

June, 1979

Holes in the Ground, et al

In the first half of December, 1978, a man was driving home down a road in the Teulon, Manitoba, area, when he saw a flash of colored light above him. It was of short duration, but long enough to detect movement downward, and a color shift from red to green. Rounding a corner, he came upon a field where he judged the object should have fallen. In the field, about $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile distant, was a green glow, about one degree of arc in width. The witness observed the glow for approximately 1½ minutes, then departed. Three to four days after the incident, the witness went to the field in question, and found a large (15-20 ft. diameter) hole in the area where he had seen the glow. He related his discovery to a friend, who in turn notified the National Research Council's "meteorite investigator" in Winnipeg. This person went to the site, and concluded that the hole was not formed by a meteorite or falling debris, but offered little in the way of explanation, other than "probably heavy digging equipment". The NRC investigator did not interview the farmer who owned the field in question.

Investigations by the Manitoba Centre for UFO Studies revealed that the hole had been dug by the field's owner with a caterpillar tractor. However, the flash of light and the glow in the field remain without full explanation, though the flash may be attributed to a bright fireball. The witness is certain he observed the glow in the area near the hole.

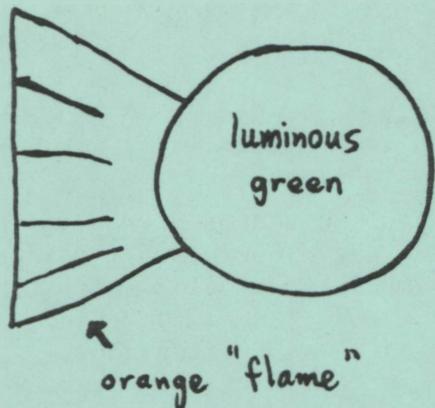
In November of 1978, a man was sitting in his home near Lac du Bonnet, Manitoba, when he heard a loud crash, "as if the basement wall had cracked", followed by a mild "earth tremor". The next day, the man found a jagged hole, 18-20 inches in diameter, in the exact center of a frozen-over dugout. The ice was cracked in zig-zag rays emanating from the hole. The National Research Council does not believe that a meteorite was responsible, but rather an air or gas bubble breaking through the ice. However, "just in case", they have asked the man to let them know if he finds anything when he drains the pond this summer.

More Bugs

It was reported in the last issue that a Fortean "bug-fall" occurred in Winnipeg in the late 19th century, described in an old issue of Scientific American, and noted by Charles Fort. Well, the February, 1979, issue of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society Newsletter (number 50) reported that an almost exact duplicate of the event happened on August 27, 1978. "The sky was overcast and the humidity was high." At 4:45 pm, "the air was full of flying insects." The insects were identified as ants, both winged male and female specimens. Fifteen queens and over four hundred males were cleaned from a pool with dimensions twenty by forty feet.

An unnamed professor at the University of Winnipeg apparently explained that the event was "not an unusual occurrence," and that there "may have been a number of colonies in the area, all growing under similar conditions and so they all released newly-hatched queens and males at the same time." However, the professor was unable to "completely identify the specimens". The similarities between the older and recent incidents are striking. Has the mystery of the falling bugs been solved?

Investigations are continuing in the Interlake regions of Manitoba, where UFO sightings are continually cropping up. One recently-investigated case took place on



January 12, 1968, at about 8:30 PM. A lone witness was in his truck in an Interlake town, when he happened to glance upward through the front windshield to the west. Moving towards him and to his right (on a northeasterly course) was a slow-moving object, roughly the size of the full moon. The main "body" of the object was a green "ball", trailed by an apparently solid orange "tail". The object and its tail were both sharply defined, though the tail had several "dark streaks", as if there were many "exhausts". The witness' sketch is

reproduced here, drawn over ten years after the incident. The object was reported to move at a speed comparable to that of a small aircraft, and was in view for at least 20 seconds before it was obscured from view by some trees. There was no wind and no noise, according to the witness. The witness speculated that the object seemed to have been travelling between two microwave towers in the west and the north.

An interesting postscript concerns the actual investigation of the incident. The investigators of the sighting had asked the local RCMP officer-in-charge for directions to the witness' home. After travelling to his residence, the investigators were surprised to find the RCMP officer observing them from under cover of some bushes a few hundred yards distant. When leaving the witness' residence, the investigators again noticed the RCMP patrol car parked in a different location, but still within view down the block. It is interesting to speculate whether this is a case of paranoia or reality.

In Clear Daylight

February 21, 1979, saw a daytime fireball observed from several northern Manitoba communities, with most observations coming from Thompson. The brilliant bolide was seen for several seconds shortly after 8:00 AM, before it burned out, leaving behind a visible cloud of smoke. Triangulation indicated that the meteorite may have hit an area east of the Nelson River, between Cauchon and Cotton Lakes.

Where Have All the UFO's Gone?

That's a good question. UFO sightings in Manitoba have shown a dramatic decrease, with next to none being reported so far in the current year. It appears that the flap which manifested itself in 1975 and continued for several years thereafter, has finally petered out. In some ways, this is very surprising. This spring was best remembered for The Great Flood of 1979, which forced evacuation of much of the Red River Valley. Living in the south of Winnipeg, an area also affected by the flood, I was amazed at the number of helicopters and light planes flying over the flooded areas. Both day and night, one could count between ten and fifteen in an hour. I expected that there would be at least some reports of UFO's called in to either myself or other UFO investigators, but there were none.

Even at this date of writing (mid-June 1979), there are no recent UFO reports for investigation. Many individuals are taking this time, however, to research UFO document cover-ups in the government, and get caught up with statistical analysis. The next few weeks might be interesting, since NORAD is currently on alert, keeping an eye on Skylab, due to fall soon. NORAD was recently put to a bit of a test when a Chinese satellite re-entered and fell over the U.S. Perhaps NORAD will pick up an anomalous blip or two in the coming months.

Citation Classics

Current Contents prints Citation Classics of notable science articles, giving readers the benefit of major articles of relevance to a particular field. It has been suggested to me that a similar review might be useful in a ufological publication. So, from time to time, I will publish reviews of exceptional articles, both pro and con, which have appeared in scientific literature concerning UFO's. The first of the series is "Social Intelligence About Anomalies: The Case of UFO's", by Ron Westrum, published in Social Studies of Science, Vol. 7, 1977, pages 271-302.

In the article, Westrum discusses the methods by which scientists gain information about UFO's, and shows that these methods influence their rejection or acceptance of UFO reality. Westrum points out that "scientific beliefs are...determined by current scientific and engineering doctrine." Hence, it is not unusual to find that scientists often balk when confronted with reports of interstellar spaceships, and gray-skinned aliens from another planet.

Westrum also discusses the nature of UFO experiences, including Hynek's "escalation of hypotheses" and Cantril's "critical ability". He also makes the observation that UFO reports are "contagious", and often are reflected in other reports, suggesting that such reports are not independent. A very valuable section of the article deals with the actual reporting of sightings, including the actions of the media, U.S. Air Force and UFO groups. A point raised is that the scientific community is very interested in detecting radio signals from extraterrestrials, yet practically refuses to consider the possibility that spacecraft from such beings may be in the Earth's skies.

This article is an excellent review of scientific attitudes toward UFO's, and should be read by skeptics and believers alike. Westrum's attitude in the article is neither strongly pro nor con, but approaches the subject with calm and logical objectivity.

Just in Time

As this issue went into production, two independent UFO reports reached me, so I delayed the next sections in order to include investigation details. On 18 June, 1979, two witnesses observed a "brilliant" red flashing light, initially stationary in the southern sky at about 45 degrees in elevation. The object performed an irregular series of manoevers at low speed, then sped off into the eastern sky, where it travelled apparently away from the observers until they stopped watching. The witnesses reported no engine sounds, and described the object as being "different than a plane".

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Recently added to my collection of UFO literature was Messengers of Deception (And/Or Press, 1979) by Jacques Vallee. This book may be very disturbing to some people, since it represents one of the furthest swings to the left that I have observed in modern ufology. Vallee has been examining contactee reports for several years now, and in his latest book suggests that such stories deserve more attention than normally given by most researchers. This is a direct result of his theory of "conditioning" which he described in earlier works. If UFO's do represent some form of manipulation by entities terrestrial or extraterrestrial, Vallee says, then contactees represent individuals who are greatly affected by the direction. Vallee indicates that the manipulators may be super-secret government agents, unknown to everyone but themselves. The theory of government origin of UFO's has been last on the list of most ufologists for years now, so it is hard to judge reaction to this. At one point, Vallee encourages paranoia by claiming that some friends of UFO researchers may be working for the manipulators, "milking" the ufologists for information.

The book also contains some interesting thoughts on cattle mutilations, a welcome addition to any UFO tome discussing secret goings-on. In all, the book is an excellent source of contemporary thinking on UFO's, and I recommend it to all serious researchers. It is not, however, for casual readers and armchair ufologists who might be led astray by some of Vallee's comments.

Coverup

It is hard for me to assess reports of government cover-up of UFO reports, since I have had little direct contact with such incidents. The stories I usually hear are those from individuals who have friends, "high up" or with the forces, that have eyewitnessed a UFO sighting report being sent to a secret telex number, or a special "mobile UFO unit" being dispatched to a quickly-hushed-up UFO landing site. Almost without exception, these key witnesses will not talk openly about their experiences to anyone in a position to properly handle such reports, for fear of being reprimanded and/or losing his/her job.

I often credit apparent government cover-up with pure ineptitude, topped with a generous amount of tangled, bureaucratic, applied logic. It's amazing what red tape and skewed thinking can do. But is there a cover-up? I personally believe there is, but to what degree I am not sure. Both CAUS (Citizens Against UFO Secrecy) in the states and a determined collection of researchers in Canada have uncovered government documents which were previously denied existence by officials. The tips of the icebergs have been uncovered, but how deep are the darn things?

And on that cheery note, I leave you until next issue.

The Swamp Gas Journal
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