

UFO INVESTIGATOR



NICAP ■ 3535 UNIVERSITY BLVD. WEST, SUITE 23 ■ KENSINGTON, MARYLAND 20795 ■ A NONPROFIT CORPORATION FOUNDED 1956

FIRST FLAP IN SIX YEARS RESURRECTS UFOs AS NATIONAL CONTROVERSY

What started as a wave of sightings in Georgia and nearby states has escalated into the first massive UFO flap in North America since 1967.

The onslaught began in late September as sighting activity that had ignited in Georgia a few weeks earlier expanded like brushfire throughout the Southeast. Observations were being reported faster than police and other authorities could follow them up, some involving dozens or hundreds of witnesses in a single community. As this issue of the newsletter went to press, cases were still flowing in from overworked NICAP Regional Investigators and busy NICAP members who have been clipping news articles and relaying other information.

Few areas of the country have been spared by the flap, which spilled over into Canada at the same time it was spreading to western and northern parts of the U.S. Sightings have been especially heavy in New England, the Great Lake states, parts of the Midwest, and the West Coast. For reasons that are still not apparent, Ohio has been the source of many reports, including at least three involving photographs.

The reports span a broad range of events, from alleged encounters with humanoid creatures to unknown objects spotted by pilots and tracked on radar. Some of the best publicized cases include:

—*Pascagoula, Miss., produced one of the most widely reported UFO accounts since 1947 following disclosure by two local shipyard workers that they had allegedly been abducted the night of Oct. 11 by three alien beings who subjected them to physical examination aboard a spacecraft and released them unharmed. The two men's story (see separate article in this issue) created an instant sensation and took on additional importance when news services reported that Dr. Allen*

Hynek and Dr. James Harter, two well known figures in the UFO field, had investigated the case and found it credible.

—*Ohio Governor John Gilligan and his wife reported seeing a strange amber-colored beam of light hanging in the sky near Flint, Mich., on Monday night, Oct. 15. They spotted it from their car and were able to keep it in view for 30-35 minutes, they said. It was visible in the southeastern sky and kept fading in and out. It seemed to be shining through a cloud cover. The Governor said it could not have been a reflection of the moon, which was visible in the northeast at the same time he and Mrs. Gilligan watched the UFO. They finally lost sight of the strange light near Anri Arbor.*

—*A truckdriver in southeastern Missouri reportedly encountered a bright light that closed in on him from behind his vehicle as he watched in his rear-view mirror. When he put his head out the truck window to get a better look, a "large ball of fire" struck him in the face, knocking his glasses off. He managed to bring the tractor-trailer to a stop but was*

unable to regain use of his eyes for several hours. His wife was with him in the truck but did not see the light. Subsequent examination of the glasses indicated the frames had been subjected to heat, causing one of the lenses to drop out. The man's wife drove him to a nearby hospital where he was treated and released. The strange experience occurred in the early morning hours of Oct. 3.

—*James Thornhill, a civil defense radar operator in Columbia, Miss., told news reporters he tracked a strange target on his radar set Oct. 14. As the target moved to within three miles of the station, it stopped and the set suddenly "jammed." After trying for 15 minutes to determine what had happened, Thornhill said the equipment corrected itself and worked normally. By that time, the unidentified blip had disappeared from the scope. "I've never seen anything quite like this," Thornhill commented.*

—*On the night of Oct. 17, 23-year-old Jeff B. Greenhaw, the one-man police force of Falkville, Ala., responded to a call from a woman who claimed a "space-*
(See Flap, Page 4)

Copter Crew Reports Near Miss With Strange Object Over Ohio

When Army Captain Lawrence J. Coyne left Columbus, Ohio, at 10:30 p.m. Oct. 18, he had no forewarning that his helicopter trip to Cleveland that night would be one of the most unusual flights he had ever made in 10 years of military flying.

Forty minutes after take-off, he and his three-man crew were traveling at 2500 feet on a northeast course in the vicinity of Mansfield. Suddenly, one of the crew, Staff Sgt. Robert Yanacsek, spotted a red

light on the eastern horizon. After watching it a few moments, Yanacsek advised Coyne that the light was moving and appeared to be heading directly toward the helicopter. Coyne immediately took over control of the aircraft and put it into a shallow dive.

As Coyne later described, "At 1700 feet I braced myself for the impact with the other craft. It was coming from our right side. I was scared. There had been so
(See Copter, page 2)

MISS. 'CONTACT' CASE REMAINS PUZZLE

One of the most provocative UFO experiences ever reported—the alleged “abduction” of two fishermen at Pascagoula, Miss., last month—continues to baffle investigators, who have used hypnosis, polygraphy, and other techniques in an attempt to verify or discredit the story.

The bizarre report came to light late Thursday night, Oct. 11, when two men, Charles Hickson and Calvin Parker, appeared at the Jackson County sheriff's office in Pascagoula and told deputies they had been seized by three misshapen creatures who emerged from a flying object near the pier where the men were fishing. According to their account, Hickson was grabbed by two of the creatures and “floated” into the spacecraft while the third creature transported Parker, who “went limp” and fainted before reaching the object. Once inside, Hickson said he was subjected to some form of physical examination by a football-sized device that reminded him of a “big eye.” After the examination was completed, both men were returned to the river bank and left uninjured.

Hickson's description of his alleged captors seemed straight out of a science fiction novel: bodies with wrinkled skin, claws instead of hands, feet rounded like an elephant's, cone-shaped projections where ears and nose should be, a slit for a mouth, and no eyes. Even harder to believe, the creatures supposedly levitated when they moved and walked over water as easily as land.

Hickson described his examination as painless and said he seemed to be suspended in mid-air while it was conducted. The interior of the craft, he reported, was brightly illuminated but devoid of any features or furnishings. All he could think about, he said, was, “They're going to take me away.”

The purported drama began, according to the men, sometime between 8 and 9 p.m. Oct. 11 when a “buzzing” sound caused them to turn around while they were fishing at the edge of the Pascagoula River. As they watched, a blue light approached and materialized into an elongated object that hovered just a few feet off the ground an estimated 20 yards behind them. Some kind of opening appeared at one end of the object, and the three occupants disembarked. Before they could resist, the creatures had

crossed over and taken hold of the two men.

Hickson estimates he and Parker were inside the strange object for perhaps 15 or 20 minutes, although they had no way of measuring this. No conversation took place, either between Hickson and Parker or between the men and their kidnapers. The only sound Hickson could remember was a “mumbling” made by one of the creatures. He heard this only once.

After the incident was over, Hickson and Parker debated for about two hours over what they should do. Hickson, who was quoted by the Knight News Service as saying he was so “weak-kneed I think I fell over,” finally went to his car and took a few swallows of whiskey from a bottle he left there. It was his first drink that night, he later told police. Parker does not drink.

On Saturday, Oct. 13, both men were interviewed by Dr. James Harder, engineering professor at the University of California at Berkeley, and Dr. Allen Hynek, professor of astronomy at Northwestern. Harter attempted to use hypnosis to regress the men through the alleged experience, but they became too emotionally upset to permit this. On Oct. 26, the day the two men were scheduled to undergo lie detector tests, Parker was hospitalized in his hometown of Laurel, Miss., for a “nervous condition.” He was released four days later, the same day Hickson took a polygraph examination at the sheriff's office in Pascagoula. Test results showed Hickson honestly believed he had experienced what he reported.

Hickson's testimony was also subjected to analysis by a new device called the Psychological Stress Evaluator (PSE). WLOX-TV in Gulfport, Miss., working in conjunction with NICAP, supplied a taped interview with Hickson and Parker to Dektor Counterintelligence and Security Inc., a company near Washington, D.C., that developed the PSE. The device measures emotional stress in vocal patterns. If used with interviews that have been structured to bring out both honest and potentially dishonest answers, the device can serve as an indicator of deception. This is the same basic principal of the polygraph.

PSE readings from the WLOX tape show definite patterns of stress in the answers of both men. Parker, when asked about his part in the reported encounter, indicated particular nervousness when he

answered, “I passed out.” Unfortunately, because the interviews were not structured for use with the PSE, these signs of emotion cannot be taken as evidence favorable or unfavorable to the report.

On the basis of available information, one of four possible explanations appears most likely for this case: 1) The events occurred as reported, 2) The witnesses are lying but are able to do so without detection by polygraph, 3) The witnesses were the victim of a hoax, or 4) The witnesses experienced some form of hallucination or dream that was extremely real to them.

Copter (Continued from page 1)

little time to respond. The thing was terrifically fast.”

Just as a collision seemed imminent, the object came to a stop about 500 feet above the copter, permitting Coyne and his crew to observe it. “It had a big, gray, metallic-looking hull about 60 feet long. It was shaped like an airfoil or a streamlined fat cigar. There was a red light on the front. The leading edge glowed red a short distance back from the nose. There was a center dome. A green light at the rear reflected on the hull. This light swiveled like a spotlight. It was shining brightly through the bubble canopy of our helicopter, completely flooding out our red instrument lights and turning everything inside green.”

Coyne got on the radio and tried to contact Mansfield Airport. The radio was functioning, but it would not transmit or receive. “I couldn't get the keying sound and there was no reception,” said Coyne.

With the green light still illuminating the copter, Coyne looked at his instruments. He was shocked to see the needle of the altimeter rising. “I could hardly believe it was reading 3500 feet, climbing to 3800. I had made no attempt to pull up. All controls were set for a 20-degree dive. Yet we had climbed from 1700 to 3500 feet with no power in a couple of seconds with no G-forces or other noticeable strains. There was no noise or turbulence either.”

The eerie ascent lasted only a brief moment, then “we felt a bounce and the other craft took off to the northeast,” said Coyne. After seven or eight minutes, radio contact was established with the Akron-Canton Airport.

Flap Yields High Noise Level

As any experienced researcher knows, not everything reported as a UFO turns out that way. Reports pouring into NICAP include hundreds of pranks, hoaxes, and misidentifications, many of which have provoked widespread confusion and alarm. Typical examples include:

- A Gulfport, Miss., cab driver who claimed he encountered a weird creature on a highway near Biloxi on Oct. 16 confessed the story was a hastily contrived alibi he made up when a fellow hacker caught him sleeping in his cab. The driver had claimed the creature tapped on the car windshield with a crab-like claw.

- Five volunteer firemen in Greenwood, Del., were arrested Oct. 17 and charged with disorderly conduct after they set up a fake flying saucer near a highway, causing a traffic backup of miles. The bogus UFO was decorated with orange lights powered by a portable generator.

- On Tuesday night, Oct. 16, police in Xenia, Ohio, closed in on three men who had dressed up in aluminum foil and mounted coat hangers on their heads in hopes of scaring passing motorists. One of the hoaxers got away, but the other two were taken in and warned to quit their dangerous stunt.

- Football fans at Louisiana State University were victims of a hoax on Oct. 20 when a home-made balloon carrying flickering candles was launched over the LSU stadium at Baton Rouge during halftime. Police tracked the glowing device in a helicopter.

- An unidentified woman who claimed she was psychic notified an Alabama television station that UFOs would be visible over a highway west of Mobile on the evening of Oct. 17. When the station announced it would send a camera crew to photograph the aerial visitors, over 1000 cars converged on the site, causing a major jam. No UFOs were sighted.

- Two men, 18 and 21, were nabbed by state troopers at Jonesboro, Ark., on Oct. 21 after numerous complaints from motorists who said the men were jumping in front of their cars. According to police, the men were "covered from head to toe" in tin foil. The men were fined \$25 each plus court costs.

A CASE FOR PANIC

On Sunday evening, October 30, 1938, millions of Americans were brought up short by a radio announcement that alien visitors with leathery faces had landed in New Jersey. Within minutes, police switchboards in cities throughout the country were flooded with calls from hysterical citizens inquiring about the reported invaders. Before the bizarre episode was over, fear and confusion would send thousands of people into the streets, seeking sanctuary from what many felt was "the end of the world."

Last month, on the 35th anniversary of the broadcast, the question of public panic no longer seemed as relevant as it did at the time of Orson Welles's famous radio program. Yet, in towns and cities throughout the Southeast and other areas, feelings of alarm were mounting as news media reported UFO sightings in communities from Florida to California. In particular, press accounts of three grotesque creatures who allegedly embarked from a spacecraft in Mississippi and kidnapped two local fishermen created scenes of fright and distress at many locations.

Reports reaching NICAP from Louisiana indicated that mothers were keeping their children home from school until the publicity had died down. A woman in Maryland called NICAP to find out what to do about the rash of reports. She said she was calling for a group of neighbors who were upset by the many news stories and radio bulletins. A newspaper in Ohio reported that one man was wakened from his sleep by a "shrieking sound" that left him too frightened "to open my door." The same paper said a woman driving toward Cleveland was startled by a "green glowing object" that passed near her car and appeared to land in some trees. Fearful that the object was radioactive, she rushed home and called police.

According to a story in the Los Angeles Times, a police official in Mississippi described local citizens as "getting hysterical." "There are many people here who are skeptical of some of these reports," he said, "but that doesn't mean they aren't afraid. . . .

Many are afraid to come out at night." The same story quoted a Mississippi woman as saying she and her friends were doing all their shopping in the daytime and making sure their children did not leave the house at night. "We don't want to take any chances," she said.

Apprehension temporarily gripped the community of Longview, Texas, in mid October when silver strands of an unknown material fell from the sky in various sections of town. Police phone lines were beset by callers who had read of recent UFO sightings in the area and were worried that the strands might be a dangerous substance from outer space. Local authorities finally determined the material was common spider webs.

Dr. Joseph Bruening, sociologist at the University of Mississippi and a NICAP member, was quoted by Associated Press as saying "The problem of panic is still a problem. People have never forgotten the H.G. Wells broadcast and the effect it had."

Apparently, Dr. Bruening was not alone in this conclusion. Two radio stations in Chattanooga, Tennessee, cancelled plans to air the "War of the Worlds" program on October 30, due to the amount of excitement caused by UFO reports in the Southeast.

In a poll taken by the Chattanooga News-Free Press, many people expressed apprehension about UFOs. If an invasion of alien creatures "actually happened," said one man, "I think I would be scared silly." A woman who said she was a strong skeptic about UFOs admitted that actual confrontation with UFO occupants would "surprise and scare" her. "I guess I'd faint," she added. Another woman interviewed in the poll made the same comment: "I'd probably be petrified." Her view was shared by men and women alike, some of whom said they would not hesitate to use firearms if they felt threatened. One man said he would grab any weapon he could find if a strange creature "exhibited hostile behavior."

Perhaps, in 35 years, the American public has not lost its fear of the unknown as much as most citizens might assume.

Flap (Continued from page 1)

ship" had landed in the field behind her house. When Greenhaw arrived at the field, he found nothing out of place but decided to inspect further. As he drove down a side road, he was surprised by a figure in a silvery suit, who he assumed was a prankster. Going along with the gag, he stopped the car and called out to the figure, "Howdy, stranger." The figure said nothing but continued to walk toward the car. Greenhaw grabbed his Polaroid camera and began taking pictures. The figure approached to within about 10 feet, then stopped. Apprehensive, Greenhaw got back in his car and turned on his police beacon. The figure started running down the road, with Greenhaw in pursuit. In his excitement, the young policeman accelerated too hard, causing the tires to spin on the road's loose gravel, sending the car off the edge of the road. When the dust cleared and Greenhaw got the car back on the road, the figure had gone. "It scared me to death," said Greenhaw.

—Also on the evening of Oct. 17, a 35-year-old automobile salesman from Athens, Ga., Paul Brown, reported he encountered a cone-shaped object that landed on U.S. 29 about 300 feet in front of his car, forcing him to make a panic stop. His first sensation of the object was a bright light passing over the car, accompanied by a "swishing sound." When the object landed, two small creatures allegedly emerged in silver suits and white gloves. They seemed to have reddish facial skin and white hair, although light from the object hampered Brown's vision. Brown nervously got out a pistol he keeps in the car and stepped halfway out of the vehicle. The creatures, according to Brown, turned around and went back into the object, which then extinguished its lights and lifted off, producing a whooshing noise. As it moved away, Brown fired several shots in its direction with no apparent effect. Police later investigated the incident and found tire marks on the highway but no sign of the alleged object. Brown was driving near Danielsville, Ga., when the encounter supposedly took place.

—A strange object with multicolored lights was spotted by two people, Mr. and Mrs. G.F. Brown, while driving near Tupelo, Miss., at about 8:30 p.m. Oct. 3.

When a National Park Ranger stopped to investigate the couple's parked car, he also observed the glowing object, whose size he compared to a "two-bedroom house." It had red, yellow, and green lights on its underside, he reported. The ranger, Thomas Westmoreland, said he is an amateur astronomer and knows how people can exaggerate "what they want to see." "I know I saw this," he said.

—Sheriff's deputies in Washington Parish, La., reportedly chased five red-orange objects through a 12-mile stretch of woods on Monday night, Oct. 15. When one of the deputies turned on his red patrol lights, the objects appeared to descend and approach the deputy's car. Scared, the deputy quickly cut the lights off. The objects vanished.

As reports like these flashed on news wires across the country, an atmosphere of curiosity and uneasiness swept many communities. Policemen, news photographers, and private citizens tried to take pictures of the puzzling aerial activity, not always with success. Ken Chamberlain, a cameraman with the Columbus Dispatch (Ohio), snapped a series of nighttime shots over Columbus on Oct. 17 after police received over 150 calls from people reporting strange lights in the sky. A week earlier, Robert Bales, a patrolman in New Lebanon, Ohio, photographed a bright light that he and other local residents watched for over 30 minutes around 8 p.m. At Union, Ohio, UPI reported that a police officer had taken a picture of a red and green object that blinked and hovered in the sky for an estimated five minutes.

Ohio was also the scene of a mysterious phone call on Sunday night, Oct. 14, to police at Dayton, who said a frantic woman claimed an elongated object had landed in a field near her house, killing two cows. Although the directions she gave to her rural homesite were vague, police dispatched several cruisers to the area, plus an airplane. After three hours of fruitless search, the law officers gave up.

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GIFT IDEA

If you would like to give a NICAP membership as a Christmas gift, be sure to send your order right away.

A MESSAGE FROM NICAP

NICAP members who held membership prior to 1970 will remember that appeals for contributions were commonplace. Fortunately it has not been necessary to make appeals for the last 3 years, and NICAP has been able to operate without the added income resulting from appeals. We are deeply appreciative of the contributions received without solicitation and would like to point out that contributions enable your organization to conduct research which could not be done without this added source of income.

The recent increase in UFO sightings has inundated NICAP with reports and queries from individuals and the news media. Any contributions that can be made at this time will be of great assistance to NICAP in the vitally important task of gathering data and conducting the necessary research to evaluate these reports.

NICAP receives numerous questions about how to make a donation. Some of the most frequently asked include:

Q. How should my check be made out for a donation?

A. To NICAP and mailed to Suite 23, 3535 University Blvd. W., Kensington, Md., 20795.

Q. Should I designate a specific use for my donation?

A. Donations may be made for a specific project, but it is best not to do this. Circumstances change and a project which seems to have the highest priority today may be overshadowed tomorrow. Designated funds may be used for no other purpose than that designated. NICAP's Board of Governors establishes and approves the spending of all NICAP funds, and flexibility to meet changing circumstances is needed.

Q. Is my donation tax deductible?

A. Yes, all donations to NICAP are 100% deductible in computing your taxable income. Donations should be listed on your tax form in the same place that you list church and other charitable donations. NICAP's name should be spelled out and the wording "a 501(C)3 tax exempt organization" shown in parentheses after the name. Your cancelled check is proof of donation.

Q. Can donations take a form other than cash?

A. Yes, stock, land, etc. may be donated. The value of such donations should be determined by your accountant to insure the most favorable tax write-off.

Q. How do I make a bequest to NICAP in my will?

A. Your attorney should work out the details. Bequests to NICAP are tax deductible to the estate.