

AUG 13 1986

White, spiraling object throbs in eastern skies

Associated Press

People scattered over much of the eastern United States reported a mysterious light in the night sky, and residents of Kentucky said they heard a boom and felt their houses shake.

The phenomenon late Tuesday coincided with the Perseid meteor shower, an annual occurrence lasting several days.

"I glanced up into the sky at about 10:15 p.m., and I saw this white object spiraling. At first, I thought it was an airplane or something," said Edward J. Uiszkowski of Vestal, N.Y. "It looked like a bunch of fireworks followed by a white cloud."

There were similar reports in other parts of the East. Robert Gribble, a spokesman for the National UFO Reporting Center in Seattle, said he received more than 100 calls from a region bounded by Michigan, Maine, South Carolina and Louisiana.

"Some people said they saw a great big ball of fire," said Clark County, Ky., Deputy Sheriff Larry Lawson. "The people said their homes shook and windows vibrated as if there had been an explosion or earthquake, but

it was just for just a very few seconds. They said the whole sky lit up.

"All these people weren't imagining or seeing things. Some of them were very terrified over it right after it happened. Some said they smelled something like gunpowder."

"It was like three lights at once — red, green and white. It was flashing on and off," said Tim Jones, an air traffic controller at Syracuse, N.Y., airport who said he watched for about 45 minutes as lights periodically hovered and veered randomly.

Jones said something coinciding with the lights registered on the airport's primary radar, which is designed to ignore stationary objects.

"Personally, I do not believe it was an aircraft. The way it was behaving is unlike any aircraft I've ever seen," said Jones, a controller for four years. "It hovered. It remained stationary."

In Buffalo, N.Y., talk show host Tom Bauerle at radio station WGR said his station was swamped with calls about the sightings just after 10 p.m. He said people described a luminous cloud, with one observer reporting a spiral shape. Other observers talked of seeing a gas cloud.