hear from him in the years to come.

George Adamski later wrote a novel titled: An Imaginary Trip to the Moon, Venus, and Mars, which was published in 1949. As a work of fiction it did not attract any attention, but on November 24, 1952, a strange story appeared in the Phoenix, Arizona, Gazette about Adamski. The Gazette printed claims by the Californian that he had met face-to-face with a pilot of a flying saucer from outer space that allegedly touched down for a short time at a remote location in California's Mojave desert. Soon after, a fully detailed account appeared in the book Flying Saucers Have Landed, in which Adamski described his new found friend from the firmament as a human-like being with an angelic face, golden brown shoulder-length hair, and dressed in a simple one-piece jumpsuit. Adamski's alien was

an obvious attempt at a comparison with the traditional conception of mankind's revered Nazarene.

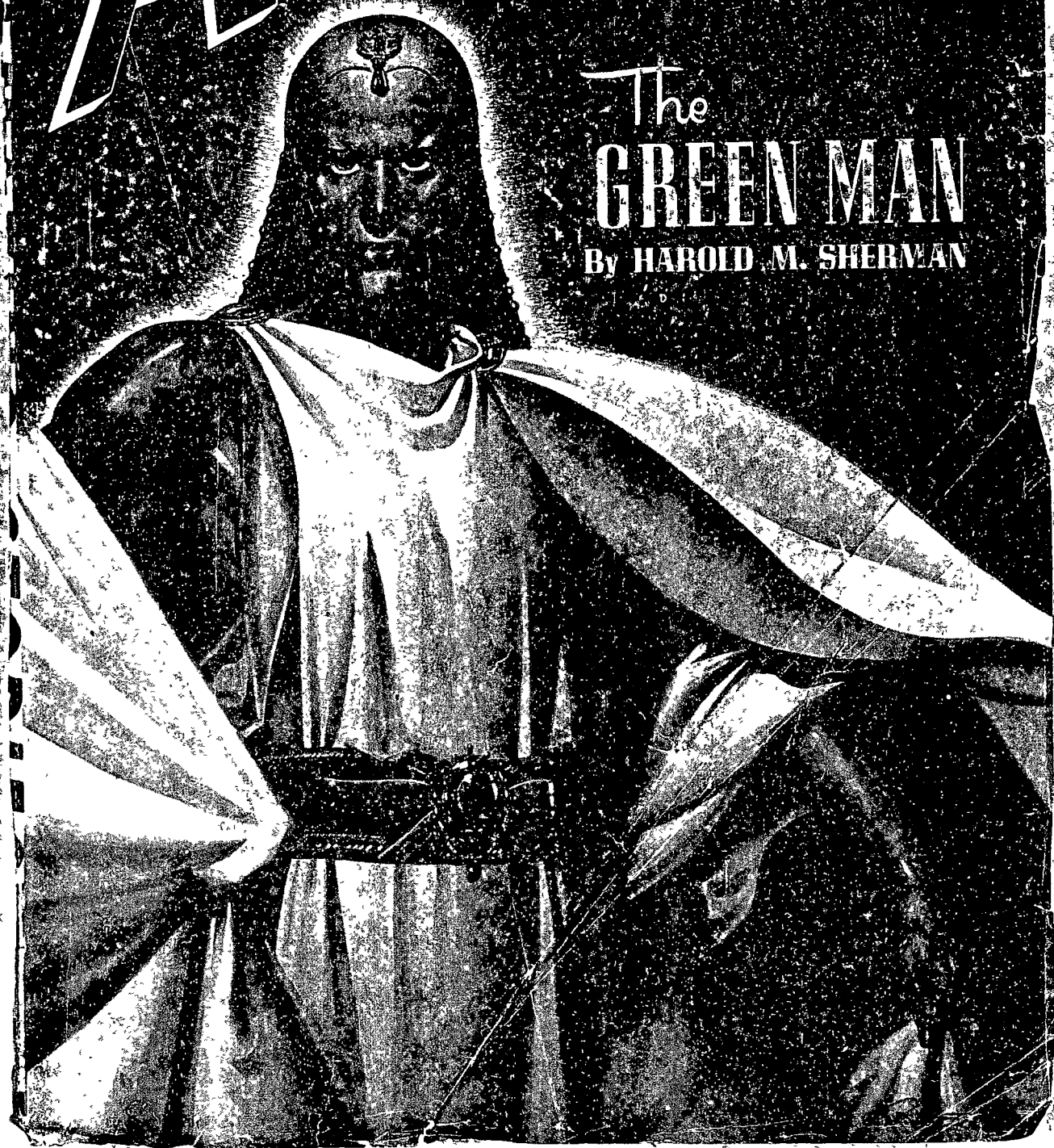
The reason for the meeting between Adamski and the spaceman, Adamski claimed, was a "good news" message of spacemen saving human civilization from self destruction. Needless to say at this point, Adamski's yarn sounds too similar to Harold Sherman's tale "The Green Man" to ignore the strong possibility the unusual Californian occult leader had been inspired by the story in Amazing magazine.

Unfortunately, Adamski's "Numar" didn't stick around to plea for peace among the nations of the earth, but Adamski was only too glad to spread the word himself.

AMAZING STORIES

The GREEN MAN

By HAROLD M. SHERMAN





GEORGE ADAMSKI stands beside a painting of the Venusian "flying saucer" pilot he claims to have contacted near Desert Center, Calif , on November 20, 1952

Stockholm made the news once again on November 16, 1946, but no rockets were mentioned. It seems a mysterious explosion in the air over the center of the city knocked people flat in a 100 yard radius.⁴⁹ but Sweden, however, was due to surrender its scepter as the current world leader in experiencing extraordinary aerial phenomena, for Seattle, Washington, U.S.A., half way around the world, was just then trying to explain six mysterious blasts in the air that had recently took place in a 24 hour period.⁵⁰

From that part of the world to the northwest of Seattle came the following report:

"London, Nov. 20 (1946) (AP)--The Moscow radio reported Wednesday that a meteor which resembled 'a white-hot flying cannon ball' was sighted Nov. 12 by the Leningrad Artie institute's polar station at Providence bay, at the northeast tip of Siberia across the Bering strait from Alaska.

'The meteor was observed for twenty-two seconds at a height of twenty-to twenty-five seconds degrees from the horizon,' the report said. 'Its trajectory was almost a straight line. It produced the impression of a white-hot flying cannon ball. Its velocity was relatively low, far below that of falling stars. The meteor was of a reddish-violet color and its huge tail was light blue.'

'The radio description, particularly as to velocity, coincided to some degree with that of meteor-like objects sighted above Scandinavian countries in recent months.' 51.

Some time later, January 6, 1947, those strange, low swooping meteors returned to the U.S.:

"...a fiery ball giving off weird flashes of light, passed over southern California and out to sea. Visible from San Diego to Bakersfield --almost 200 miles apart --it resulted in two separate searches for crashed planes.

Coast Guard boats at Santa Monica and Oceanside put out to sea, and in many cities telephone switchboards were jammed as witnesses called police and newspaper offices.

At Malibu it was reported that three ghostly flashes of light appeared after the blazing ball had passed. Two transport pilots in the air at the time stated that the object flashed by at a tremendous speed.

Dr. Clarence H. Clemminshaw of Griffith Observatory said it apparently was "exceptionally large".⁵²

January 6, 1947, found England's Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery in Moscow for a high level visit. Other than Stalin's outspoken mistrust for the recent Anglo-American agreement of a "strandardisation of defense" which the suspicious old fox of the Kremlin made Marshall Montgomery go to great lengths to define, the Russians seemed friendly enough for the moment.

Making a mental survey of the condition of the war ravaged countryside, Marshall Montgomery later reported to his government that the Communists might not be ready for an aggressive move for another 15 to 20 years.⁵³

While the Russians leaders were toasting Marshall Montgomery with vodka in Moscow, the commandant of a Portland military academy came close to being bashed on the noggin by a chunk of "something" that had dropped down out of a clear blue sky along with a number of egg-size hailstones. Oddly, only an area of 15 square feet was affected by this quaser cloudless "weather" phenomenon. The academie's headmaster told a Portland newspaper, the Oregonian, that the strange chunk of dark material that nearly struck him had a jacket of ice and hit with such force it rebounded six feet high. According to an Oregon state

geologist, the unidentified mass was composed of eleven different metals, but that no analysis gave a clue to what it was or where it came from. ^{54.}

It had been a warm clear day, January 4th, when the unusual fall occurred, and it immediately became obvious an airplane might have dropped the ice, but the CAA authorities confirmed the fact that no airplanes had been over the campus area at the right hour of the day. During the short span of days in which investigators examined various theories, the Oregonian did some research on its own. On January 7th, the Oregonian suggested that long range rockets from White Sands testing range in New Mexico might be responsible, adding that the Swedish ghost rocket's landing bases had never been discovered and that there might be a connection. The Commander of White Sands proving grounds ^{then} made an official denial that his installation could have sent aloft a rocket that could have reached Portland. ^{55.}

The Oregonian proved to be well informed and reminded its readers that a man named Charles Fort believed he had discovered proof of unexplained things cruising the earth's atmosphere fifty years before. The Oregonian asked: "...who on earth --or the moon --is upstairs anyway?" ^{56.}

Tiffany Thayer received the Oregonian newsstories on the Portland excitement and savored the brief Fortean acknowledgement, but to expect more would probably be like the optimist that went fishing using whales for bait.

A further U.S. Army Air Force communiqué quickly slapped down any notion the freak occurrence at Portland could be, by stretch of the imagination, connected with the Swedish

ghost rockets. 57

March 22, 1947, a familiar headline returned to the pages of the New York Times. " 'Phantom Bombs' Return To Skies Over Sweden". A sixty-foot, silver torpedo, spurting smoke that persisted long after the thing itself sped out of sight, had been noticed over southern Sweden. The trail of vapor showed that the mysterious rocket had reversed its course, thus displaying intelligent control. 58

Meanwhile, the editor of Amazing Stories lectured its readers in its April issue: "Does it take a fiction magazine like Amazing Stories to stress the importance of not taking these (UFO) 'mysteries' lightly?" 59

The Ghost Rockets had been primarily a European phenomenon within the jurisdiction of British intelligence, and the responsibility of European newsmedia. In the spring of 1947 there occurred a major shift to North America. Curiously, U.S. Air Force intelligence, headquartered at Wright-Patterson Air Force base in Ohio (Air Technical Intelligence Command), seemed to have been caught completely unawares. This fact alone indicates strict security must have limited Ghost Rocket information of official nature to a high level.

According to official records Air Technical Intelligence Command (ATIC) at Wright Field was first introduced to the fact that something very odd was going on in the atmosphere in mid-April, 1947. Official records stated that a weather observer at Richmond, Virginia, spotted an unexplained object speeding

through the air. The observer tracked the UFO using a theodolite and with it was able to obtain accurate speed and height measurements. ^{60.} The complete report of the Richmond case is still classified and not much more is publicly known. After a number of years the fact that "flying saucers" were officially recorded before June 24, 1947 (an important date that will be explained in the next chapter) has been a fact that official sources seem to be inclined to ignore.

Other elements of the shift from Europe to North America was a sudden and massive appearance of UFOs in the skies of the Western Hemisphere, and the discovery of the phenomena by the American newsmen, a recognition that required some especially advantageous conditions that did not occur until the afternoon of June 24th.

Meanwhile, the Russians, the often accused villains in the ghost rocket mystery, had at this time, April, 1947, badly failed in their efforts to achieve anything near what the West feared. The Sanger type long range antipodal rocket glider, had only then come to the attention of Stalin personally. He grasped the significance of the weapon and summoned a conference of his top lieutenants. On a gray overcast afternoon in April, 1947, in Moscow, the leading figures of the Communist empire gathered together in a secret room in the Kremlin. Present at the meeting was Stalin, Molotov, Malenkov, and Beria. Others there also included Stalin's son Vassili, and the Soviet Generals Voznesenski and Voroshilov. The group listened quietly for while to a couple of Russian rocket experts describing the history of the German V-weapon program. The two debriefing officers, Colonel Serov and a Colonel Tokayeff, had begun by discussing the V-2

and its 250 mile range, but Malenkov interrupted with P.237
~~the~~ the comment that Socialism's current chief opponent did not lie at such a conveniently short distance. Stalin hushed Malenkov and asked the military aides to move on to the Sanger rocket that could circumnavigate the globe.

After the lecture Stalin ordered Tokayeff and his son Vassili to travel incognito to Western occupied Germany where Sanger was believed to be living and "persuade" the German scientist to come to the Soviet Union and continue his work on the antipodal missile.

After months of fruitless effort to find Sanger, Vassili and Colonel Tokayeff returned to Moscow emptyhanded. Such was the Russian long range intercontinental missile program in the early summer of 1947. Tokayeff defected to the West a year later in the spring of 1948, giving Anglo-American intelligence an inside look at the Communist missile program and disclosing the existence of the "Sanger rocket meeting". 61.

Meanwhile, Fortean R. DeWitt Miller put together a selection of his Coronet articles for a book titled Forgotten Mysteries in the spring of 1947, telling of ghosts, vanished people, lost cities, sea serpents, ect. Charles Fort rated a single chapter, an abbreviated treatment of reports of "mystery planes" and unexplained lights seen at sea, and Mr. Miller was careful to credit Fort as the man who was the first to dare assert that the planet earth had "guests". 62. Yet the total effect was that the strange Bronx author remained a little honored ^{probably} prophet to be stuck in books like Forgotten Mysteries indefinitely, sandwiched between Nostradamus and the survivors of Lemuria, amid the latest speculation on the Pyramid of Gizeh and sharing the

the stage with the Loch Ness Monster, holding hands with the Abominable Snowman and moving over for the vast stonework of Saosahauman.

Amazing Stories devoted its entire June 1947 issue to the "true" spacemen-subterranean story as related by the magazine's special correspondent, a fellow that claimed somekind of "psychic understanding" of the secret doings of these undetect-
ed alien civilizations. All of this correspondent's articles in the June issue dealt with the antics of the alladged under-ground beings and just why the spacemen were ^{generally} ignored is not known. However, the editor of Amazing got an author-member of the Fortean Society to write a two page spread for inclusion in the June issue which was titled: "Visiters From The Void". The Fortean writer, Vincient Gaddis, penned an accounting of the phantom airplane newspaper clippings gathered by Tiffany Thayer during the 1930s. ^{63.} The editor of Amazing had a 50-50 chance of being right on top of one biggest news stories of the year, yet just about all of the publication's money was rideing on the theme of subterraneans.

Things began warming up early in June when there was some 50 reports of "silvery balls" seen speeding through the ^{skies of} Hungary in eastern Europe. ^{64.} but it was in the United States where real pandemonium was about to break out.

A whole series of sightings were made between May and mid-June, 1947, across the U.S., yet for various reasons the sightings failed to trigger any excitement. Most people believed

^{well}
they [^]seeing secret weapons, but with no definite data they did not go the newspapers and make an issue of their experience.

Over Oklahoma City, May 12th, a private pilot watched as a large circular object sped by at a high rate of speed. ^{65.}

Another unexplained thing was seen maneuvering over Manitow Springs, Colorado, a short time later. ^{66.}

^{unidentified}
Speedy flying objects zipped over Weiser, Idaho, on June 12th, rising and falling as they moved along. ^{67.}

June 14th a pilot on the ground at Bakerfield, California, Richard Rankin, was startled to see nine disc-shaped objects in formation in the sky. He estimated that the round objects were thirty feet across and traveling around 900 miles per hour. ^{68.}

An Air Force pilot sighted six more unidentified flying bodies in the air over Lake Meade, Nevada, on June 21st.

Finally, on June 23, 1947, the local newspaper office in Cedar Rapids, Iowa recieved a telephone call from a gentleman who felt compelled to tell the world he had seen something he believed should be publisized. The phone report mentioned:

"They looked like ten shiny, disc-shaped things, ... (and) were very, very high, fluttering along in a string and soon they vanished toward the north-west... (also) he guessed they might have been traveling five hunderd miles an hour --faster than any plane he had ever seen." ^{69.}

Apparently since the witness was a railroad engineer, the news item failed to cause a national stir (This is UFO expert Frank Edwards' opinion.). ^{70.}

The afternoon of the next day, the 24th, a member of the

Washington State forest service was on fire watch at a lookout tower at Diamond Gap. Diamond Gap is a small settlement near the town of Salmon, Washington, just south of the majestic peak of mount Raineer. The forest service lookout noticed something in the sky which said were: "...flashes in the distance quite high up in the east (they)...seemed to be going in a straight line and made a strange noise, higher pitched than most airplanes make." 71.

¶ Like on previous occasions conditions were not right for a perfect sighting, but from all indications the report from Diamond Gap supported what has become one of most famous UFO reports of all, and one good enough to make the UFO mystery a major news story for 150 the nation's biggest newspapers the following day. 72.

1.) In 1945 the United States Air Force had the now famous think tank organization, the Rand Corporation of Santa Monica, California, created to explore the problem of intercontinental warfare. By 1946 Rand scientists were busy studying the possibilities of utilizing rockets of space traveling capabilities in a military way. The Rand Corporation also had a big role later in the preparation of the anti-UFO report at the end of 1949.

2.) When General Le May boasted about a possible "airrocket" that could soar to 700,000 feet where it might need a "anti-meteor" gun, he was probably referring to the research plane XS-1 which was then under going tests. The XS-1 was essentially a winged, V-2 flown by a pilot. A fascinating thought is that perhaps General Le May believed the XS-1 might be needed to engage the ghost rockets in combat.



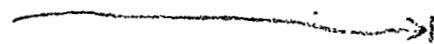
The rocket airplane XS-1 nestling under the wing of a B-29 bomber at Muroc Air Base, California. In order to prolong flying time, the XS-1 was carried aloft by the B-29 so that no fuel would be needed for initial take off
(U S Air Force Photo)

Pandemonium

On
~~About 2 p.m.~~ June 24, 1947, a single engine Callair was executing a 180 degree turn 9,200 feet over the small town of Mineral, Washington. The pilot, Kenneth Arnold, scrutinized the rugged terrain below for the wreckage of a missing C-46. His plane's airspeed was ¹⁰⁵~~115~~ miles per hour. *1. The time was 2:59 p.m.*

Arnold came out of his turn and set ^{his} plane on an eastern heading. A few moments later something strange happened:

"The first thing I noticed was a series of flashes in my eyes as if a mirror was reflecting sunlight at me," he said, "I saw the flashes were coming from a series of objects that were traveling incredibly fast. They were silvery and shiny and seemed to be shaped like a pie plate." "2.

Banking his plane, Arnold slid back 

his side window so he could get an unobstructed view. He saw an echelon of silvery objects flying along following the snow blanketed ridge of the Cascade range. The Callair helmsman was unable to see any tails on the strange "aircraft" and ^{he} thought that very peculiar. "3.

Arnold said:

"I counted nine of them as they disappeared behind the peak of Mount Ranier. Their speed was apparently so great I decided to clock them. I took out my watch and checked off one minute and 42 seconds from the time they passed Mount Ranier until they reached the peak of Mount Adams...All told the objects remained in view slightly less than two minutes from the time I first noticed them." "4.

A fast calculation of the speed using the peaks of Mount Rainer and Mount Adams gave an answer of 1,200 miles per hour, far above contemporary technological achievements.

Looking like the shiny flickering of metallic flakes, the mysterious "aircraft" faded from sight as they moved beyond Mount Adams to the south almost 50 miles away.⁵

The Chicago Daily Tribune's account of the incident added the following:

"He (Arnold) said he calculated the length of the air train at five miles by flying over a mountain ridge behind which he had seen the lead object emerge about the time the tail object disappeared. This ridge proved to be five miles long... 'I am sure they were separate units,' he (Arnold) said, 'because they weaved in flight like a tail of a kite'." ⁶

After the objects disappeared from view, Arnold set his course for his next stop at Yakima, Washington. ^{There} He talked with some the airport personnel ^{upon his arrival,} there but he could learn nothing new about what he had seen.

Arnold continued on his way home to Boise, taking off for his last stop at Pendleton, Oregon. At Pendleton the weather was clear with some rain over the mountains to the east. At the city airport preparations were being made to welcome a 60 plane air fleet, ~~due the following morning~~, ^{which was due the next morning} a tri-state air tour to promote private aviation by business concerns. Someone at the Yakima airport had phoned ahead of Arnold to notify Pendleton airport, overcrowded with extra ground personnel, that if they wanted to hear ^{about} a strange new "aircraft" to check with the pilot of the Callair due to land there within the hour. When Arnold landed he was greeted by a large crowd. Everyone wanted to hear the story about the "tailless jets".

While the physical description of the objects was strange, interest was focused on the odd "jets" speed. Calculations made by Arnold were rechecked and after much discussion an answer of 1,200 miles per hour seemed inescapable.

The Portland Oregon Journal carried the following UP account of Arnold's discussion with the other pilots at Pendleton airport:

"Some of the pilots thought it over and said it was possible (said Arnold). Some of them guessed that I had seen some secret guided missiles. People began asking me if I thought they were missiles sent over the North Pole (Russian Sanger rockets?).

"When I saw them (Arnold continued), weaving and ducking in and out as they came south not more than 500 feet over the plateau. They looked like they were rocking. I looked for the tails but I realized they didn't have any. They were half-moon shaped, oval in front and convex in the rear.... There were no bulges or cowings. They looked like a big flat disk. They were larger than the ordinary jet plane, but slightly smaller than a DC-4, if you don't count the rear fuselage." 7.

ARE THEY JET PROPELLED?

6/28/47

Woodland Man Sights Disks at Close Range

The far-famed "flying objects" were seen at close hand over Woodland, Wash., Friday afternoon.

In two groups, numbering either 9 or 10 in all, and soaring between 1000 and 2000 feet, they skimmed silently as clouds from north to south—making a south-easterly turn as they disappeared.

There was no sound, no vapor trail, only the very thin pie-plate affairs now reported as having been seen in several Western states, which as they "undulated" in the air flashed the rays of the sun like the reflection from mirrors.

REPORT TELEPHONED

This is the report, telephoned in a matter-of-fact tone to The Journal late Friday by Clyde Homan, who lives in Woodland and is manager of Tulips, Inc., a bulb-growing property about two miles south of that city in Southwestern Washington.

Homan said the objects also were seen by the farm foreman who was in a warehouse but ran to the door as Homan called and glimpsed them just as they were disappearing in the southeast.

"I was sitting at my desk in the office when a bright flash came in the window," Homan reported. "I looked up at the sky and saw these things in two groups pretty close together. I didn't get an exact count—there were four or five in the first bunch and the same number in the second, which was behind the first some 400 or 500 yards.

"I couldn't see shape much either because they were very

bright, reflecting the sun like from metal—not glass mirrors—and the flash was so bright I couldn't make out the shape behind it.

"They were going fast, but not any 1200 miles an hour I'd say about twice as fast as an ordinary airliner, maybe 600 miles an hour. There was no particular formation except that they were bunched.

"The peculiar thing was the way they moved along—tilting back and forth, tipping up and down undulating—and every time they reached the right reflection angle, the flashes came."

Homan ventured the opinion the objects might have been the new type of tailless aircraft known as flying wings.

DAY WAS CLOUDY

Homan was reminded that the day was mostly cloudy and he replied, "It was partly cloudy here with sunshine occasionally through the clouds. There were 'holes' of blue sky. And anyway, the clouds were high and these things weren't over 1000 to 2000 feet up and were flying under the clouds.

"And there wasn't a sound, not a trace of vapor trail—just these things sailing along. As soon as I saw them, I ran to the warehouse and called the foreman, and he got to the door just in time to see them. They came over the hill back of us here from the north and they were following straight along the Pacific highway. Just south of here they veered off sharply to the southeast.

"Shape? Very flat, very, very thin, particularly when you saw

them on edge as they were banking and very bright."

Homan said he had flown many times, feels he knows pretty well the speed of planes, and is confident these "objects" were going just about twice as fast as airliners and judged them to be jet-propelled but he was puzzled by absence of the vapor trail.

"And I am not too creditable and I have good eyesight and I know what I saw this afternoon," he said in conclusion. "I'm surprised you don't have reports from others of having seen them today."

Meanwhile other reports of the flying saucers continue to come in.

United Press reports that Charles Kastl, railroad engineer of Joliet, Ill., said he spotted "about nine" of the things as he walked along a highway at 1:50 p. m. Central standard time Tuesday. If these are the same ones seen by Kenneth Arnold, Boise it means they must have covered the distance from Seattle to Chicago—about 2000 miles—in 50 minutes.

FLIPPED TOGETHER

Kastl said he could see no connecting link between them but they acted as though the leading disk had a motor in it to power the others because when it flipped the others would follow. When it would right itself, the others would right themselves.

Archie Edes of Wenatchee said he saw one explode about 200 feet from the ground near Moses lake last Friday night. He said there was no blinding flash but a great shower of sparks and flames seemed to hurtle to the ground.

Finally Arnold left the crowd at the airport to go to his hotel and get some rest, temporarily satisfied that the erratic formation of fluttering, dipping, pie-shaped objects must have been a test of Uncle Sam's latest ~~new~~ secret missile. Like the other airmen, it was the ^{objects high} speed that impressed ^{Arnold} him. Nothing, Arnold surmised, would have survived the violent movements of the objects as they skipped along, therefore the things must have been some kind of radio controlled missile. 8.

The following morning every plane of the air fleet had arrived at Pendleton municipal airport by 9 o'clock and all of the fleet's air personnel convened in the local VFW hall for breakfast. The pilots and mechanics were in jovial spirits, and when the main speaker rose to give his address, he was set upon by some men in white coats and strapped in a straitjacket while the audience howled with laughter. The mystery missiles had already been forgotten.

~~When.~~

Arnold didn't attend the ~~the~~ good humored gathering, but fate would have him in that same VFW hall twenty-three days later giving a talk himself, saying some incredible things, and there would be no straitjackets or laughter.

The Boise flyer was up early on 25th and decided to go downtown. A gentleman who said he was ^{from} a city called Ukiah stopped Arnold in the street and brought up the subject of the mystery "mystery" missiles. The stranger claimed that he seen a similar formation over his home in Ukiah, the day before, about the same time Arnold had seen this formation near Mount Rainer. The man added that the things would weave and threaten to break out of alignment as they sped along. 9.

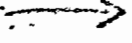
The encounter with a man who claimed to have seen the same thing as he, emboldened Arnold. Before leaving for Bosie, Arnold gathered together his courage and went over to the office of the East Oregonian, Pendleton's only newspaper. It was noon time as Arnold timidly walked into the East Oregonian building and asked to talk to someone in the news department. Nolan Skiff, who wrote the "End of the Week" column, invited the flyer to have a chair by his desk. Mr. Skiff listened as Arnold slowly began describe what had happened the 24th over the Cascades. At first Mr. Skiff thought Arnold might be a kook, but as the flyer's story unfolded the sincerity with which it was told quickly overcame any doubts about Arnold's honesty. Arnold freely admitted it was a fantastic story, yet he said he had to believe his own eyes. The "missiles" traveled, Arnold remarked, like a flat rock bouncing along the surface of water, a rising and falling motion(undulatory flight). Another staff member, Bill Bequette, had been taking down Arnold's story and soon believed it might have national interest. The East Oregonian was hooked up with the newswire of Associated Press so Bequette sent a short message out on teletype, pausing at the point which called for a name for the phenomenon. Thinking of the motion of objects Bequette spelled out "flying saucers".^{10.}

Hundreds of newspapers picked up the Arnold flying saucer story and carried it on the lower half of their front pages. Immediately dozens of persons contacted the press to tell of similar sightings made by them that same day or earlier in the month. People said they they had been afraid to say some-

thing, or had thought nothing of it believing the objects were government devices.

Kenneth Arnold's place in history is due to four factors. First, as a pilot he was familiar with aircraft and had instant doubts whether ^{or not} the objects were ordinary aircraft. Second, Arnold was flying ^{at} 9,000 feet ~~in the air~~ ^{he} when he witnessed the objects moving through the air along the Cascade range. This high vantage point ^{enabled} him to get a prolonged look at the strange formation. A third factor was that Arnold's plane had been ^{almost} directly over the town of Mineral, Washington, and that the objects passed between two very prominent reference points, ~~which were~~ Mount Rainier and Mount Adams. A little quick thinking and a handy timepiece gave Arnold something important. This was information that was not purely subjective in nature: a computed speed of ^{at least} 1,200 miles per hour. Armed with his amazing calculation Arnold was ready for the fourth factor, which was that the flyer found the courage to tell his story to the newspapers and risk ridicule in a face-to-face interview.

Reaction to the news story about some "flying saucers" was ^{not} unfavorable for the first few days. And a Pentagon spokesman even responded within a matter of hours on the Arnold report by commenting that only a V-2 rocket could achieve 1,200 miles per hour. ^{17.} The fact that the Pentagon chose not to ignore what seemed to be a sea serpent type news story was ^{even a} point in the story's favor.

Soon  a flood of reports hit the newswires and the public had to begin to take sides on the issue.

← When similar things had managed to capture public attention before, they were ^{more or less given} names of explainable devices: "airships", "mystery planes", "German secret weapons", and "ghost rockets" or "foo fighters". But now, in June, 1947, the eye catching expression: "flying saucers" had → been tacked on the aerial mystery. The name drew attention and kept the door open to a wide range of interpretations.

~~now knew there was a real riddle to solve.~~ Reaction ranged from intelligent skepticism to belief that approached panic.

Arnold hung around the East Oregonian office until June 27th, watching the teletype clatter away on dozens and dozens of flying disk sightings, but the information he patiently waited for never appeared. He just wanted to know what the objects were, but no satisfactory answer was ever proposed.

A Portland newspaper reporter phoned Arnold in Pendleton and asked if the saucers had not been reflections within the cockpit, or an illusion created by the glare off the snow on slopes of Mount Rainier. The Bosie flyer, a little upset, repeated his story in detail, saying he wasn't trying to gain notoriety, just an answer to something that looked absolutely real, and that he could hardly believe it had happened himself. 12.

The newspaper, the Portland Oregonian, printed a story on the telephone interview which included Arnold's remarks on some exasperating results of the increasing excitement:

" (Arnold)...said a preacher called him from Texas and informed him that the strange objects Arnold claimed to have seen batting through the ozone actually were harbingers of doomsday.

Arnold said he didn't get the preacher's name during their phone conversation, but the minister said he was getting his flock 'ready for the end

of this world'.

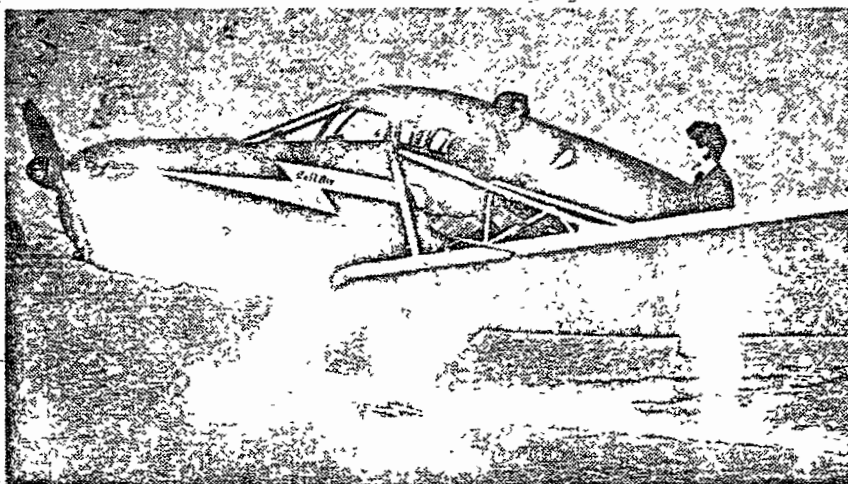
That was unnerving, according to Arnold, but it wasn't half as disconcerting as the episode in a Pendleton cafe.

Arnold said a woman rushed in, took one look at him and then dashed out shrieking, 'There's the man who saw the men from Mars,' She rushed out of the eating place 'sobbing that she would have to do something for the children,' Arnold added with a sudder." 13.

Arnold later went to a Pendleton photography shop and purchased a \$150 movie camera. He told Bill Bequette of the East Oregonian that if any of those baffling saucers dared show themselves again he would at least catch them on film. With that Arnold finally left Pendleton for his home at Bosie. After Arnold had left, the East Oregonian editorialized on the nation wide uproar and said that whatever the objects were, they had better be American. 14.

It wasn't long before persons came forward to give Arnold's story support from experiences of their own, that predated the June 24th episode by a considerable length of time. The Oregon Daily Journal, on June 27, 1947, printed the following: "Lloyd Kenyon, 26, of 6934 SE 45th Avenue, ...a former shipfitter in the navy, reported he first saw the disks while in the Russell islands (in the Pacific) in 1943. He was aboard a ship at the time and said several others saw the objects traveling at an unbelievable speed.... (Overseas I saw them only at night... 'he reported it to intelligence officers who contended the objects were meteors or falling stars. 'but (Kenyon said) they certainly looked as though they might be some kind of plane." 15.

If the existence of unexplained objects flying in the atmosphere was difficult to accept, and physical evidence seemingly impossible to obtain, during 1947 and the years following, the problem was not a new one since the Foo Fighters and Ghost Rockets had presented similar ^{difficulties} problems. Nevertheless, there ^{would} appear perceptive investigators that would persist in the face of a number of obstacles: the elusiveness of concrete data, non-cooperation from official authorities, the ridicule of friends, and the lure of an easy dollar by the sacrifice of fact for entertaining fiction. The driving force behind those honestly concerned with the unknown aerial objects problem was the fact that good reports continued to come in from highly qualified witnesses, and also the fact, not always apparent due to the incomplete gathering of information, that many ^{reports} ~~reports~~ shared similar characteristics.



Kenneth and Mrs. Arnold beside the Callair, three-place plane used on his historic "saucer" flight.

Center for UFO Studies
P. O. Box 11
Northfield, IL

One important example of a similar characteristic was the following motorist's sighting.

The Associated Press reported on June 27th:

"Still another version this time of a night flight was reported by Archie Edes of Wenatchee (Washington), while driving on the Moses Lake highway last Friday night with his father and family. Edes said he saw a speeding object 'descending in a long slant ...it looked like a long oval blue-white flame.'

'As we watched, it neared the ground and when it was about 200 feet high it exploded. There was no blinding flash, but there were great showers of sparks and piles of flame seemed to hurtle to the ground,' he said." /6.

This Moses Lake report seemed to match the sightings of objects exploding and disintegrating over Sweden, either high in the air or low over bodies of water.

The lack of physical evidence has always been a problem to those who champion the cause the physical existence of the saucers, thus a stir was caused when alleged pieces of a flying disc were eventually recovered some years after 1947 and subjected to exhaustive spectrographic analysis. The examination disclosed that the fragments were almost pure magnesium. The background on how the fragments were obtained and a detailed, step-by-step, description of the laboratory tests, were given in a book published in 1962, authored by Coral Lorenzen. While the book gives principle attention to the examination of mysterious samples, the description of the fragments discovery is also interesting.

What has become known as the Ubatuba episode tells of a person who claimed he saw a small, grey-colored, platter

speeding out of sky on a downward course. The disc then suddenly burst in a sparkling display a few dozen feet in air over a river near Ubatuba, Brazil. Most the fragments were consumed by fire before they fell very far, but a few were rescued when they reached, and ^{were} apparently cooled by, the shallow waters of the river. ^{17.} The interesting resemblance of the forementioned case to the ghost rocket reports and the little known Moses Lake sighting cannot be ignored.

Returning to a recounting of the turbulent year of 1947, we find that the newspapers of the time offered a variety of solutions to the flying saucer riddle: persistent vision, meteors, jet plane exhausts seen at night, and even aluminum wafers from bottle caps. ^{18.}

One item found in the newspapers was an important clue. A prospector had returned to civilization after wandering the mountains in search of gold to tell the press a now familiar tale of seeing silver discs playing about in the sky. The prospector added, however, the interesting comment that the compass needle on the instrument he always carried twitched wildly during the object's presence in the sky overhead. ^{19.}

From White Sands, New Mexico, came a carefully worded, but not very convincing, explanation of the situation, apparently an attempt to calm down the public with some magic words about "astronomical phenomena" that, back in the year 1946, had

helped cool off the heated ghost rocket controversy:

"El Paso, Texas, June 28 --(UP) Lt. Col. Harold R. Turner, commander of White Sands proving grounds, said today the puzzling objects 'sighted in the sky in New Mexico were evidently meteorites.

'They appear much larger and apparently are coming closer to earth than usual', he said.

Investigations of two reports of falling bodies, one in Tularosa and another near Engle, N.M., were made by Colonel Turner today.

Colonel Turner said such a meteorite could give the appearance of a shiny flying disk because of reflection of the sun's rays.

He said the meteorite could easily cause the illusion of being quite near and traveling slowly, while actually it is probably many miles away and traveling at a high rate of speed."

Yet on the same day Colonel Turner's statement appeared in print the following happened:"...an Air Force pilot in a F-51 was flying near Lake Meade, Nevada, when he saw a formation of five or six circular objects off his right wing. This was about three-fifteen in the afternoon(June 28th)."

Within six hours, more military men were witnesses to strange flying objects, lights, or whatever: "...at nine-twenty(June 28th), four Air Force officers, two [^]pi lots, and two intelligence officers from Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama, saw a bright light traveling across the sky. It was first seen just above the horizon, and as it traveled toward the observers it 'zigagged,' with bursts of high speed. When it was directly overhead it made a sharp 90-degree turn and was lost from view as it traveled south." 20

On the 30th, a newspaper in Wyoming ran an item written by a local man which discussed his sighting of strange globes in air over Germany during the war. 21.

UFO sightings became fewer and fewer ^{until} ~~by~~ July 2nd ^{when} ~~and~~ some thought the flying saucer fad had burned itself out, but the United Press noted that on July 3rd flying object reports were suddenly on the increase once again. 23.

To compound the Pentagon's headaches, yet another plane, a C-54,
  vanished without a trace off Florida.

July 3rd, at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, a farmer's gaze was attracted to a bright light in the sky. He looked in the direction of the glare and saw something that closely resembled a ghost rocket:

"The light appeared to come from the rear of a black projectile whose shape resembled that of a rocket, or wingless plane. The flame behind this black object was blinding white. Behind this white flame there trailed a long plume of smoke, in which could be seen occasional 'puffs, which looked like smoke rings. The smoke trail appeared to be two miles long. The object was estimated to be at an altitude of 10,000 feet, and was traveling in an easterly direction at tremendous speed. It was in view for 15 seconds." 22

While the New York Herald-Tribune chose to denounce the "saucer craze" as due to people suffering from delusions, out of Fayetteville, Ark., came the remarkable report that cows and horses were ^{also} victims of the delusions:

" 'The animals sure get up and go when they see these things,' Henry Seay, who lives two miles north of here, reported.

Seay, who said he had seen six of the disks Friday night and again just before dark Saturday night, described them as 'yellow, about the size of pancakes, and whirling around.' He was driving cows and horses toward his farm at the time, he said, and the stock became frightened." 24.

The Fourth of July, 1947, was probably the biggest day for UFOs that year:

The center of activity was the Portland, Oregon, area. At 11:00 A.M. a carload of people driving near Redmond saw four disk-shaped objects streaking past Mount Jefferson. At 1:05 P.M. a policeman was in the parking lot behind the Portland City Police Headquarters when he noticed some pigeons suddenly began to flutter around as if they were scared. He looked up and saw five large disk-shaped objects, two going south and three east. They were traveling at a high rate of speed and seemed to be oscillating about their lateral axis. Minutes later two other policemen, both ex-pilots, reported three of the same things flying in trail. Before long the harbor patrol called into headquarters. A crew of four patrolmen had seen three to six of the disks, 'shaped like chrome hub caps,' traveling very fast. They oscillated as they

flew. Then the citizens of Portland began to see them. A man saw one going east and two going north. At four-thirty a woman called in and said she had just seen one that looked like 'a new dime flipping around.' Another man reported two, one going southeast, one northwest. In Vancouver, Washington, sheriff's deputies saw twenty to thirty."²⁵

At Hauser Lake, Idaho, 200 persons attending a ball game watched a disc circling in sky for 30 minutes before it shot straight up out of sight. And, according to United Press, Mexicans and phoned their national defense ministry to report discs in the sky over their country, but a ministry spokesman put an abrupt end to that by simply answering inquiries to the effect that he just didn't believe in the things.²⁶

A science writer for the one of the newsservices tended to agree with the Mexican defense ministry official and wrote a long article which tried to blame the discs on light reflections, but a New York psychiatrist countered with an essay which stated the number of "mental mistakes" were too massive to be physiological. Besides that, one newspapers man in Tennessee swore that he had seen some unexplained flying discs back in 1945, long before the recent flap. He told the press that the objects he saw in 1945 looked:"...a bright aluminum color and were going at terrific speed." The journalist stated that he had not called attention to what he had seen because he thought the objects were connected with the highly secret activity at nearby Oak Ridge.²⁷

Also, on July 4th, a forest ranger at the a lookout tower north of Fort Ross, California, observed something odd about 10 miles off the coast. It looked to him to be a burning ship which seemed to sink after 20 minutes. The coast guard searched

the whole area thoughly with no results. A check showed that no ships were suppose to have been in the area at the time of the sighting, nor was any vessel reported missing. The ranger, Earl Halle, nevertheless, stuck to his story of seeing a ship afire on the horizon.^{28.}

It must be noted here that ranger Halle's sighting is not unique. UFOs emitting intense crimson light have been mistaken for burning ships before, when the objects were apparently resting on the surface of the ocean or just above it. There are also cases of glowing and smoking "aircraft" plunging into the sea which were possibly UFOs.

Another July 4th report, datelined San Diego, also mentions the ocean:

"Two navy chief petty officers today reported they saw three 'flying disks' approach the coast in formation here yesterday (the 4th), circle and disappear at sea.

Robert L. Jackson and William Baker, the navy men, said the disks, larger than an average size airplane, looked like saucers and gleamed in the sun."²⁹

From Twin Falls, Idaho, came the following story complied by United Press:

"Three groups of 'flying disks' were seen by sixty picnickers at Twin Falls City park within twenty minutes late Friday (July 4th), A.E. Mitchell of Goose Creek, Texas, reported Saturday.

Mitchell, visiting in Twin Falls, said that a formation of seven mysterious objects was seen about 2:50 p.m. by seven persons.

He said that ten minutes later thirty picnickers saw another group of nine or ten discs whirling through the air. At 3:10 p.m. Mitchell said that a third 'flight' of eighteen 'flying saucers' were seen by sixty persons who had been scanning the sky after the first two flights.

Mitchell said that the group of seven was in V-formation but the other two groups were circling and diving in loose formation."

The United Press notified the nation that the U.S. Army had started a probe into the flying object mystery on Thursday, July 3rd, and that the naval observatory at Washington D.C. had, on July 5th, concluded: "...unofficially Saturday that the mysterious 'flying saucers' were not at least, astronomical phenomena."³¹ Thus it seemed the newest outbreak of UFO activity would not receive a brush off like that given the ghost rockets.

Dr. H.H. Nininger, director of the American Meteorite museum at Winslow, Arizona, made a very logical observation which all but removed officialdom's favorite explanation the same day (July 5th), and also calls attention to the fact that the 1947 UFO flap was a daytime phenomenon: "He pointed out...that if as many meteors as have been reported were seen in the daytime, the sky would be filled with them at night, when they are more visible".³²

Probably the most dramatic conversion from sceptic to believer was the experience of Captain E.J. Smith, a story that made nearly every major newspaper.

As early as June 26th Captain Smith, a pilot for United Air Lines, had been approached by reporters and asked his opinion on the flying saucers being seen over the northwest, an area where he regularly flew airliners. He told reporters: "I've never seen anything like that (Arnold's flying saucers) and the boys (other pilots) say they haven't either... what that other fellow probably saw was the reflection of his own instrument panel." ³³

On the evening of July 4th, Captain Smith was walking up the ramp to board his airliner for a flight from Boise to Seattle when someone mentioned the massive wave of saucer sightings that had taken place all day. Captain Smith joked: "I'll believe in those discs when I see them." ³⁴

The airliner lifted off and turned toward Seattle. As Captain Smith remembers it, the control tower at Boise bid him farewell by: "joshingly warning us to be on the lookout for 'flying saucers'."

Captain Smith told a representative of United Press what happened then:

"My co-pilot, Ralph Stevens, also of Seattle, was in control shortly after we got into the air. Suddenly he switched on the landing lights. He said he thought he saw an aircraft approaching us head-on."

7-200

I noticed the object -or objects -then for the first time. We saw four or 'five 'somethings.' One was larger than the rest and, for the most part, kept off to the right of the other three or four similar, but smaller objects.

Since we were flying northwest -roughly into the sunset -we saw whatever they were in at least partial light. We saw them clearly. We followed them in a northwesterly direction for about 45 miles.

Then I called the attendant at the Ontario, Ore., radio tower, giving an approximate location and course for the objects. The attendant acknowledged our call, went outside to look, but was unable to see anything like we described.

Finally the objects disappeared in a burst of speed. We were unable to tell whether they outsped us or disintegrated.

We were never able to catch them in our DC-3. Our air speed at the time was 185 mph.

Miss(Marty) Morrow, our stewardess, verified what we had seen.

Because we were following the objects at roughly the same altitude, we can't say anything about their shape except that they were thin and were smooth on the bottom and rough appearing on the top.

But, whatever they were, they were not another aircraft, nor were they smoke or clouds.

Our plane had eight passengers aboard, but because the objects were mostly dead ahead of us and off the bow, they were unable to see them."35.

The saucer flap of 1947 had many firsts, one of which was the sighting of a large disc-shaped craft with a "mast", a description that resembled the images in the later famous Trent photographs. Because of the unusually good qualifications of the witness, Tiffany Thayer included the following sighting report in its entirety in the pages of Doubt. Crediting the Science Editor of Pathfinder magazine, John Conly, for the information, Thayer passed on to Doubt's readers this account:

"La Bous is a commercial artist, a person trained to use his eyes. He had spend eight of the previous nine years watching airplanes and then drawing them as visual education artist of the Civil Aeronautics Administration. He was on a bus(11:45 a.m., July 5, 1947) and saw a four-motored bomber in the sky. He has 20-20 plus-plus vision and can recognize any convention aircraft as far away as he can discern it. Habit and training caused him to identify the plane's model and estimate its distance. As he shifted his vision, glint as from 'a mirror in the sun' hit him in the eye. He focused on the object, expecting to see another plane. Instead he saw a shiny, disk-shaped object -'way off over Bethesda(Md.).

He observed it for two minutes, estimated its distance as between 10,000 and 15,000 feet, its size, about the same as that of the bomber. It was moving, but not at a speed which would be surprising in a military aircraft. It heeled over, seemed to have a

projection, like a short mast, rising from its top axis. La Bous said the disc was travelling 'the wrong way'. It was not slicing through the air like a scaled plate, but mashing through it, like a kite drawn at a run. He said it seemed to him to be whirling. He was sure of this but he didn't know why." 36

From Dayton, Ohio, at this time, came the following news item:

"German scientists shook their heads in wonderment today over reports of mysterious 'flying saucers' skittering thru the skies over a dozen states.

A spokesman said the scientists, many of them experts from the Nazis' most carefully guarded experimental laboratories, say they never heard of anything from the past, present or future answering the description.

Guided missile experts here also professed ignorance." 37.

Yet in spite of the above disavowals, the public imagination was dry tinder awaiting only a sizeable spark to set it aflame. One such spark came on the afternoon of July 4th in the form of a letter.

The Los Angeles Examiner

note on
I received a crudely written letter, July 4th that alleged the flying saucers were newly invented Russian atom powered planes, aircraft that left radio-active clouds in their wake. The writer of the letter claimed that the information came from Russian crewmen of a Soviet tanker that had visited Los Angeles harbor a few days before.

The Examiner showed the letter to a well known nuclear physicist who said the idea was: "...not entirely nonsense." 38.

The reaction of the physicist prompted the Examiner to publish the story and to contact the FBI.

The Russian Vice Consul in Los Angeles, Eugene Tunantzev, replied to the charge immediately:

" 'Russia respects the sovereignty of all governments and by no stretch of the imagination would it use another country for a proving ground....Russia has plenty of territory of its own for any scientific experimentation.' " 39.

United Press had the following to add to Tunantzev's statement:

"High-ranking U.S. Army officers agreed with Tunantzev. They discounted theories that the flying discs might be secret weapons....They said it was significant that none of the discs had yet registered on army radar." 40.

But Tunantzev's assurances failed to smooth things over. The big wave of UFO sightings had hit the West Coast the same day (the 4th) and the first indications of panic took place. The most vulnerable point was Hawaii with memories of Pearl Harbor still very much alive in the minds of those living there. The news from Hawaii was ignored for very little of the excitement that began to sweep through the islands appeared in newspapers on the mainland. The Denver (Colorado) Post however, took the initiative during the July 4th holiday and placed phone calls to different areas of the nation to learn what was going on. In Hawaii, the Post found out that: "...there were wild rumors that the United States was at war with Russia, and that the Soviet was sending the devices over the country by way of the north pole." 41.

The rumors may well have been triggered by military officer, for Kenneth Arnold's "flying saucers" had been spotted coming from the direction of the arctic and the reported motion of the odd disc-like craft resembled that which one might expect from a long range, Sanger type, rocket. In Washington this must have caused a stir for within a short time the press was notified that certain steps had been taken. The Associated Press told the nation that on July 6th: "The Army Air Force alerted jet and conventional fighter planes on the Pacific Coast...in the hopes of chasing and explaining the mystery of the 'flying saucers' which in 12 days has challenged the entire country." It was emphasized that the primary mission of the alert was the identification of the phenomenon, but the warplanes were also armed with live ammunition according to official sources.

General Carl Spaatz, Army Air Force Commandant, rushed to the Pacific Northwest, while a Pentagon spokesman insisted that: "...he (Spaatz) had not gone there to investigate (the saucers), but merely to make a speech at Seattle and for an airfield inspection at Tacoma." 43.

On the 6th of July, a widely publized incident occurred at Acampo, Calif. The United Press reported: "Residents of Acampo...thought for sure they were being attacked by flying saucers before dawn Sunday when they heard a roar, saw a glow in the sky -and then all the lights went out...(witnesses said)the noise was 'like a four-motored bomber with its props feathered for a take off.' Looking toward the sky, (witnesses)saw the glow, as all power in the community went off." 14

It would prove to be of some value to pause and reflect on some other material that came to the attention of Firtany Thayer. Thayer wrote in ~~the~~ Doubt:

"In Houston, Texas, Norman Hargrave was having trouble with a reporter from the (Houston) Chronicle, or vice versa. On July 6, as was first stated, Hargrave found an 'aluminim' disk, twenty inches thick, bearing these words: 'NON-EXPLOSIVE ...Military secret of the United States of America, Army Air Forces M4339658. Anyone damaging or revealing description or whereabouts of this missile subject to preecution by the U.S. Government. Call collect at once, LD 446, Army Air Forces Depot, Spokane, Washington.'

Having revealed so much, according to the Chronicle, the man changed his story next day, saying it had been a joke." 15

The above report must have been forgotten after the confusion of the July, 1947, flap. In March of 1950 when the U.S. was again experiencing a big UFO wave, the journalist and radio commentator Henry J. TAYOR came out with his "The 'Flying Saucer' Is Good News" story which turned into something of a fiasco even though it did have a calming effect on public excitement. Mr. TAYOR maintained that the flying saucers were American secret weapons and proof of this was a saucer that had alledgedly been found in Galveston, Texas. According to TAYOR the disc had the following stenciled on it:

"MILITARY SECRET OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AIR FORCES
(and a number)

ANYONE DAMAGING OR REVEALING DESCRIPTION OR WHEREABOUTS OF
THIS MISSILE IS SUBJECT TO PROSECUTION BY THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT. CALL COLLECT AT ONCE (then a telephone number, and
the address of a U.S. Air Base)

NON-EXPLOSIVE" 16

TAYOR's claim gained quick national attention helped considerably by a three page spread in the Reader's Digest. After a week or two, TAYOR's "Good News" tale was discredited, but the yarn didn't seem

to hurt Mr. Thayer as later on he was named U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland. One might alledge that the U.S. secret weapon story was a plant by a "silence group" within the government to head off public panic. And one might suggest that the Hargrave hoax on July 6, 1947, may have also have been a plant that was retracted so it could be used later.

On July 4th the Denver Post placed a ~~Call~~ TO David E. Lilienthal, head of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, to ask if the flying discs had anything to do with government atomic projects, which he firmly denied, adding that he: "...was anxious to know if any of them had 'fallen to the ground.'" 48

Just as the disk mystery threaten to create panic, a conference was called at Los Alamos, New Mexico. The Denver Post learned of the gathering because of its special relationship with a Dr. Roberts. On July 6th the Post printed:

"One puzzling aspect of the nationally watched enigma of the heavens was a meeting in New Mexico of Los Alamos officials and Dr. Walter Orr Roberts, superintendent of the high altitude observatory of Harvard and Colorado universities at Climax, Colo. A telephone call to Los Alamos and White Sands, N.M. failed to locate Roberts or the officials with him. Roberts is a regular contributor to the Denver Post." 49

By a coincidence on the following day, July 7th, when the Hargrave secret weapon story was withdrawn, a flurry of conforiting comments appeared in the press.

General Irving O. Schaefer, commanding officier of Colorado's military forces, for example, admitted that fighter planes of the National Guard were on standby, ready to take off and intercept the flying discs at a moment's notice, but he: "...cautioned agaainst any 'mass hysteria'." 50

Dr. Newton Smith, of the National Bureau of Standards, was quoted by the Associated Press saying: "It's like those Loch Ness monster stories --once the report gets around that someone said they saw something a lot of people think they see it too."

July 9th three scientists scolded the American public by saying they should: "calm down". One sientist, a doctor of mental and nervous diseases, blamed the flying disc visions on illusions, while another expect, a human behavior specialist, said persons were, seeing spots

in front of their eyes. A third scientist, a famous astronomer and one of the men who helped create the atom bomb, blamed the saucers on "group hysteria".⁵²

However, when things did quiet down, it was due more to the fact that UFO activity seems to peak in the mid summer and taper off with the approach of the Fall, a fact repeatedly confirmed by statistics in the years since 1947. Yet there may have been an official effort to blackout information on the discs as early as July 7th. Perhaps the meeting in Los Alamos had something to do with implementing such a scheme of censorship. If certain scientists knew more about the UFO mystery, having investigated the ghost rockets in 1946, than the generals in the Pentagon, then it would seem the June-July UFO flap of 1947 was a period of difficult policy adjustment between the U.S. military and the government civilian scientists.

By July 8th the official communique out of Washington sounded like those later issued during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s:

"The army air and ground forces announced that they were investigating the reported clouds=hopping discs with an open mind. But privately, high-ranking army officers said they believed the saucers were a hoax and that some persons were victims of hysteria."⁵³

Edward Ruppelt himself admitted that there can be a big difference between official communiques and what was actually happening behind the scenes:

"By the end of July 1947 the UFO security lid was down tight. The few members of the press who did inquire about what the Air Force was doing got the same treatment that you would get today if you inquired about the number of thermo-nuclear weapons stock-piled in the U.S.'s atomic arsenal. No one, outside of a few high-ranking officers in the Pentagon, knew what the people in the barbed-wired enclosed Quonset huts that the Air Technical Intelligence Center were thinking or doing."⁵⁴

^{seen}
The saucers visited California's great central valley of 1896 ^{aviation} fame. An official of California's Department of Agriculture, a Dr. Carr, and his wife, were in Sacramento on July 7th when two of the flying disks appeared high in the sky coming out of the

west. Dr. Carr grapped a pair of 12 power field glasses and watched as the disks sped to a point over the center of the city. When the objects were directly over ~~the~~ downtown, one of them flipped up on edge and made a turn north, while the other continued on a straight course and quickly disappeared to the east. 55.

The experience of Dr. Carr appeared in the major Northern Californian newspapers and has been reprinted in a few periodicals and books since that time, but in the smaller communities there were UFO sightings of equal interest that never made the large circulation ^{newspapers} ~~publications~~. As a consequence many reports have never been widely publicized. For example, near the small city of Lodi, a short distance south of Sacramento, something was seen at a very low altitude not many hours after a neighboring town of Acampo suffered its unexplained electric power black-out. A farmer was out in his vineyard northwest of Lodi on Telegraph Road when he saw a flying disk:

"(Mr.) Lloyd said the saucer was gray in color and about the size of an automobile steering wheel. He estimated that it was flying about 20 feet above the ground. (Mr. Lloyd)...was plowing when he first noticed the object 300 feet away. It was traveling in a southerly direction and narrowly missed the pump house at his home, he explained as far as he was able to determine, no one else saw it.

Lloyd said the noise made by the motor of his tractor drowned out any noise made by the 'flying saucer.' It was traveling in a straight line and maintained the same altitude." 56

One item with a July 7th date, worth mentioning was a comment by a person living in the Bay Area. His ideas had some resemblance to the theories of Erich Van Daniken's that enjoyed some popularity in the

early 1970s which helps to prove that very little concerning the UFO business is really new:

"Ole J. Sneide of San Francisco, said he was surprise that the witnesses didn't know they were seeing 'oblate spheroid space ships from the older planets'. In a letter to the San Francisco Chronicle Sneide warned the people of the earth to 'set up no belligerence' or they would be wiped out in 24 hours. He said the 'masters of the "Space ship" passengers from out of this world' planted the original humanities here'.

'They have absent from our planet since before the fall of the Roman empire, when the Great Master left earth for the outer galaxy by fohatic teleportation,' he explained.

'He is now back and what is going to be depends upon mankind'."

As far out as Mr. Sneide seemed to be, United Press was sending out his rature foolish mutterings on the news services' newswire with the following statements tacked directly on the end:

"Aircraft engineers at the University of California conceded that if the 'flying saucers' were traveling at 1200 miles per hour, as reported by some witnesses, any passengers must be 'out of this world'."

reports which were sent to Fortean headquarters
Thayer enjoyed the following two. At Palmdale, California, a housewife phoned the sheriff *to report* that a "mother disc" was overhead with it's "childern" milling about. The sheriff just said thanks and hung up. The Fortean editor suggested that the sheriff may have taken the report too lightly, after all the Fortean membership had discovered and sent to Fortean headquarters a similar item from Tacoma, Washington, about a "flagship" and smaller discs which was reported by lawmen!

These Palmdale and Tacoma reports deserve a closer look. A check of local newspapers in those cities reveals the following accounts:

Early in the morning, Monday, July 7, 1947, a bright moon

hung in the dark sky over Tacoma, Washington:

"At 2:30 a.m., a bewildered voice boomed over the police radio.

'We're chasing a flying saucer out toward the Narrows bridge,' Prowl Car officer Stan Johnson and Skip Davies reported to startled Radio Operator D.F.Erickson.

'What are you doing out at Western State Hospital?' Erickson demanded facetiously.

He sobered as Johnson and Davies gave a play-by-play account of the disc's antics as they sped south on Proctor and then down 6th Ave.

Davies and Johnson were sitting in a car at North 33d and Adams, where they had been dispatched to find a burglar. Suddenly Johnson said hesitantly.

'Do you see anything, Skip?' 'Yeah, Do you?' Davies answered cautiously.

'Uh huh. Over to the left of that big tree,' Johnson replied.

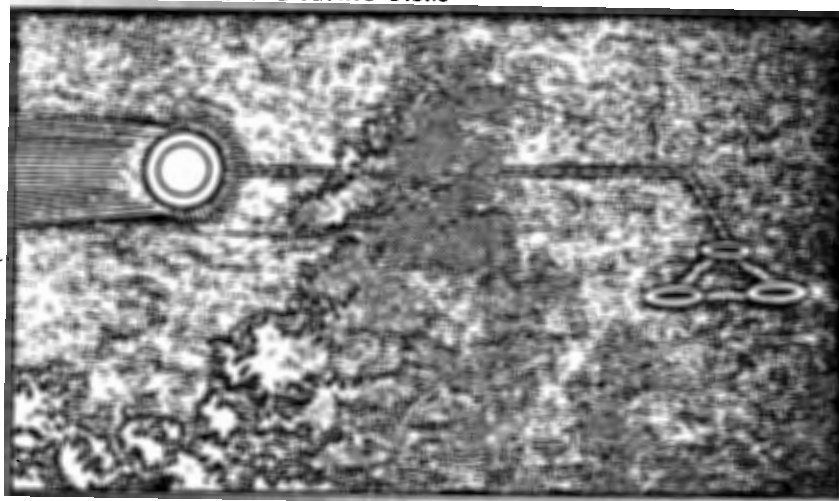
'I thought I was screwy,' Davies remarked with apparent relief. 'I've been watching it for five mintues.'

'So have I,' his partner admitted.

As the officers gave chase, they radioed a description of the aerial platters. Johnson said that although it was impossible to judge size, altitude, speed or distance accurately, 'they moved at tremendous speeds and appeared to be the size of softballs.' (also)...the officers said the first disc they spotted appeared to be flying over

THE MYSTERY OF THE FLYING DISKS

39



These disks, observed August 4, 1947, glowed with a platinum-white radiance with an opaque center. When changing formation after passing tree, they seemed to be joined by silvery streaks of light.

Meadow Park golf course. Later, they reported seeing another disc...in the direction of Hood Canal and a third, which vanished after about 60 seconds, over Ruston...The objects turned from a brilliant red to purple to blue-white and back to red, progressing through the color cycle as they moved about on a erratic course, they said at one point, the disc which had been flying over Hood Canal shot straight up an estimated 5,000 feet above its normal flight level 'quicker than you could snap your fingers,' Davies said.

'If they come close enough, I'm going to take a shot at them,' said Johnson as he fingered the prowl car shotgun.

'Don't do it,' Davies cautioned.

'It might blow up Tacoma.'

Davies said the objects appeared to spin 'like Brick Bradford's "time top"...The patrolmen agreed the phenomena could have been neither a plane nor a star because of the swift, erratic movement. They said the discs gave off no sound, as far as they could tell. 59.

Another newspaper reporter learned these additional details from the two policemen:

"One central saucer, they said, appeared to act as sort of a 'flagship.' It appeared larger or closer than the others, with the smaller saucers repeatedly making sorties to the proximity of the larger disc and then gliding away southward.

'The largest disc seemed a shade of red part of the time, particularly when it zoomed, but most of the time it was sort of a luminous silver,' Davies declared...Davies said the larger disc remained for a time after the smaller or more distinct objects vanished westward in a group. 60.

Unfortunately the Palmdale case was much less detailed:

"Just as the Press suspected, sooner or later some Antelope Valley (California) resident would see one of these 'flying saucers' which have been sailing over the whole countryside with the greatest of ease. One Palmdale woman reports seeing a 'Mother Saucer' with a bunch of little saucers playing around in the sky. Occasionally the smaller saucers would return to the mother saucer for nourishment or gasoline or whatever the saucers use to romp around in the atmosphere." 61.

When ^a on July 4th ~~there was~~ ^{took place} a massive wave of sightings, newspapers that previously thought the discs were just a fad started by a fellow named Arnold, took a hard new look at the situation. The Chicago Times splashed a saucer drawing over the entire front page, 1896 airship style. Elsewhere editors sent reporters scattering in all direction to turn up any inkling of an answer. Reporters descended on colleges of psychology, army posts, private laboratories, ^{and} weather bureaus.

At this point Walter Winchell got his hands on some inside dope, namely DeWitt Miller's book: Forgotten Mysteries, but we know he could have done better than that.

Sure enough it took an Associated Press reporter checking Chicago's Newberry Library. There the reporter claimed to have discovered a rare "unknown" book (Thayer really thought that was hilarious), the scarlet colored volume titled the: Book of the Damned. After this "discovery" it wasn't long before news agencies tracked Thayer and the Fortean to their lair, ^(July 23rd) to ask: "Who was this guy Fort?" and "can we quote such and such?" This was a highpoint in the history of the Fortean Society and unfortunately Fort himself was not alive to take a well-earned bow.

Orville Wright, co-inventor of the airplane, was still alive and kicking though, and out of Dayton, Ohio, the home of the retired pioneer, came a statement attributed to the famed aviator on July 8th, ^{which} ~~that~~ pinned the disc scare on the Pentagon trying to ignite world war III. Thayer awarded the highest Fortean honor on the old flyer: a Society Fellowship.

According to Air Force files, which Edward Ruppelt quoted, some military technicians near Edwards Air Force Base, California, testified:

"On the 8 of July 1947 at 11:50 we were sitting in an observation truck located in Area #3, Rogers Dry Lake. We were gazing upward toward a formation of two P-82's and an A-26 aircraft flying at 20,000 feet. They were preparing to carry out a seat-ejection experiment. We observed a round object, white aluminum color, which at first resembled a parachute canopy. Our first impression was that a premature ejection of the seat and dummy had occurred but this was not the case. The object was lower than 20,000 feet, and was falling at three times the rate observed for the test parachute, which ejected thirty seconds after we first saw the object. As the object fell it drifted slightly north of due west against the prevailing wind. The speed, horizontal motion, could not be determined, but it appeared to be slower than the maximum velocity of a F-80 aircraft.

As this object descended to a low enough level to permit observation of its lateral silhouette, it presented a distinct oval-shaped outline, with two projections on the upper surface which might have been thick fins or knobs. These crossed each other at intervals, suggesting either rotation or oscillation of slow type.

No smoke, flames, propeller arcs, engine noise, or visible means of propulsion were noted. The color was silver, resembling an aluminum-painted fabric, and did not appear as dense as a parachute canopy." 62

Welles Thinks Flying Saucers Will Fizzle Out

(By United Press)

Hollywood, July 8.—Orson Welles, who once "scared the pants" off Americans with an invasion from Mars broadcast, said today he didn't have a thing to do with the flying saucers.

"Once was enough," he said.

The actor-producer-director-writer, currently making "MacBeth," pointed out that during his 1938 radio hoax dozens of Americans reported seeing space ships landing.

"People are imaginative and gullible," he said. "I'll bet 10 to one this will fizzle out."

Flying Saucers; Divorce.

Pittsburg, July 8.—Connie Dunbar told Judge Harry H. Rowand in divorce court yesterday there was no mystery about the flying saucers in his home—they were wife-propelled. The judge granted Dunbar, 35, a divorce.

Above: A joke that was inevitable.

Left: Orson proves less prophetic than his namesake H.G.

DOUBT

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THE UNITED STATES OF DREAMLAND

"Hysterical" is the term invented for the doctor's use to shut your mouth when your wife is sick and he doesn't know what's wrong with her. For most rough and ready purposes it denotes the mildest form of insanity. "Hysterical" persons are not really crazy, they just act as if they were. By extension, typical of this era of loose generalizations and to hell with details, the term has come to be applied to shut all our mouths whenever anything is going on which Science doesn't understand. The editors of the freepress have borrowed the gag from the doctors, and thus — by extension again — they place themselves on a level with the medicine-men, above the masses to which they minister, immune to the efforts of their own jargon, amulets and incantations.

One detail commonly overlooked by doctors and editors who lift themselves to the astral plane by their own bootstraps is the perniciousness of self-satisfaction. No rose that blows can be so captivating, so enchanting in its fragrance, as are — to an individual — the odors he creates himself. This matters very little in the case of a doctor in love with his own diagnosis. If your wife's "hysteria" kills her, that's no great loss to the world, whereas the fate of nations, civilizations, of the planets in their courses, may depend on the editors' whims. The stench they raise daily is their ozone and it affects them much like opium. So that by constantly inhaling their own gasses they live in a perpetual dream-world of their own creation. Limiting ourselves to the local scene, they have set up the United States of Dreamland, whence this essay derives its title.

If the numerous editors created private

worlds, like the thousands which revolve in Bedlams everywhere, they would be shut up with the other maniacs who think they are God, and although we might deplore their sad state, we should be protected from their violence. Unfortunately for us, the great editorial delusion does not create private worlds. Its false appetites are not satisfied until vast numbers of the sane are behaving AS IF the synthetic cosmos of the editors' diurnal vaporings were *bona fide*. Like "hysterical" women, the editors generally retain some faint awareness of reality, and like maniacs, they are cunning. Their faint awareness of reality is their yardstick by which they measure their power over the sane. Their cunning has inspired them to unite their efforts to extend that power by enforcing the delusion of a single dream-world universally instead of a different one in each circulation area, and the means they have devised to this end are called the Associated Press, the United Press and the International News Service.

These press associations and their member publishers own or control the means of broadcasting "news" by radio as well, so that any appearance of competition between the two media is the sheerest illusion. You never have heard a scrap of news over the air until after it was for sale, printed, on the street, with the exception of sports events and a few rare accidents which have occurred under the eyes of the public on the air. In this latter class, the sinking of the Hindenberg and the crash of a plane into the Empire State Building are notable examples.

Yes, the means of general communication in the world today is a monopoly held by a small group of madmen who call everybody else "hysterical" and do everything in their power to make that wish-thought a fact. Rational humans who, conceivably, might wish to compare notes about events in the real world have not the slightest chance to do so. Nowhere on the face of the earth today is there a single publication (of any significant circulation) which is not dedicated to the perpetuation of some pipe dream. So that in good sooth (for all practical purposes) the United States of Dreamland IS the reality. We, the people, have had forced upon us a notoriously false and scurrilous wood-pulp soul. And what the Devil do we do about it?

Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the majority of the population were ashamed of the picture of ourselves which the papers send abroad. How would we go about changing it?

The vast majority of us knew that Pearl Harbor was a put-up-job, agreed to by the U.S. Government expressly to make the public "hysterical" (only at that time the term was "war-minded"), but what could we — and what did we — do about it?

Writing letters to editors doesn't do any more good than writing them to Santa Claus. Nailing their lies doesn't stop the chain-effect the lies have set in motion. No matter what percentage of the public is aware of a published false-

hood, that awareness practically never gets into print, so that, say, 90% of the people in New York don't know and can't find out what 90% of the people in Chicago are thinking. Polls of "public opinion" are engineered to substantiate any nefarious, noxious nonsense the editors wish to foist upon us. The only publication of any potency which consistently exposes their frauds is IN FACT, a weekly, and IN FACT confines itself almost exclusively to political issues. Further, IN FACT has an ax of its own to grind, and so circulates principally among a group which would like to control the United States of Dreamland but never, never, never would permit the views of the masses to circulate freely. Nor does the limited potency of IN FACT stem the flood of falsehood in the slightest. On the contrary, each little exposure calls forth a smothering blanket of taller tales, so that the great stock of imposed hallucinations is weekly being squared to the seventh power.

Thus was the world led into "war". Thus were the masses taught to fear "atoms". Thus — most recently — was a grand series of Fortean phenomena laughed out of the editors' Dreamland. Reference is to the data which the newspapers grouped hysterically under their flying "saucer" or "disk" scare-heads. June 24 at 3:00 p.m., between Mt. Ranier and Mt. Adams in Washington, 10,000 feet up, estimated to be moving at 1200 mph., nine objects, bright, "as if nickel plated", no size stated: moved as if fastened together, "if one dipped, the others did too". Reported by Kenneth Arnold, of Boise, Idaho, when he landed at Pendleton, Oregon. An unidentified man from Ukiah, Oregon, claimed to have seen similar objects the same date. (AP papers only)

The Chicago Tribune adds — the nine objects were headed South, strung out about 5 miles, remained in sight two minutes, were certainly "separate units" — and that "a (that is one) strange shiny object" had been seen at 7:00 p.m., same date, by Glen E. Stewart and his wife, of Pendleton.

The next day the Tribune gave the size of the objects — "as big as DC-4 passenger planes", and added: June 25, shortly after noon, nine objects flying west over Kansas City, Mo., reported by W. I. Davenport, of K C. . . . Also — "five or six weeks ago" an object (that is one) alleged to have been seen by Byron Savage, in Oklahoma City (The Tribune does not credit AP, but attributes its information to "Special"). Savage saw what he saw "about dusk".

The Oregon Journal puts a DC-4 in the air at the same time as Arnold and the objects, but states: "The DC-4 pilot reported nothing unusual in that particular region at exactly that time."

The Oakland (Calif.) Tribune states that "experts" scoff at the story. Just what the scoffers were "expert" is not stated, perhaps at scoffing.

Witness number SEVEN was Mrs. Elma (or Emma) Shingler, Bremerton, Wash. Saw "shiny platters" twice in past ten days. No number stated. They were headed NW.

Things became so topsy-turvy one state of the union, boasted of no flying saucer sightings within its boundaries and that made news. With the aerial desperados at large driving the military nuts, people began to offer rewards for the capture of one of the elusive discs. Amounts ran from a mere 3,000 to a even 1,000,000 dollars.

Fortean Society publication Doubt, #19, covering the months of June, July, and August, 1947, was a memorable one for its editor, Thayer. The saucers consumed nearly the whole issue. It was an awkward situation since the Society under Thayer's leadership had wandered a long way from Fort's hypothesizing about scout craft from a celestial super-Rome. Anti-Wasserman testers, Anti-vivisectionists, Anti-vaccinationists, flat earth adherents, and proponents of universal disarmament, to name a few, had all but taken over the pages of Doubt, yet the big new ~~social~~ disturbance was impossible to ignore so Thayer gave in. However, Thayer introduced the flying saucer issue with an 800 word essay on the future intent and passed accomplishments of the nation's newspapers ~~visions~~ ^{Newspapers, he believed, that were} to sell the American public various "pipedreams" capitained by editors with wood-pulp souls. Still Thayer's half hearted attempt to list and very briefly make a remark about each saucer clipping clogged the Fortean journal. Thayer ran out of stream and room after the 380th item. Such a collection! For once Thayer was unhappy about some offbeat data and it kind of took the fun out of things when he had to compete with the magazines Time and Life.

That there had been a few speculations about space visitors behind the disc mystery never really thrilled Thayer. Shucks, Thayer comment waggishly, the Fortean Society already had one

member who claimed nightly conversations with the inhabitants of the planet Venus.

Charles Fort's name turned up in highly friendly news dispatches from Los Angeles to Scotland, and was also entertained in various scientific strongholds which was one result Thayer could not fault in the least, even by his own stern standards.

Thayer enjoyed the fact that he was one up on the news services. He had checked his Fortean correspondence file and came across a gem. The extensive Fortean network had discovered and reported on something seen in the sky over Bombay, India. On June 7, 1947: "About 9:00, 'a dazzling object emitting blue and red light,' (was seen)...fifteen minutes later, another, only blue light. 'The latter was round in shape but accompanied by several smaller -sized ones.'" ⁶³

Because no organization outside the government existed to provide a collection center for data and a forum for speculation save the Fortean Society, Kenneth Arnold eventually applied for and received membership. Writing to Thayer, Arnold suggested that the Society sponsor him on a lecture tour to help turn up clues to the origin of the mystery objects, but Arnold encountered Thayer's rapidly diminishing interest in the subject and received a negative answer. Since by now, besides Time and Life, even the magazines Popular Science and The Saturday Evening Post were putting out welcoming hands to the supposedly "damned" data as proper information to print, Thayer's initial lukewarm enthusiasm for the mystery of the flying objects

cooled more and more. Though the Fortean Society had for over
 a decade been a clearing house for outcasts, nothing in any
 other category approached the volume of flying saucer data
 saturating the organization's mail. Thayer printed less and
 less about unexplained flying phenomena, returning the vacated
 space to his favorite theme of the perpetuation of dissent.
 Later, in February 1946, when a subdued publication like
 the National Geographic diverted it's readers with an essay
 by a Yale professor about ^{intelligent} life on Mars, interplanet-
 ary travel, and the possibility the Martians may be investigating
 us, Thayer really felt the Society was in danger of losing it's
 rebellious reputation if it entertained any extraterrestrial
 matters which had suddenly become so familiar and popular. Also,
 the second big wave of saucer sightings on July 4, ¹⁹⁴⁷ put the
 discs ^{back} on page one. Saucer items that might have been put on
 page 35 or not even printed at all, ^{again} ~~often~~ were put on the tele-
 type and ^{they} showed up in newspapers all over the country. Therefore
 Thayer was faced with the problem of printing old news, and there
 is nothing deader than yesterday's news. ^{II} The July, 1947 flap
 firmly established the flying saucers as part of the American
 scene. Novelists and movie producers were attracted and soon
 would make the discs a commercial fad of sorts. Though ~~the~~
 mercantile interests and fiction buffs would greatly damage
 the saucer's scientific respectibility, the unexplained flying
 object subject had already achieved the momentum it needed
 to get along without being championed by the Fortean Society.

A passing note should be made of the first recorded encounter case having to do with UFOs. On July 9, 1947, the following account appeared in The Nashville Tennessean:

"Meanwhile as newspaper office telephone calls on this latest form of mid -summer madness multiply, it's obvious that the subject is getting a grip on people.

One man, apparently perfectly sane and sober, wrote the editor of the Nashville Tennessean a long, interesting letter about his brush with a couple of Men from Mars on a nearby flying field.

The strange little men, 'all heads and arms and legs, and glowing like fireflies,' landed and alighted from a flying saucer as he drove along a highway, the man wrote.

The man from Nashville and the Men from Mars exchanged greetings (in sign language) and the saucer finally took off in a cloud of dust, so the letter says." 64.

The East Oregonian, on July 12, 1947, mentioned that the now famous Kenneth Arnold had returned to Pendleton for a short visit and that the newspaper had sent a reporter to ask for a comment. Arnold told an East Oregonian representative that if the military couldn't shed any light on the flying saucer mystery, then the only alternative was that the unknown flying objects must be from outer space. 65.

Three weeks went by before the Army Air Force# military intelligence paid a visit to Arnold's home in Boise, Idaho, to ask questions about the flyer's Mount Rainier sighting. It was not clear why it took so long for military intelligence to get around to talking to Arnold, but according to Arnold account of the visit the military officers gave the impression they knew what they were after. The intelligence men took down an official statement of Arnold's sighting and then shifted through the huge pile of mail the flyer had received from all over the country. Arnold thought it was significant that the military investigators picked out inquiries by "organizations and societies" and generally ignored the rest. Before leaving the intelligence men told Arnold that if he: "...needed help..." or "...anything unusual took place..." he should contact their office at once and not to tell anyone else. 66.

On July 17th, Arnold turned up ^{once} again in Pendleton where he gave lecture in the VFW hall on the subject of the flying discs. He told the assembled crowd the discs may utilize nuclear energy and then brought up R. DeWitt Miller's book of Coronet articles that Walter Winchell had mentioned over the air. At this point he revealed the six hour interview the previous weekend he had granted to military intelligence. The most interesting thing Arnold mentioned was that the Army Air Force had known about the flying objects since April of 1947. 67.

#The United States Air Force dropped the word: "Army" and became a separate branch of the Defense establishment under the Unification Act of July 26, 1947.

end of
 Later, at the July, Arnold was contacted by some alledged flying saucer witnesses who summoned him to Tacoma, Washington to inspect some fragments they claimed had dropped from a hovering disc. The story of finding pieces of a disc turned out to be a hoax, but the reaction of military intelligence was revealing.

Arnold phoned Hamilton Field, California, and asked to talk to one of the intelligence officers that interviewed him several weeks before. The Bosie flyer told the intelligence officer ^{about the "saucer evidence" adding} that he was'nt sure if someone was pulling his leg or not since the alledged saucer metal looked more like lava rock than anything else. The intelligence officer reaction was immediate. The military expert said he would be in Tacoma to see Arnold and the samples right away!

When the slag-like fragments were shown to the two intelligence officers after ^{the two military men had} they made a quick flight up north in a B-25, the military men lost all interest in samples and told Arnold he had indeed been ~~been~~ fooled by a practical joker. ^{68.} A professor of chemistry of the College of Puget Sound later conducted some laboratory tests and verified the quick judgement of the intelligence officers. The material was: "...common ordinary smelter slag." ^{69.} A few unasked questions remain however. Did the intelligence officers expect slag-like material? And, were the intelligence officers so well briefed they could made a judgement by sight? Could the officers have been aware of reports of the slag-like material found in areas ^{over which} ~~where~~ the 1946 ghost rockets were ^{reported} to have exploded?

Their curiosity satisfied, the military representatives excused themselves and then left for the city airport, but, not before having a few pieces of the hoax material pressed on ^{them} by Arnold

as souvenirs. Less than a half an hour after taking off Tacoma the B-25 the intelligence officers were flying caught fire and crashed, killing both men. The local newspaper which knew of the meeting between Arnold and military intelligence spashed a big headline that read: "WRECKED BOMBER CARRIED DISC SECRET". 70.

Nothing mysterious about the cause of the mishap even turned up in a subsequent investigation, yet, ~~remained~~ the aura of ~~err~~ eerie sensationalism surrounding the subject of unidentified flying objects was greatly enhanced.

Behind the doors at Air Force intelligence at Dayton things were not much better. According to the memoirs[#] of a former Air Force intelligence officer, Edward Ruppelt, who inspected old files at Wright Field, Ohio, intelligence headquarters there was at that moment confused to point of panic. 71.

^{the}
[#]Captain Edward Ruppelt headed Air Force Intelligence's UFO investigation for several years in the early 1950s. Ruppelt authored what is almost universally accepted as one of the most important books on UFOs ever written: The Report on Unidentified Flying Objects (Doubleday and Company, 1956).

Ruppelt's book is seemingly unbiased, but he still omitted or glossed over^a considerable number of details favoring the extraterrestrial hypothesis. When Ruppelt^{later} added some additional chapters to his original book, in a revised edition, which attacked the extraterrestrial theory vigorously without new evidence, many students of UFO subject began to have second thoughts about Ruppelt's objectivity.

One of Kenneth Arnold's last appearances in print during the hectic year of 1947 was when he was interviewed by a reporter from the Denver (Colorado) Post on July 22th:

"Arnold was first to give an eyewitness account of the disks and 'It's upset the whole routine of my life' he complains.

'It's not funny to me,' said Arnold, on a business trip to Denver Tuesday.

'I don't read Popular Science or Startling Comics. I don't know anything about atomic fission. I don't know what it was I saw. All I know is that I saw nine objects that performed like aircraft, traveling at tremendous speed.

'I have a wife and two children and a little business up in Boise and I'm not looking for publicity. If I had known what a fuss it was going to stir up, I probably would never have said anything about the disks. But it makes me pretty sore to have people say I'm imagining ... (things).'" 72.

footnote continued:

Keep in mind that American Intelligence learned many of its tricks from the British. Ralph Ingersoll, in his book: Top Secret, on page 71, (this book has nothing to do with UFOs) makes the following observation on the ~~methods~~ of the Intelligence experts that might apply to Ruppelt's writings: "British Intelligence operates on the sound and ingenious principle that the best way to keep a secret is to reveal 90 per cent of it in such a way that your opponents believe they have the whole story. When your opponents believe they have the whole story, they are persuaded to relax, to be content with what they have and pry no further."

Before we leave the months of June and July, 1947, a few notes should be mentioned concerning the assertion made all too often in books, magazines articles, and newspaper stories dealing with the subject of unidentified flying objects ^{in the years} ~~since that time~~ ¹⁹⁴⁷ that have blamed Kenneth Arnold for "starting a craze", as if the aerial mystery has been just an American psychological phenomenon. As we have learned, there is ^{a considerable number} ~~every~~ reasons to believe ~~that instead~~ the phenomena is not just American and/or of recent origin. June, ^{24,} 1947 simply marks the date the American press first discovered the riddle, its full scope and many implications.

We have already dealt at length with what had happened outside the United States before 1947, but let's take a look at the following items that turned up on the American newswires just during the months of June and July, 1947:

June 26th:

"London --Recurring reports of a midnight 'ghost plane' swooping out of the east at tremendous speed gave the British press a sensational aviation mystery, but the royal air force, while admitting the whole thing was 'slightly mysterious' refused to get excited.

Eyewitness accounts said the mystery craft, first plotted by radar early in January, zooms over the east Anglia coast --as though it came from the continent --and disappears inland at a speed of 400 miles per hour or more.

What is even odder is that the plane never has been seen making the return journey from England to the continent. RAF night fighters have tried regularly to intercept the 'ghost plane' but so far have been unsuccessful.

'Radar has plotted some strange things in its time, from children's kites and raindrops to formations of geese, but it surely never plotted a stranger thing than this,' said the Yorkshire Post..." 73.

July 7th:

"Something was seen in the sky over Stockholm as reported in the newspaper Aftonbladet as that city continued to be haunted by "rocket ghosts"." 74.

July 8th:

Denver (AP) " --A Denver Belgian war bride, Mrs. Terry Cagley, finds the flying saucers no novelty.

She said that she saw disks many times before leaving Belgium in April to come to the United States to marry Cagley. She said thousands of others in Belgium saw them.

Mrs. Cagley said that when she left her homeland the disks were still in evidence and had not been explained." 75:

July 9th:

Teheran (AP) " --The flying saucer fever spread to Iran today.

Press reports from Zabool, Shosef, and Sarbished near the Afghan frontier said residents there had observed strange 'starlike bodies' in the sky which exploded loudly, leaving a cloud of smoke.

The newspaper Mehri Iran said the objects apparently had something to do with a secret weapon, which it dubbed 'V-20' ". 76.

July 13th:

"Paris (AP) --The newspaper Parisien Libere said today that a resident of Le Mans, a French town 100 miles southwest of Paris, reported that yesterday morning he had seen two 'strangely shaped' things 'which he thought were 'flying saucers'.

The paper quoted the man as saying the things 'were flying noiselessly westward' at a height of about 2,500 feet, and were of a 'greenish-gray' color. He added that they 'vanished behind the clouds leaving a trail of smoke behind them.' " 77.

July 14th:

"Shanghai -(AP)...North China news agency said crowds of Chinese near the summer palace in Peiping's suburbs reported seeing 'an enormous saucer emitting bright beams in all directions and dazzling the eyes of all who saw it.'" 78

Mr. Johnson, the aviation editor of the Boise, Idaho, Idaho Statesman, had taken an immediate interest in the flying saucer mystery and even conducted an aerial search for the unexplained objects on July 2nd. He invited Kenneth Arnold of Boise to join him in spending the day aloft in Johnson's private plane cruising the sky near the atomic research center at Hanford, Washington. If Johnson had taken to the air a couple of days later on the 4th, he might have been more successful, as it was July 2th was one of the biggest lulls in UFO activity during the saucer flap.

On July 9th, Mr. Johnson went up again. This time he sighted a dark, disk-like object manoeuvring among the clouds over Anderson ranch dam near Boise. He took an estimated 10 feet of movie film of the object, but since the object was small and some distance away, little could be seen on the film when it was developed. 79

However he managed on November 23, 1947, to obtain some interesting news from the ship SS Ticonderoga ^{concerning} ~~about~~ a UFO sighting that took place at sea. About two weeks before the tanker Ticonderoga had been sailing 25 miles off the Pacific coast almost directly west of the mouth of the Columbia river, when two large disk-shaped objects came into view flying on a southwesterly course. Witnesses aboard the tanker estimated the objects were round disks about 35 feet across and trailing 50-foot illuminous streaks behind them. 80.

Johnson immediately phoned an important Air Force intelligence officer he knew to forward the Ticonderoga report. The officer was glad to hear about the case and assured Mr. Johnson that

orders to investigate the UFO problem *thoroughly* had just come down from the highest official level (On September 23, 1947, ATIC at Wright Field had submitted a report to Air Force Chief of Staff, General ~~Hoyt~~ Vandenburg, which was favorable to the idea that the flying saucers were something real. General Vandenburg then issued orders establishing a formal investigation which was given the codename: Sign. ^{81.}).

During the conversation with the Air Force intelligence officer, Dave Johnson happened to mentioned something about an odd meteor seen over southern Idaho. A large blue-^{green}-colored "bolide" *had been seen* over Idaho and apparently burned itself out since it quickly vanished, but it left an unusual luminescent smoke trail that persisted for some time. The Air Force officer was *with the meteor report* fascinated to Johnson's surprise, and expressed an opinion that the blue object was not the meteor it may have appeared to be. ^{82.}

Why? The officer, unfortunately, didn't say.

By a coincidence perhaps, astronomers at Harvard, Dr. Menzel's hangout, were quite active in their concern about meteors or meteor-like activity. Tiffany Thayer wrote:

"In its issue of 12-18-47...the Provincetown (Mass.) Advocate printed an appeal from Harvard to Cape residents, for data relating to a 'fireball' which Harlan J. Smith (Dept of Astro) had reason to believe flashed across the sky 'about' 100 miles east of Provincetown and at an estimated height of 80 miles, 'about 3:00 A.M. Nov. 22...' Harvard observers express disappointment because they missed practically all of the show. They were working inside at the time and came out in time to see only the remains. A rature faint, pale-white streak about as wide as the moon and ten times as long was noticed; it persisted for about 20 minutes, enabling a couple of good time exposures to be taken of it, but was shrinking all the while, and finally disappeared.' For a variety of reasons the observers were able to eliminate clouds, aurora, and man-made objects as probable causes, leaving a meteoric origin as the most likely explanation." ⁸³

From witnesses descriptions from ^{different} ^{over Idaho} sources, the strange aerial display ^{over Idaho} could have hardly qualified as a natural meteor, though the phenomenon resembled the remarkable green fireballs that would be reported in the American southwest a year later and that would be official deemed of "natural origin".

According to detailed reports from sources other than Mr. Johnson, more than one "meteor" had been spotted over Idaho. A military cargo plane had been flying at 11,000 feet above Walla, Walla, Washington when a bright flash startled the pilot. The light came up from below the aircraft, appearing ²⁷⁹ to just miss the nose of the Army transport as it zipped by. The pilot may have been mistaken by the nearness of the object's passage, for the source of the light was an intense blue-green ball of fire. The fiery sphere flew out of sight on an upward slant. Hardly twenty minutes later, three other aircraft over southern Idaho sighted the same object or one very nearly like it. Glowing with a brilliant blue-green light, a large fiery ball zoomed across the sky on a horizontal flightpath, leaving a trail of green smoke estimated to have been four miles in length. One pilot confessed he had been frightened out of his wits by the encounter. 84.

Yet another uncomfortable aerial encounter had occurred much earlier on July 28th when the disk flap was at its height. A United Air Lines flight 105 piloted by Captain Charles F. Gibian and First Officer Jack Harvey had just started its approach to Boise airport and was at about 9,000 feet altitude near Mountain Home, Idaho, when a disk-like object was spotted dead ahead of the airliner. The object sped directly at the plane, but at the last second, turned and raced away. 85

After many weeks of nothing in the papers on the subject of unexplained aerial phenomenon, an item ^{finally} appeared on the Associated Press newswire dated December 22, 1947. Tiffany Thayer mentioned the item in Doubt, quoting Congressman Harris Ellsworth of Oregon, who told the newsmedia that: "...he has received reliable information concerning the development of high-velocity missiles by Soviet Scientists." The AP article was titled: "Mystery of Flying Disks Again Linked to Russia." 86.

At the end of December, 1947, the American Association for the Advancement of Science held its annual winter meeting. During the opening sessions, Dr. C.C. Wylie of the University of Iowa read a paper to the hundreds of scientists in the astronomy section. The professor proposed that a "sky patrol" be established to check on unexplained phenomenon taking place in the atmosphere. Dr. Wylie made a logical case for his proposal, so logical that it puts a strain on one's imagination to believe that the U.S. governmental scientists hadn't considered the same thing back in August of 1946.

Dr. Wylie said:

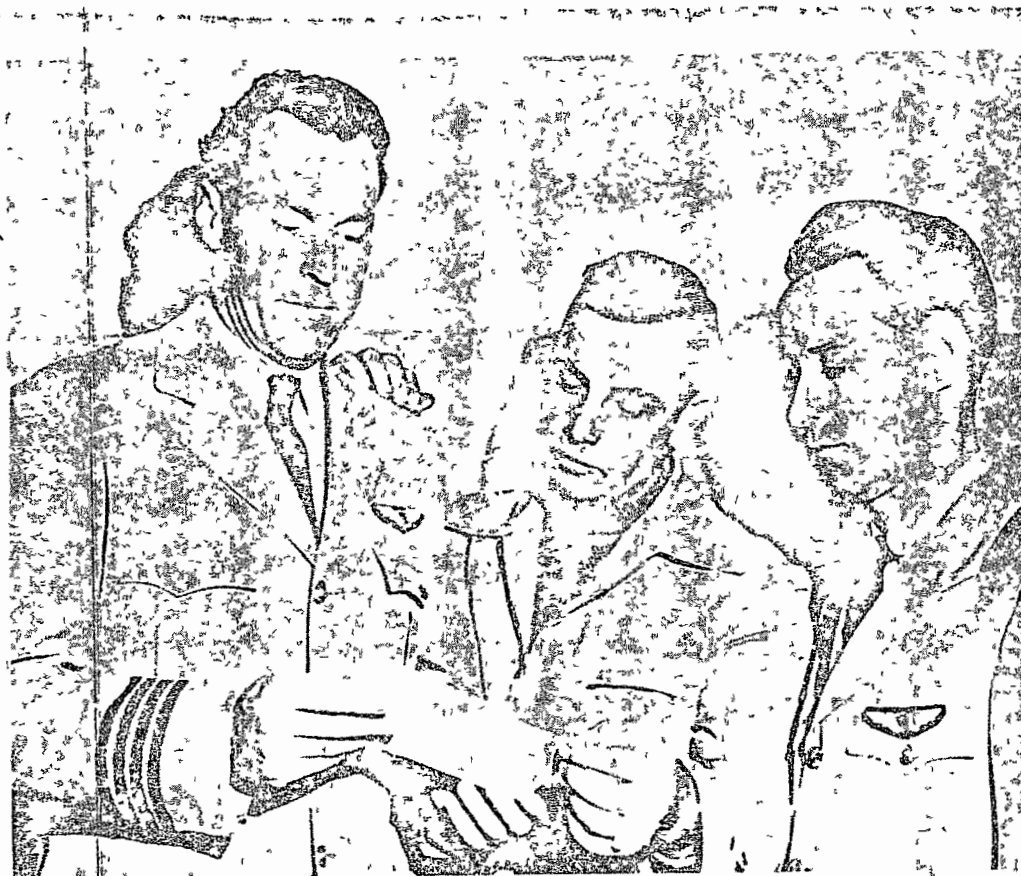
" '...in these days of international tension our country should have a means of recognizing promptly authentic reports of V-2 bombs, high speed planes, or bomb-carrying balloon seen in the air!

'The present failure of scientific men to explain promptly and accurately flaming objects seen over several states, flying saucers, and other celestial phenomena which arouse national interest, is causing the public to lose confidence in the intellectual ability of scholars,' he went on. 'The mass hysteria in simple, but unexplained, phenomena is bad for the morale of the country. Many of these reports refer to detonating and stone-dropping meteors, and information on these should be of great value to astronomy.' " 87.

Urging that his "sky patrol" cover the entire United States on a year around basis, Dr. Wylie stated further that:

"The present national policy is to ignore reports of objects seen in the heavens. There is no provision for finding the real facts back of these reports. We believe that our citizens have plenty of real troubles without adding the burden of imaginary dangers, and that in these days of robot planes and atomic bombers neither individuals or communities should be allowed to get hysterical because of our failure to explain some simple phenomenon well known to us..." 88.

Besides the unsettling idea that the unexplained flying objects might possibly be craft from another world, there was another reason officials might ——— be giving the impression that they were ignoring the logic of Dr. Wylie proposals. This was the unsettling fact that three Swedish flyers had died under suspicious circumstances.



UPI Photo

From left Capt E J Smith Kenneth Arnold and Ralph E Stevens examine photo (above) of disc they claim to have seen in the air over Washington in 1947

Chapter Notes

5 1.) In April, 1967, some interesting information appeared in the Soviet press. Frank Edwards, in his book: Flying Saucers- Here and Now (Lyle Stuart, Inc., 1967) summed up the remarkable Russian disclosure on page 152 of the volume. The part that concerns us reads:

"Dr. Felix Zigel, an astronomer who has been connected with the Soviet space work for years, said in a magazine article in Moscow that Soviet radars have been tracking UFOs for the past twenty years and that the Soviet scientists are as puzzled by the phenomena as their counterparts in the United States.

He also revealed that in the early years of the UFO problem, 1946-1950, the Russians suspected that they might be some sort of U.S. secret device, at the same time that we suspected that they might have been Russian."

6 2.) It might not mean anything, but when Dr. Walter Orr Roberts, superintendent of the high altitude observatory of Harvard and Colorado, was attending a meeting in New Mexico at the time the flying saucer furor peaked in early July, 1947, someone else was in the same area. In his book: Flying Saucers, on page 3, Dr. Donald Menzel told his readers: "My studies of the sun take me frequently to Colorado and New Mexico, and I was at the Holloman Air Base, near Alamogordo, New Mexico, at the height of the flying saucer scare."

Dr. Orr and Dr. Menzel must have known each other. Were they both at the meeting of Los Alamo officials, and did the gathering concern the flying disks?

7 3.) The newspapers were so stirred up by the aerial mystery during the summer of 1947 that even Meade Layne managed to gain some notice on July 6th in a dispatch by United Press. Just

below a comment by a unnamed Atomic Energy Commission spokesman, who said he would believe in the disks only when he sees them, United Press noted: "A San Diego editor of an occult magazine said the discs were space ships from Mars".

On July 13, 1947 Layne sent out a postcard to all BSRA members, passing along the opinion of a gentleman identified only as "FGH", who claimed that the saucers belonged: "...to an old Atlantean Arcane Order, which has held them in caches; their present mobilization is for trial and for training of crews; they will be used for emergency rescue craft and to gather key personnel and material. They have gravity control, ^{and} a speed up to 4000 mi./ hr. above the atmosphere. They become invisible by bending the light rays around them, and are invulnerable to attack by our own forces." Layne then added his own comment: "This differs in many respects from the information previously given you by RR(Round Robin) and FR(Flying Roll)service, and time will establish the true facts. We also have alleged info. to the effect that government authorities have ordered a shut-down on all news concerning these craft. They are also reported over Japan and parts of Europe."

Remarkably enough, Edward Ruppelt's memoirs confirms Layne's statement about censorship on the saucers being imposed by the government in July, though there is no evidence such a blackout extended beyond governmental public relations departments.

Meade Layne and his borderlander group could have developed the extraterrestrial hypothesis much more fully than they did. In later years there was enough written on the aliens from space theory to fill dozens of volumes, however Layne threw away his big headstart. In a way, it was Layne's headstart that proved his undoing, as he seemed to have been to be under the spell of Mark Probert from the beginning and never quite shook

off the fellow's influence. Just five days after the Kenneth Arnold newsstory appeared in the newspapers (June 29th), Probert notified Layne that a spirit named "Lingford" had contacted him during a seance. This "trance control" was alledgedly to have informed Probert about an etheric world and the inhabitants thereof, suggesting that the 1946 "Kareeta" craft and the flying saucers were flying ships from an etheric plane of existence. Layne became highly interested and later wrote the book: The Ether Ship Mystery and its Solution (1950). The ether ship idea never caught the public's fancy and the episode remains to this day an obscure footnote to the events of the summer of 1947.

4.) Apparently there was more UFO activity over Arizona during the summer of 1947 than has been indicated by books and other sources devoted to the period. According to UFO researcher Coral Lorenzen, quite a few reports turned up in the newspapers in Arizona: the Bisbee Review and the Douglas Dispatch. It was stated in the forementioned newspapers that small flying discs appeared over Douglas on July 8th, 10th, and 11th. Moreover, late in July some twenty-five witnesses watched as a strange object carrying lights flew rapidly in a great circular path in the sky over Douglas. The object repeated this manuver ten times (a remarkable sighting in regards to lenght of time) before zipping over the horizon. UFO sightings also occurred a little east of Tucson on July 8th, ^{and} Yuma and Nogales, Arizona, registered sightings on the 9th. For more information consult the book: Flying Saucers: The Startling Evidence of the Invasion from Outer Space, by Coral E. Lorenzen (Signet, 1966).