

PROJECT 1947

UFO DOCUMENTS - 1949

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The following report is a digest of preliminary studies made by the Air Material Command, Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, on "Flying Saucers."

PROJECT "SAUCER"

On Tuesday, June 24, 1947, a Boise, Idaho businessman named Kenneth Arnold looked from his private plane and spotted a chain of nine saucer-like objects playing tag with the jagged peaks of Washington's Mt. Rainier at what he described as a "fantastic speed."

Arnold's report set off a veritable celestial chain reaction. And within a few days, the fabulous "flying saucers" had spun into the national spotlight. Observers reported sighting flying "chromium hub caps," flying "dimes," flying "tear drops," flying "gas lights," "ice cream cones," and flying "pie plates."

But to military intelligence this sky potpourri came under a single heading -- that of "Unidentified Aerial Phenomena." Exhaustive investigations of each reported sighting were launched. And Project "Saucer" was born.

Now, almost two years later, Project "Saucer" is neither gone nor forgotten so far as the U. S. Air Force's Air Material Command at Wright Field, Dayton, Ohio, is concerned.

Official birthday for "Saucer" was January 22, 1948. Since then, AMC's Technical Intelligence Division, Charged with the collection, investigation and interpretation of data relative to unidentified flying objects, has looked into more than 240 domestic and 30 foreign incidents. With assistance from several other government and private agencies, and with the entire facilities of the Wright Field laboratories at their disposal, Project "Saucer" personnel have already come up with identification or about 30 percent of the sightings studied this thus far as conventional aerial objects. It is expected that further probing of incidents in relation to weather balloon locations, etc., will provide commonplace answers to at least an equal number of the sky riddles.

Answers have been -- and will be -- drawn from factors such as guided missile research activity, weather and other atmospheric sounding balloons, astronomical phenomena, commercial and military aircraft flights, flights of migratory birds, shots from flare guns, practical jokes, victims of optical illusion, the phenomena of mass hallucination, etc.

But to date there are still question marks in the "Saucer Story."

Of course, the possibility that some of the incidents reported to AMC Intelligence may represent technical developments far in advance of knowledge available to American engineers and scientists has been widely considered. But observations based on experience with nuclear power plant research in this country label as "highly improbable" the existence on Earth of engines small enough in size and weight to have powered any of the capricious "saucers". The other obvious possibility -- visitations from Mars, Venus, or distant planets attached to other star systems -- is also looked upon as an almost completely impossibility.

In short, while Project "Saucer" evaluation teams report that no "definite and conclusive evidence is yet available to either prove or disprove the existence of at least some of the remaining unidentified objects as real aircraft of unknown and unconventional configurations," exhaustive investigations have turned up no alarming probabilities.

The question marks in Project "Saucer" are not dangerous ones.

Nor are reports of unidentified flying objects peculiar to the present day. In "The Books of Charles Fort" by Tiffany Thayer, published in 1941 by Henry Holte and Company, New York, similar phenomena are described as having been sighted at various times throughout past centuries.

But this is the Saucer Story of 1947-49.

WHO SAW THE SAUCERS

Although occasional sightings of strange aerial objects were reported as far back as January of 1947, it was the Mt. Rainier incident that touched off the saucer sensation late the following June.

[Kenneth Arnold](#), representative of a fire control equipment firm in Boise, Idaho, was en route from Chehalis, Washington to Yakima, Washington, on June 24, in a privately-owned plane when he saw the reflection of a bright flash on his wing. Arnold said he looked around and observed a chain of nine peculiar aircraft approaching Mt. Rainier.

"I could see their outline quite plainly against the snow as they approached the mountain," he reported. "They flew very close to the mountain tops, directly south to southeast down the hog's back of the range, flying like geese in a diagonal chain-like line, as if they were linked together."

Arnold observed that the objects seemed smaller than a DC-4 on his left, but he judged their wing span to be as wide as the furthest engines on either side of the DC-4's fuselage.

"They were approximately 20 or 25 miles away, and I couldn't see a tail on them," he declared. "I watched for about three minutes...a chain of saucer-like things at least five miles long, swerving in and out of the high mountain peaks. They were flat like a pie pan and so shiny they reflected the sun like a mirror."

"I never saw anything so fast," he told investigators.

Arnold said he clocked the "Saucers" speed at about 1,200 miles an hour. Later, however, Aero-Medical Laboratory men stated that an object travelling that fast would not have been visible to the naked eye.

Arnold's story, when it broke in the newspapers, was treated mainly with amusement and disbelief.

Resentful of what he termed "press ridicule," Arnold retorted "They can call me Einstein, Flash Gordon, or just a screwball, but I am absolutely certain of what I saw." He added that if he ever again saw a phenomena in the sky... "even if it were a 10 story building flying through the air"... he would not say a word about it.

Today, no one knows just what Arnold did see on Mt. Rainier. But the objects have been judged to be of non-astronomical origin according to an interim report submitted recently on Project "Saucer" by

Professor Joseph A. Hynek, Ohio State University astrophysicist and head of the O.S.U. Observatory. Dr. Hynek is working under contract with AMC on an independent investigation of "Saucer" incidents to determine what percentage may definitely be attributed to astronomical phenomena.

In his review of the Arnold Incident, however, Dr. Hynek has come up with what he terms "certain inconsistencies in Arnold's estimates of size, speed and performance of his "saucers".

"It appears probable," Hynek reports, "that whatever objects were observed were travelling at sub-sonic speeds and may therefore have been some sort of known aircraft."

In the days that followed Arnold's observation, the disc reports began to snowball. At [Muroc, California](#), a group of Air Force officers reported spotting spherical objects of a disc-like shape whirling through the sky at a speed in excess of 300 MPH.

In Portland, Oregon, several policemen told investigators they saw a group of discs that "wobbled, disappeared and reappeared" several times. They were described as resembling "shiny chromium hub caps."

These objects were not of astronomical origin, according to Dr. Hynek's report.

Regarding the Portland incident, he stated "There is nothing whatever in this incident to suggest that the objects observed were of astronomical origin. The maneuvers of the objects and the relatively long time they were in sight definitely preclude their being astronomical."

Only a few days after Arnold's sighting, a disc was reported seen over his hometown of Boise -- "a half-circle in shape, clinging to a cloud and just as bright and silvery looking as a mirror caught in the rays of the sun."

Early in August, 1947, two pilots for a [Bethel, Alabama](#), flying service told investigators they spotted a huge black object "bigger than a C-54" silhouetted against the brilliant evening sky. In order to avoid collision they said they pulled up to 1,200 feet and watched the object cross their path at right angles.

The two pilots told of swinging in behind the object and following it at 170 MPH until it outdistanced them and disappeared from sight about four minutes later. They described it as "resembling a C-54 without motors, wings or visible means of propulsion...smooth surfaced and streamlined." No balloons were reported in the area.

A few days later, at Ft. Richardson, Alaska, two officers told of sighting a spherical object about 10 feet in diameter flying through the air at tremendous speed, leaving no vapor trail.

Another incident still in "Saucer's" Unidentified File took place 5,000 feet above sea level in the Cascade mountains. [Fred. M. Johnson](#), a Portland prospector, told authorities he noticed a strange reflection in the sky and, looking up, spotted five or six discs about 30 feet in diameter. Johnson said he grabbed his telescope and watched the discs approximately 50 seconds while they banked in the sun. He described them as being round with tails, making no noise and not flying formation.

Johnson said that while the discs were in sight the hand on his compass-watch weaved wildly from side to side.

Perhaps the most super-sized "saucer" ever sighted was one an Oklahoma City man reported as "seeming to be the bulk of six B-29's." The observer, who holds a private pilot's license, spotted the object from the ground. He said at first it looked like a big white plane, but moving closer became perfectly round and flat with no protrusions. He heard no sound and reported the speed as "probably three times that of a jet."

FATAL SAUCER SEARCH

Tragedy struck at the flying saucer story early in 1948. On January 7, an unidentified object that looked like "an ice cream cone topped with red" was sighted over Godman Air Force base, Ft. Knox, Kentucky, by several military and civilian observers. The Godman tower requested a flight of four National Guard F-51's in the vicinity to investigate the phenomena.

Three of the planes closed in on the object, and reported it to be metallic and of "tremendous size." One pilot described it as "round like a tear drop, and at times almost fluid."

The flight leader, Capt. Thomas F. Mantell, contacted the Godman tower with an initial report that the

object was travelling at half his speed at 12 o'clock high.

"I'm closing in now to take a good look," he radioed. "It's directly ahead of me and still moving at about half my speed...the thing looks metallic and of tremendous size."

"It's going up now and forward as fast as I am...that's 360 MPH," Captain Mantell reported from his F-51." "I'm going up to 20,000 feet and if I'm no closer, I'll abandon chase."

The time was 1515 hours.

That was the last radio contact made by Mantell with the Godman tower.

Later that day his body was found in the wreckage of his plane near Ft. Knox.

Five minutes after Mantell disappeared from his formation, the two remaining planes returned to Godman. A few minutes later, one resumed the search -- covering territory 100 miles to the south as high as 33,000 feet -- but found nothing.

Subsequent investigation revealed that Mantell had probably blacked out at 20,000 feet from lack of oxygen and had died of suffocation before the crash.

The mysterious object which the flyer chased to his death was first identified as the Planet Venus. However, further probing showed the elevation and azimuth readings of Venus and the object at specified time intervals did not coincide.

It is still considered "Unidentified."

On the same day, about two hours later, a sky phenomena was observed by several watchers over Lockbourne Air Force Base, Columbus, Ohio. It was described as "round or oval, larger than a C-47, and travelling in level flight faster than 500 MPH." The object was followed from the Lockbourne observation tower for more than 20 minutes. Observers said it glowed from white to amber, leaving an amber exhaust trail five times its own length. It motioned like an elevator and at one time appeared to touch the ground. No sound was heard. Finally, the object faded and lowered toward the horizon.

FOREIGN SIGHTINGS

While the vast majority of saucers reported to Air Force intelligence have been seen over the continental United States, they have also appeared around the globe. Sightings have been reported, for example, over Newfoundland, Alaska, Asuncion, Paraguay; Gadjberg, Denmark; Lake Dorian (at the Yugoslav-Greek frontier), Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Turkey, Hawaii, etc.

In April of 1948, 1st Lt. Robert W. Meyers of the 67th Fighter Wing, 18th Fighter Group, Philippine Islands, was leading a flight of four F-47's when he sighted an unidentified aerial object about three miles away. As Meyers wheeled his fighter around, the object made a simultaneous 90° turn left and disappeared in about five seconds. No exhaust trails were observed. Meyers said the object appeared to be a flying wing type

of aircraft, silver in color and resembling a half moon with what seemed to be a dorsal fin barely perceptible.

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On May 8, 1948, citizens of Middleport, Ohio, reported sighting several disc-shaped objects travelling across the sky at two minute intervals. One observer said they resembled "a large clock face covered with radium and sailing through the air."

SPACE SHIP

Perhaps the fantastic saucer sighting in Technical Intelligence records was the widely-publicized "space ship" which two [Eastern Air Lines](#) pilot reported encountering in the skies around Montgomery, Alabama, last July. Presumably the same object was seen by ground observers at Robbins Air Force Base, Macon, Georgia, about an hour before. All reports agreed it was going in a southerly direction, trailing multi-colored flames and that it behaved like a normal aircraft insofar as disappearing from the line of sight was concerned.

The EAL pilots, Capt. C.S. Chiles and John B. Whitted described the phenomena as a "wingless aircraft," 100 feet long cigar shaped and about twice the diameter of a B-29 with no protruding surfaces."

"We saw it at the same time and asked each other, "What in the world is this?" Chiles told investigators. "Whatever it was, it flashed down toward us and veered to the left. It veered to its left and passed us about 700 feet to our right and above us. Then, as if the pilot had seen us and wanted to avoid us, it pulled up with a tremendous burst of flame from the rear and zoomed into the clouds, its prop wash or jet wash rocking our DC-3."

The flame-shooting mystery craft, as described by the EAL pilots had no fins, but appeared to have a snout similar to a radar pole in front, and gave the impression of a cabin with windows above.

Captain Chiles declared the cabin "appeared like a pilot compartment, except brighter. "He said the illumination inside the body itself approximated the brilliance of a magnesium flare.

"We saw no occupants," he told investigators. "From the side of the craft, came an intense, fairly dark blue glow that ran the entire

length of the fuselage...like a blue fluorescent factory light. The exhaust was a red-orange flame, with a lighter color predominant around the outer edges."

The pilots said the flame extended 30 to 50 feet behind the object and became deeper intensity as the craft pulled up into a cloud. Its speed was said to be about 1/3 faster than common jets.

In their investigation of the incident, Project "Saucer" personnel screened 225 civilian and military flight schedules and found that the only other aircraft in the vicinity at the time was an Air Force C-47. Application of the Prandtl theory of lift to the incident indicated that a fuselage of the dimensions reported by Chiles and Whitted could support a load comparable to the weight of an aircraft of this size at flying speeds in the sub-

sonic range.

The object is still considered "Unidentified."

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Another fantastic saucer tale came "out of the mouths of babes" in Hamel, Minn. Two children playing in their back yard one afternoon last August reported seeing a strange object about 12 feet off the ground descending between them.

"It hit the ground, spun around once, made a whistling noise and then shot straight up into the sky about 20 feet, stopped again and made more whistling noises," the children reported.

They told their parents the object then shot up about 10 feet more, maneuvering around tree branches and telephone wires, and suddenly sped off to the northwest. They said the disc was about two feet in diameter and of a dull gray color. Soil analysis of a recession in the earth where the children claimed the disc had landed proved negative.

* * * * *

A unique chapter in the saucer story was written last October by Lt. George F. Gorman of the North Dakota National Guard who said he had a 27-minute dogfight with a flying saucer in the skies over Fargo.

Gorman, manager of a Fargo construction company, told this story to project investigators.

On the night of October 1, 1948, he was preparing to land at the Fargo airport after a routine F-51 patrol flight. Cleared by the tower to land, Gorman noticed what appeared to be the tail light of another plane about another 1,000 yards away. He queried the tower and was told that the only other aircraft over the field was a Piper Cub which he could see outlined plainly below him. He saw no outline of anything around the moving light.

Gorman closed in to take a look at the mystery light.

"It was about six to eight inches in diameter, clear white and completely round with a sort of fuzz at the edges," he said. "It was blinking on and off. As I approached, however, the light suddenly became steady and pulled into a sharp left bank. I thought it was making a pass at the tower.

"I dived after it and brought my manifold pressure up to 60 inches but I couldn't catch up with the thing. It started gaining altitude and again made a left bank," Gorman told investigators.

"I put my F-51 into a sharp turn and tried to cut the light off in its turn. By then we were at about 7,000 feet. Suddenly it made a sharp right turn and we headed straight at each other. Just when we were about to collide I guess I got scared.

"I went into a dive and the light passed over my canopy at about 500 feet. Then, it made a left circle about 1,000 feet above, and I gave chase again."

Gorman said he cut sharply toward the light which was once more coming at him. When collision again seemed imminent, the object shot straight into the air. Gorman climbed after it to 14,000 feet when his plane went into a power stall. The object turned in a northwest north heading and disappeared.

During the "dogfight" Gorman said he noticed no deviation on his instruments, no sounds, odors or exhaust trails from the object.

Its speed, he said was excessive. At times during the chase, his F-51 was under full power with speed varying from 300 to 400 MPH. In all, the light was observed more than 27 minutes. Gorman described it as having depth although it appeared flat.

The mystery light was also seen by L.D. Jensen, Airport Traffic Controller at Fargo, who watched it with a pair of binoculars. He said he was unable to distinguish any shape or form other than what appeared to be the tail light of a very fast-moving craft.

In a certified statement Gorman, who was a pilot instructor for French military students during World War II, said he was convinced there was "thought" behind the maneuvers. He declared, "I am also convinced that the object was governed by the laws of inertia because its acceleration was rapid but not immediate and although it was able to turn fairly tight at considerable speed, it still followed a natural curve.

The object could out-turn and out-speed the F-51 and was able to attain a much steeper climb and to maintain a constant rate of climb far in excess of the Air Force Fighter.

"When I attempted to turn with the object I blacked out temporarily due to excessive speed," Gorman stated. "I am in fairly good physical condition and I do not believe there are many if any pilots who could withstand the turn and speed effected by the light and remain conscious."

From a psychological aspect, the Gorman incident raised the question, "Is it possible for an object without appreciable shape or known aeronautical configuration to appear to travel at variable speeds and maneuver intelligently?"

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The saucer sightings have spread over into 1949. On New Year's Day of this year, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Rush of Jackson, Mississippi, were coming in for a landing at Dixie Airport, Jackson, in a Stinson civilian plane when they sighted an unidentified aerial object they first described as being cigar-shaped with short, stubby wings and resembling a rocket. The Rushes later changed their description to a "wingless aircraft." They said it was about 60 feet long and 10 feet in diameter, with one end tapered to a four foot trailing edge. It crossed 500 feet in front of them, they reported, turned to the southwest, accelerated from a speed of about 200 MPH to 500 MPH and flew out of sight. Rush is a former USAF pilot and both he and his wife hold private pilots licenses.

ASTRONOMICAL ORIGINS

Preliminary study of more than 240 domestic and 30 foreign incidents by astrophysicist Hynek indicates that an overall total of about 30 percent can probably satisfactorily be explained away as astronomical phenomena.

For example, on February 18, 1948, a terrific explosion high in the sky over Northern Kansas rocked buildings, broke windows and terrified residents over a wide section of Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

Fantastic tales were associated with the phenomena. A Stockton, Kansas, farmer reported that shortly before the explosion he saw a strange "saucer" hovering over his home. He said when he came within about six feet of the object it stopped in the air almost level with his face and "wobbled around for an instant with fire belching out and then being sucked back in."

The farmer described the object as about four feet long and shaped "something like a funnel."

Suddenly sparks showered from it, and the fire increased as if a fuse had been lighted, he declared.

"It took off in a northwest direction very fast, gaining altitude as it went," he told investigators. "My wife came out and watched it fly off leaving a trail of smoke. Suddenly a great cloud of smoke appeared in the sky and a few seconds later we heard a terrible explosion. I could feel the heat from where the object had come near the ground."

Scores of residents over the country side reported seeing flashes of light and hearing the explosion. The object left a smudge of bluish-white smoke extending across a wide segment of the sky.

Although the phenomena was immediately thought to be a fireball, some mystery and "saucer talk" surrounded it until definite proof came the following April. Oscar Manning, Texas astronomer, reported that meteorites had been recovered, including a 109 pound piece which was discovered embedded about two feet in the soil. It was an "achondrite," -- technical name for an unusual type of stony meteorite.

On the same day that Kenneth Arnold saw his Mt. Rainier saucers, Lt. Gov. Donald S. Whitehead of Idaho said he spotted a comet-shaped object hanging motionless in the western Idaho sky, which seemed, after a time, to disappear below the horizon with the rotation of the earth.

In his recent report, Dr. Hynek said it seemed likely Lt. Governor Whitehead observed either the planet Saturn or Mercury. A bright planet shining through the cirrus clouds could give the impression of a comet-like object, he stated.

On July 20, 1947, observers off the Newfoundland coast reported seeing a series of silver to reddish flashes in the sky, although the object from which they came was not visible. Dr. Hynek states in his report these flashes were probably nothing more than a fireball.

Early in the saucer sensation -- mid July of 1947 -- capture of a "flying disc" excited residents of Jackson,

Ohio. Later, however, the "saucer" was identified as a U.S. Army Signal Corps Radiosonde Transmitter used for gathering weather data.

BALLOONS

Various weather and research balloons have been found at the source of a great number of saucer incidents.

One of the most startling occurred last November at Camp Springs, Maryland. From a plane, an object illuminated by a continuous glowing white light was observed flying on a 360° pattern west to east over Andrews Air Force Base. As the pilot made a pass to check on the object he said it took definite evasive action. He switched his wing and tail navigation lights off, but as he again tried to close in, the "saucer" flew up and over his plane. He reported the mystery craft's speed as seeming to alternate from 80 MPH to five or six hundred MPH. The pilot said it appeared like an oblong ball with one light and no wings or exhaust flames visible. Smaller than a T-6 aircraft, this "saucer" was reported to be highly maneuverable and capable of near-vertical flight.

The mystery was cleared up when the object was identified positively as a cluster of cosmic ray research balloons.

On April 8, 1948 several witnesses reported seeing an object variously described as "an oblong silver streak" "a large cylindrical body resembling an opalescent mother of pearl stick" "a vaporous cylinder" and "a white sphere," was seen by several ground observers over Ashley and Delaware, Ohio. At Delaware, the airport and the Perkins Observatory were alerted, but both were unable to sight the object. Later, it was determined that weather balloons were in the area at the time of the sightings.

Weather balloons also appeared to be the answer to a "long cylindrical object" sighted in the skies between Everett and Bedford, Mass., by the pilot and navigator of a Pan American Airlines plane. They described it as being about the length of a P-40 fuselage and blunt at both ends.

Another strange "silver disc" sighted by an Air Force Lt. Col. over Tyndall Air Force Base, Montgomery, Ala. later was definitely identified as a weather balloon. Balloons were also blamed for a flurry of "disc" sightings which occurred in and around Indianapolis late last July.

Columbus, Ohio residents had their eyes on the skies early last August when several citizens reported seeing a round flying object, 20 to 30 feet in diameter, with a constant gray-black perimeter and transparent center. The object seemed to move at a slow, steady pace over the city, making no noise and occasionally issuing a thin trail of smoke. This was later positively identified as a carnival balloon.

Often, Wright Field laboratories are called on to make analysis of objects claimed to be fragments salvaged from "flying discs." The "flaming wheel" which fell on Bellefontaine, O., last December and stirred up the populace to a new saucer scare lost its mystery origin in Wright Field Labs. Remains of the "Wheel" underwent analysis which revealed they contained zinc, magnesium, sodium and lead, typical constituents of flares and other explosive devices. It is assumed the "wheel" was in reality a pistol flare fired from the

ground.

HOAXES

The nation's practical jokers and publicity seekers also have played a role in project "Saucer."

One of the biggest tempests was stirred up by two Tacoma, Wash., men, Fred Chrisman and Harold A. Dahl. In July, 1947, a few days after Kenneth Arnold's Mt. Rainier saucers hit the headlines, Dahl reported sighting six discs from a boat in which he was patrolling off Maury Island, Washington.

Dahl said one of the discs fluttered to earth and disintegrated, showering his boat with fragments which caused some damage and killed his pet dog. He and Chrisman then attempted to sell the story to a Chicago adventure magazine which in turn contacted Kenneth Arnold in Boise and asked him to check its authenticity.

Arnold went to Tacoma with Capt. Emil J. Smith, United Airlines pilot, who had also received "saucer" publicity when he reported seeing discs on the Fourth of July while on a routine flight over Boise.

From Tacoma, Arnold summoned two officers of Army A-2 Intelligence to aid in the investigation of Dahl and Chrisman's claim. Thus began a story of secret hotel meetings and mysterious anonymous telephone calls which ended in death for two of the participants and exposed the Tacoma disc story as a hoax.

At a meeting in the Winthrop Hotel, Dahl produced some fragments which he alleged came from the disc which damaged his boat. He related his entire story of the incident to Arnold, Smith and the two Army Intelligence men. The next day the two officers left to return to Hamilton Field, Calif., to participate in an Air Force Day program, taking some of the fragment with them for technical analysis.

But tragedy struck en route. The plane crashed, killing both officers although the crew chief and a hitch hiker -- the other two passengers -- parachuted to safety.

Shortly after the crash, newspapers and wire services in Tacoma began receiving a series of anonymous telephone calls informing them that the fallen B-25 had been carrying "flying disc" fragments and that the plane had been shot down from the air with a 20mm cannon by saboteurs. While one Tacoma paper hinted that the plane had been sabotaged because of the disc fragments it carried, a thorough investigation of the crash revealed no indication of foul play. (The crash was caused by a burned exhaust stack which in turn caught the left wing afire. The blazing wing broke from the fuselage and tore off the plane's tail.

The mysterious called added that a U.S. Marine Corps plane found a few weeks before on Mt. Rainier had also been shot down by the unidentified "saucer saboteurs."

On the day of the crash, Chrisman and Dahl took Captain Smith to view the boat which allegedly had been damaged by the falling disc.

"I saw what may have been repairs to the windshield and lights, but I was not personally satisfied that they were made as a result of the claimed incident," Smith told investigators.

Later under questioning, Chrisman and Dahl broke and admitted that the fragments they had produced were really unusual rock formations found on Maury Island and had no connection with the "flying discs".

They admitted telling the Chicago magazine that the fragments "could have been remnants of the discs" in order to increase the sale value of their story.

During the investigation, Dahl's wife consistently urged him to admit that the entire affair was a hoax, and it is carried as such in Project "Saucer" files.

July of 1947 was a banner month for the practical jokers. A Seattle, Wash., woman excitedly reported to police that a flaming flying disc had landed on her roof. The object, which was quickly extinguished, was turned over to the Federal agents and examined by Navy bomb and electronics experts. It consisted of a 28 inch circular piece of plywood cupped up on two sides and held in position by a wire stretched across the center. The letters "USSR" and "EYR" and a hammer and sickle were painted on the disc in white. Two radio tubes and a quart cylindrical shaped oil can were mounted on pieces of Bakelite inside the object and a cloth saturated with a turpentine-like substance and charred from burning was attached to it. Final consensus was that the disc could not fly and was undoubtedly the work of practical jokers.

The population of Shreveport, La., had its share of disc excitement when a resident reported seeing a "saucer" whirl through the air, shooting smoke and fire, and come to rest on a downtown thoroughfare. A police investigation, however, revealed that the "saucer" was the work of a prankster who launched the homemade disc from the top of a downtown office building as a joke on his boss. This "Saucer" employed a starter from a fluorescent light and two electric fan condensers.

A flying disc became big business in Black River Falls, Wisconsin, where the finder charged 50 cents admission for a look at the "saucer" until local police stepped in and shut it up in a bank vault. The contrivance, which was fashioned from plywood and cardboard was supposedly seen in flight near Black River Falls shortly before an electrician said he found it lying in deep grass on the town fairgrounds. After analysis at Mitchell Field, the following report was made:

"This contrivance is patently a hoax...it will be held for a reasonable length of time and then disposed of in the nearest ash receptacle."

Other remains of "grounded discs" were also determined to be hoaxes. Usually they were crudely contrived practical jokes. Analysis of the pieces of one "flying saucer" which crashed to the ground in a farmer's field at Danforth, Illinois, and burned the weeds in the area to a fine ash, revealed plaster of Paris fragments, part of an outmoded magnetic speaker diaphragm, Bakelite coil forms wrapped in enameled copper wire, a metallic box, the remains of an electronic condenser manufactured in New York City, and the vestiges of a metallic magnetic ring.

Of such things are some of the saucers made.

* * * * *

Letters voicing opinions on the origin of the saucers and advice on how to deal with them have teamed

into Project "Saucer" headquarters.

A Los Angeles man sent a wire to the Commanding General, USAF, advising that we "shoot down flying saucers, discs, skeet and wash tubs if of foreign origin and not American."

From an Oregon woman who reported seeing a series of saucers form up and spell out "PEPSI" came a suggestion that some foreign power was practicing code in our skies.

Another letter writer suggested that the saucer scare was in reality a "world-wide mapping survey expedition" being made by a world government of the "empire of oppressed and subjugated people of the earth" and led by "The Ancient Three' -- Who Were, Who Are and Who Will Be."

HOW INCIDENTS ARE INVESTIGATED

But the hoaxes and the crank letters in reality play a small part in Project "Saucer".

Actually, it is a serious scientific business of constant investigation, analysis and evaluation which thus far has yielded evidence pointing to the conclusion that much of the saucer scare is no scare at all, but can be attributed to astronomical phenomena, to conventional aerial objects, to hallucinations and to mass psychology.

But the mere existence of some yet unidentified flying objects necessitates a constant vigilance on the part of Project "Saucer" personnel, and on the part of the civilian population. Investigation of the phenomena is greatly stepped-up when observers report incidents as soon as possible to the nearest military installation or to Headquarters, AMC, direct.

When an incident comes to the attention of Project "Saucer" personnel it is first investigated by existing intelligence agencies in the vicinity of the sighting -- usually a nearby Air Force base, the FBI, or the local police. In some cases, personnel from AMC's Technical Intelligence Division fly to the scene themselves for on-the-spot interrogation.

A standard questionnaire is filled out by the observer under the guidance of interrogators and any supplementary information available is gleaned by investigators. Standard questions are stated simply and slanted so that they may be answered with reasonable accuracy by the most inexperienced observers. In each case, time, location, size and shape of object, approximate altitude, speed, maneuvers, color, length of time in sight, sound, etc., are carefully noted. This information is sent in its entirety, together with any fragments, soil specimens, photographs, drawings, etc., pertinent to the incident to Headquarters, AMC. Here, highly trained evaluation teams take over. The information is broken down and filed on summary sheets, plotted on maps and graphs and integrated with the rest of the Project material, thus giving an easily comprehended overall picture of Project "Saucer."

Then, duplicate copies of the data on each incident are sent to other investigating agencies including technical labs within AMC. These reports are studied in relation to many factors such as guided missile research activity, weather and many other atmospheric sounding balloon launchings, commercial and military

aircraft flights, flights of migratory birds and a myriad of other considerations which might furnish

explanations. Based on the possibility that the objects could be unidentified and unconventional types of aircraft, technical analysis is made of some of the reports to determine aerodynamic, propulsion and control features which would be required for the objects in question to perform as described in the reports.

Generally, the flying objects are divided into four groups; flying discs, torpedo or cigar shaped bodies with no wings or fins visible in flight, spherical or balloon-shaped objects and balls of light. The first three groups are capable of flight by aerodynamic or aerostatic means and can be propelled and controlled by methods known to aeronautical designers. As for the lights, their actions -- unless they were suspended from a higher object or were the product of hallucination -- remain thus far unexplained.

Eventually, reports from assisting laboratories and agencies are sent back to Project "Saucer" headquarters, often marking incidents closed. The project, however, is a young one -- much of investigation is still underway.

Currently, a psychological analysis is being made by AMC's Aero-Medical laboratory to determine what percentage of the incidents are probably based on errors of the human mind and senses. Available preliminary reports now indicate that a great number of sightings can be explained away as ordinary occurrences which have been misrepresented as a result of these human errors.

In this respect, the common dizziness known to medical science as "vertigo" is considered an important factor. Vertigo, which can be easily caused by the maneuvers and sudden accelerations of aircraft, makes objects appear to move in various directions although they actually are stationary. It is the opinion of aero medical men that at least some of the incidents of fast and highly maneuverable lights reported by pilots were actually due to vertigo or optical illusion.

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Much of the work of "saucer" personnel involves precise graphing, charting and pin pointing of incidents. A frequency graph compiled recently shows that saucer sightings began in this country on a small scale in January of 1947, and reached their peak in July of that year, shortly after the Mt. Rainier incident. They then fell off sharply for the rest of the year, but reoccurred in relative frequency in January, July, November of 1948. Reports coming to AMC now indicate a current low level of sighting -- about 12 a month at present.

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FROM ANOTHER PLANET

Since flying saucers first hit the headlines almost two years ago there has been wide speculation that the aerial phenomena might actually be some form of penetration of the earth from another planet.

Kenneth Arnold was pointed to for months as "the man who saw the Men from Mars."

Actually, astronomers are largely in agreement that only one member of the solar system besides Earth is

capable of supporting life. That is Mars. Even Mars, however, appears to be relatively desolate and inhospitable, so that a Martian race would be more occupied with survival than we are on Earth.

On Mars, there exists an excessively slow loss of atmosphere, oxygen and water against which intelligent beings, if they do exist there, may have protected themselves by scientific control of physical conditions. This might have been done, scientists speculate, by the construction of homes and cities underground where the atmospheric pressure would be greater and thus temperature extremes reduced. The other possibilities exist, of course that evolution may have developed a being who can withstand the rigors of the Martian climate, or that the race -- if it ever did exist -- has perished.

In other words, the existence of intelligent life on Mars, where the rare atmosphere is nearly devoid of oxygen and water and where the nights are much colder than our Arctic winters, is not impossible but is completely unproven.

The possibility of intelligent life also existing on the Planet Venus is not considered completely unreasonable by astronomers. The atmosphere of Venus apparently consists mostly of carbon dioxide with deep clouds of formaldehyde droplets, and there seems to be little or no water. Yet, scientists concede that living organisms might develop in chemical environments which are strange to us. Venus however, has two handicaps. Her mass and gravity are nearly as large as the Earth (Mars is smaller) and her cloudy atmosphere would discourage astronomy, hence space travel.

Reports of strange objects seen in the skies have been handed down through the generations. However, scientists believe that if Martians were now visiting Earth without establishing contact it could be assumed that they have just recently succeeded in space travel and that their civilization would be practically abreast of ours. This because they find it hard to believe that any technically established race would come here, flaunt its ability in mysterious ways over the years, but each time simply go away without ever establishing contact.

Astronomers, however, feel it particularly unlikely that a Martian civilization would be within a half century of our own state of advancement. Yet, in the last 50 years we have just begin to use aircraft and in the next 50 we will almost certainly start exploring space. Thus, it appears that space travel from another point within the Solar System is possible but very unlikely. Reports in Project "Saucer" files call the odds against it "at least a thousand to one."

OTHER STAR SYSTEMS

Outside the solar system other stars -- 22 in number -- besides the sun have satellite planets. The sun has nine. One of these, Earth, is ideal for existence of intelligent life. On two others there is a possibility of life. Therefore, astronomers believe reasonable the thesis that there could be at least one ideally habitable planet for each of the 22 other eligible stars.

In this line of reasoning the theory is also employed, of necessity, that man represents the average in advancement and development. Therefore, one half the other habitable planets would be behind man in development and other half ahead. It is also assumed that any visiting race could be expected to be far in advance of man. Thus, the chance of space travelers existing at planets attached to neighboring stars is very much greater than the chance of space-traveling Martians. The one can be viewed as almost a certainty (if

you accept the thesis that the number of inhabited planets is equal to those that are suitable for life and that intelligent life is not peculiar to earth.) Whereas the possibility of space visitors from Mars is very slight indeed.

There is only one stumbling block to a trip from such a distant planet to Earth. But it is a formidable block.

The nearest eligible star is one called Wolf 359. This is eight light years away. Travelling at 1/10th the speed of light -- that is 18,000 miles per second -- it would take a space ship pilot 80 years for a one-way trip to earth. And this speed is completely beyond the reach of any predicted level of rocket propulsion.

If a process could be created to convert a nuclear material into jet energy the time could be cut from 60 (sic) to 16 years from Wolf 359 to Earth.

SPACE SHIPS

The problems involved in the creation of the long idealized "Buck Rogers" type space ship are myriad. While a special purpose rocket can be made as maneuverable as is desired with very high performance, a high performance, a high performance space ship would be large and unwieldy and could hardly be designed to maneuver frivolously in the earth's atmosphere as the reported discs have done.

Also, such an aircraft could not carry sufficient extra fuel to make repeated descents into the earth's atmosphere.

Scientists say a vertically descending rocket might well appear as a luminous disc to a person standing directly below. Yet observers at a distance would surely be able to identify the rocket as such, and the exhaust should be easy to see.

Distribution has proved another factor in debunking the Man From Mars solution to the saucer riddle. With few exceptions all discs have been reported within the continental limits of the United States, whereas spacemen could be expected to scatter their visits more or less uniformly over the globe. The small area covered by the disc barrage points strongly to the belief that the flying objects are of earthly origin, be they physical or psychological.

Thus, although visits from outer space are believed to be possible, they are thought to be highly improbable. In particular, detailed reports made on study of individual incidents and the overall picture of project "Saucer" point to the fact that actions attributed to the flying objects reported during the last two years are inconsistent with the requirements for space travel.

The possibility that the "saucers" were supported by means of rays or beams was investigated and debunked. By "rays" or "beams" are meant either purely electromagnetic radiation or else radiation which is largely corpuscular like cathode rays, cosmic rays or cyclotron beams.

Any device thus propelled would have to be fundamentally a reaction device. The basic theory of such devices is that a given amount of energy is most efficiently spent if the momentum thrown back or down is

large. This means that a large mass should be given a small acceleration -- a theorem well understood by helicopter designers.

Beams or rays to the contrary, a small mass is given a very high velocity, and consequently enormous powers -- greater than the total world's power capacity -- would be needed to support even the smallest object by such means.

Several unorthodox means of supporting or propelling a solid object have been considered, including the fiction writers' old stand-by, the anti-gravity shield, but all have been found impractical. This, in the opinion of investigating scientists lends credence to the assumption that the unidentified flying objects are supported and propelled by some normal means, or else they are not solids.

Possibilities that the saucers are foreign aircraft have also been considered. But the reported performance of the discs is so superior to anything we have yet approached in this country that it is considered only an accidental discovery of "a degree of novelty never before achieved" could suffice to explain such devices.

The possible existence of some sort of strange extra-terrestrial animals has also been remotely considered, as many of the objects described acted more like animals than anything else. However, there are few reliable reports on extra-terrestrial animals.

SUMMARY

All of the information so far presented in project "Saucer" on the possible existence of space ship from another planet or of aircraft propelled by an advanced type of atomic power plant have been largely conjecture.

To sum up, no definite conclusive evidence is yet available that would prove or disprove the possibility that a portion of the unidentified objects are real aircraft of unknown or unconventional configuration.

Many sightings by qualified and apparently reliable witnesses have been reported. However, each incident has unsatisfactory features such as the shortness of time the object was under observation, the great distance from the observer, vagueness of description or photographs, inconsistencies between individual observers, lack of descriptive data, etc.

In so far as the aero dynamic superiority of the disc-like phenomena is concerned the circular platform has not been used in representative aircraft, either military or civilian, because the induced drag is excessively high.

Spherical or balloon shaped objects are also not usually considered as efficient aircraft. Drag is high and the energy expended to develop lift by aerodynamic means is excessive.

The obvious explanation for most of the spherical shaped objects reported, as already mentioned, is that they are meteorological or similar type balloons. This, however, does not explain reports that they travel at high speed or maneuver rapidly. But "Saucer" men point out that the movement could be explained away as

an optical illusion or actual acceleration of the balloon caused by a gas leak and later exaggerated by observers.

The most reasonable explanation for the reported "balls of light" is that they were suspended from balloons or some other means of support not visible at night, and that the violent maneuvers sometimes reported in those cases were due to optical illusion.

There are scores of possible explanations for the scores of different type sightings reported. Many of the aerial phenomena have been positively identified. However, the correct tagging of the remaining percentage is still the job of Project "Saucer."

The "saucers" are not a joke. Neither are they a cause for alarm to the population. Many of the incidents already have answers, Meteors, Balloons, Falling stars. Birds in flight. Testing devices, etc. Some of them still end in question marks.

It is the mission of the AMC Technical Intelligence Division's Project "Saucer" to supply the periods.

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