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us for 40 years?

Have space visitors been among

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Armed with the government's own records, Robert Hastings 'proves' flying saucers exist

BY J. W. SCHOMISCH
The New Mexican Staff

Robert Hastings has been searching for the truth about UFOs for nearly 20 years.

Hastings, in northern New Mexico recently for lectures and research, said UFOs are real and that for nearly 40 years U.S. government agencies have kept secret evidence of their existence. He has a stack of evidence: records he says he's gotten through Freedom of Information requests from the U.S. government.

"I can sympathize with their motivations for keeping things secret but I personally believe the public has a right to know the truth," he said.

Hastings said government officials decided early in the 1950's not to reveal the evidence it had gathered since the first unidentified flying objects were reported in 1948. "A decision was made to keep the public in the dark about UFOs."

A major factor in deciding not

to reveal the information was the concern over causing a public panic, he said. "They were worried about another Orson Welles panic. Remember that happened only about 10 years before this and the memory was still fresh."

Hastings was referring to the historic Mercury Theatre radio production of H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds*, the sci-fi story of a Martian invasion of Earth. The broadcast, which modernized the tale, so alarmed the public that it created a massive panic.

And Hastings also believes the secrecy continues today because the "visitors" seem to have an extreme interest in U.S. nuclear weapons and military installations. "I think (the government) is worried about the public reaction if and when the public finds out about the nuclear weapons related activity," he said.

Hastings said for 18 months in 1948-49 there were more than 150 UFO sightings in New Mexico, mostly near Los Alamos, Holloman Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range, and Kirtland Air Force Base.

Hastings has copies of what he says are Federal Bureau of Investigation memos from 1949 and 1950 that detail the New Mexico sightings. One of the 1950 memos from Guy Hottel, an FBI special agent, to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover said "three so-called flying saucers had been recovered

crashed in northern New Mexico, perhaps in the Jemez Mountains near Los Alamos.

Other sightings were reported around Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the Hanford Military Reservation in Washington. Both are involved in the nation's nuclear weapon production.

Hastings said in the 1960s and 1970s there were a number of sightings reported around nuclear missile silos throughout the nation. The last sighting for which he has documented evidence was in August 1980 at Kirtland Air Force Base.

The intelligence report he has said a craft, which guards at first thought was a helicopter, was reported near a bunker containing nuclear material. When security guards arrived, they found a circular craft and when they approached it shot straight up into the air and took off.

Hastings said his information is based primarily on Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Security Agency, and military files that were among 981 documents released to W. Todd Zechel, a former NSA employee, who received the documents after a lengthy Freedom of Information court battle in the 1970s.

"During the lawsuit the CIA conceded it had more than 10,000 classified files on UFOs. There is still a lot more information to get."

Hastings said he travels the nation telling what he knows about the UFO coverup because "I have a strong conviction in the public's right to know. This is tremendously significant information and very few people have the information and even fewer want to talk. Somebody has to do it."

Hastings said he was an Air Force brat and a close encounter of the first kind in Montana got him interested in UFO's and their relationship to the nation's defenses.

Hastings said he was in an air traffic control tower in Montana in March of 1967 when there were multiple sightings of unknown aircraft. As soon as they were sighted Hastings was "hustled out of the room."

He later learned the objects were watched for about 30 minutes around missile silo locations and were neither airplanes nor helicopters. "They were observed at speeds of up to 4,800 miles per hour and doing things that neither ours nor Soviet craft could do at the time."

He had a passing interest in UFOs and their sightings until 1973 when he started interviewing former and retired military — principally Air Force — officers about sightings and government reaction. "The deeper I got into it the more information I wanted to find out."

And his quest began.

In New Mexico. "The ships were 50 feet in diameter and circular with raised center."
"Each one was occupied by three bodies of human shape but only three feet tall, dressed in metallic cloth of a very fine texture," the memo continued. "Each body was bandaged in a manner similar to the blackout suits used by speed flyers and test pilots."
Hastings believes the craft