

# Look

JULY 18, 1950

15¢

**FLYING SAUCERS:**  
*Myth or Menace?*

**COWBOY CRAZE**  
Sweeps U. S.

COVER GIRL:  
**Working**  
**Debutante**

**BILLY GRAHAM**  
"God's Ball of Fire"





The sultry sunsets, the crickets and the calendar—all say that this is mid-summer. But to us in show business, it's the beginning of the year.

Traditionally, the new show season starts at this time with great pictures. And M-G-M expects to have the winners. Let us mention just three and then judge for yourself.

First of the exciting M-G-M entertainments will be "The Next Voice You Hear..." This, as perhaps you've heard, is the new and unusual film from the men who made "Battleground" so memorable, producer Dore Schary and director William A. Wellman.



"The Next Voice You Hear..." tells of what happened to the world one night at 8:30. A voice was heard on the radio in every land and every language. What was said and what it meant in the life of Joe Smith, American (and his family) is the theme of this amazing movie.

Next on M-G-M's roster of hits is a dazzling Technicolor musical that tells the life-story and sings the lilting songs of Tin Pan Alley's famous tune-smiths, Kalmar and Ruby. It's called "Three Little Words" after one of their wonderful songs.

It's played by Fred and Red, which means Astaire and Skelton, of course. They dance and romance with lovely Vera-Ellen and Arlene Dahl. And to put it in three little words—they amaze you.

And finally (for space permits of no more!) we want to apprise you of a picture event. It can be described in no other terms. M-G-M will present "The Miniver Story", the sequel to Academy Award winning "Mrs. Miniver" which was one of the best-loved pictures of the last decade.

Here are the further adventures of the gay, charming, spirited Minivers portrayed by the stars who created the original roles, Greer Garson and Walter Pidgeon. You'll love them!

This is the auspicious start of the new entertainment year. And it seems to us a happy new year indeed!

—Lea



# Look

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

## AMERICA'S FAMILY MAGAZINE

COWLES MAGAZINES, INC.—PUBLISHERS OF LOOK • QUICK • FLAIR

JULY 18, 1950 • VOL. 14, NO. 15

### AMERICAN SPOTLIGHT

FLYING SAUCERS—MYTH OR MENACE, By Bruce Bliven.....	12
BILLY GRAHAM—"GOD'S BALL OF FIRE," By Lewis W. Gillenson.....	25
HELP FOR ACUTE ALCOHOLICS IN 24 HOURS, By William L. Laurence....	52
THE U. S. IS GOING COWBOY NUTTY, By William Houseman.....	63
HOW DOES YOUR STATE RANK IN LENGTH OF LIFE?.....	92

### WORLD SPOTLIGHT

24 REASONS WHY EUROPE WON'T UNITE, By W. B. Courtney.....	48
---	----

### STRICTLY PERSONAL

THE DEBUTANTE WHO WENT TO WORK, By Pat Coffin.....	40
THE BALLAD OF PEGGY LEE.....	88

### FASHIONS AND BEAUTY

PARIS COLLECTIONS PRESENT NEW USES FOR RAFFIA.....	30
STORE SHINDIG.....	76

### MEN'S FASHIONS

MEN'S TIES—"CUSTOM ORDER TO CRAVATERIA".....	72
--	----

### FOOD AND HOMEMAKING

EAT COOL AND GET THIN.....	90
----------------------------	----

### ART

BEN SHAHN.....	68
----------------	----

### SPORTS

GUS MAUCH, TRAINER... THE BUSIEST MAN ON THE YANKS.....	34
BIG LEAGUE ALUMNI HIT FOR DISTANCE ON THE AIR.....	56

### DEPARTMENTS

LETTERS AND PICTURES	MOVIE REVIEW:
TO THE EDITOR..... 6	Treasure Island..... 82
LOOK APPLAUDS..... 21	PHOTOCRIME..... 86
PHOTOQUIZ..... 22	RECORD GUIDE..... 89

SOURCES OF LOOK'S PICTURES 86

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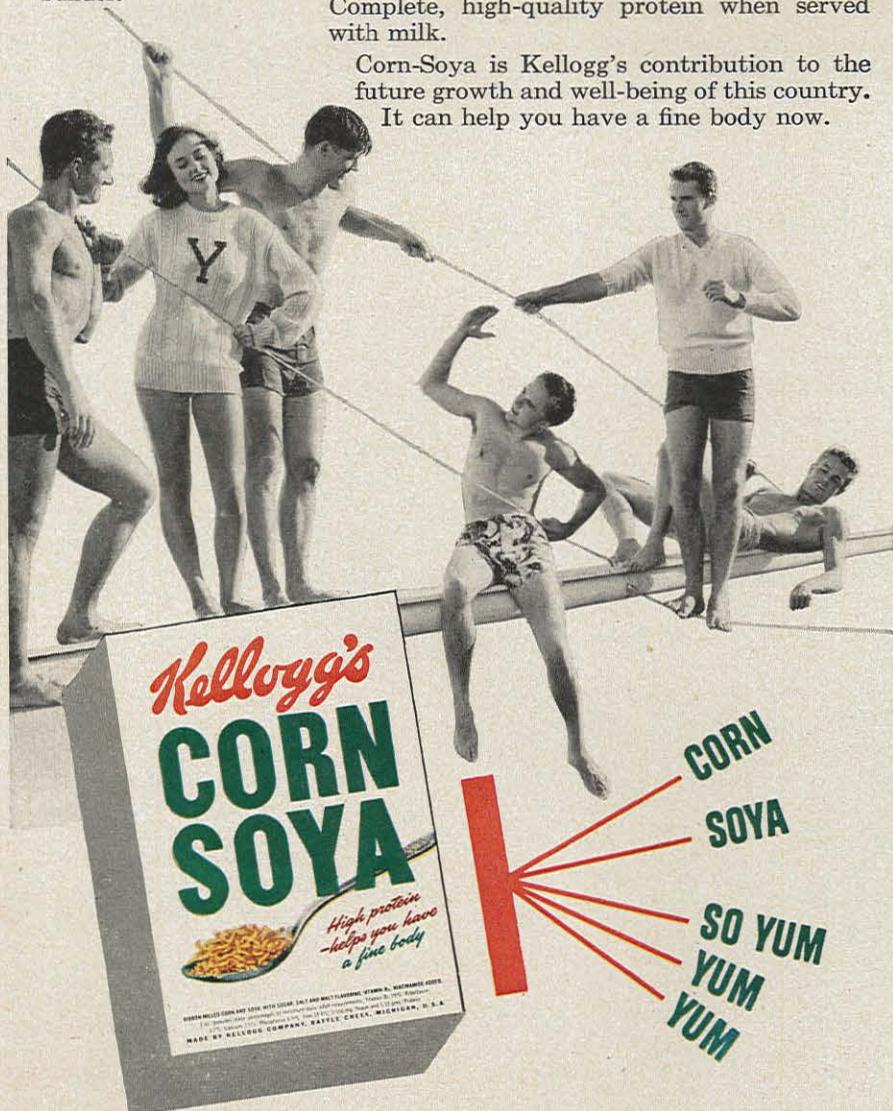
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No other well-known cereal, hot or cold, is so rich in protein—the master body-builder.



# FLYING SAUCERS

Many people think the saucers

# MYTH OR

Are they visitors from another planet, Russian or U. S. secret weapons, or only war-of-nerves hallucinations? Here's an authoritative answer —

By **BRUCE BLIVEN**  
Author of *The Men Who Make the Future*

FOR three years the papers have been filled with reports from people who claim to have seen "flying saucers" in the sky. Most of the reports have come from average, ordinary Americans, but a few have originated with highly trained Army, Navy or Air Force personnel. Though a majority of the stories have come from people on the grounds, some observers were themselves in aircraft, and in a few cases, very close indeed to the flying object they reported.

What lies behind all these stories? Are the flying saucers real?

I do not have any confidential information from high military sources, and if I did, I wouldn't, of course, be allowed to reveal it. But after reviewing all the available evidence in the light of known scientific data the facts seem to lead to inescapable conclusions.

### How It Started

The big scare began three years ago, on a June day in 1947. Kenneth Arnold, an experienced pilot of Boise, Idaho, was flying his own plane in the vicinity of Mt. Rainier, in the state of Washington. He saw "a terrific blue flash" go past,

and perceived nine peculiar tail-less objects rapidly approaching Mt. Rainier. They were, he said, about 23 miles away, and 100 feet across—a remarkably precise report, considering that any object 100 feet in diameter would be hardly more than a speck at a distance of 23 miles. When he landed (he had been out looking for a missing Marine plane), he told his friends what he had seen, and the story reached the newspapers. Reporters interviewed him and asked what the motion of these objects was like. Mr. Arnold said that it was irregular, "like you took a saucer and threw it across the water." The newspapermen misunderstood him, called the objects "flying saucers," and a famous phrase was born.

### Others Saw Them Too

No sooner had Arnold's story been printed than other people began to see flying saucers too. Up to date there have been at least 400 such reports. The number of flying objects varies as a rule from one to 10; the color is almost always silver or aluminum; the speed is usually great, up to 500 miles an hour, or even faster. Frequently,



are really experimental planes like this Navy model, but authorities say No.

# MENACE?

the objects seem to hover, or to move in all directions, vertically or laterally, like a darting insect. Some people have mentioned a hissing sound, or flashes of light which may be blue, white or purplish. While most observers have described a thickened disk, others have talked of a cigar-shaped wingless object.

## One Man Was Killed

At least one man has been killed chasing a flying saucer. On Jan. 7, 1948, a strange object was seen hovering over a U. S. Air Force base at Fort Knox, Ky. It was pursued by three fighter planes, one of which was piloted by Captain Thomas F. Mantell, who had flown in the war and had 3,000 air hours to his credit. He reported by radio that he was chasing the object, which "looks metallic and is of tremendous size." He said it was moving at his speed, 360 miles an hour, or faster. It was rising, and the fighters had no oxygen equipment. At 18,000 feet, all the planes but Captain Mantell's turned back. At 20,000 feet he reported that he was "going to 25,000—if no closer, will abandon search." He never reported again; his plane crashed, its parts being scattered around an area covering half a mile. The instruments indicated it had gone as high as 30,000 feet, and it is considered probable that Captain Mantell blacked out from lack of oxygen before his plane reached that height. Presumably he never regained consciousness, or not in time to prevent the crash. Some writers have suggested that his

plane disintegrated in the air, hinting that the flying saucer shot some sort of death ray at him, but there is no evidence that this is true.

I could fill this whole issue of Look with the detailed reports of people who claim to have seen flying saucers, but a few other samples will have to suffice.

Douglas Ghourley, of Laguna Beach, Calif., who was an anti-aircraft observer in the war, saw eight objects in the air, about three o'clock one afternoon, going about 150 miles an hour at 2,000 feet and heading out to sea.

## A Flaming Projectile

Commander Robert B. McLaughlin, USN, saw an object in the sky over the White Sands Proving Ground, N. M., which he calculated to be 105 feet in diameter and to be moving faster than the speed of sound, which is roughly 700 miles per hour at the height indicated. A diameter of 105 feet is a notable figure for two reasons: it is an amazingly definite statement about something in the sky, moving at 700 miles per hour, and it coincides precisely with the diameter of an alleged secret, new-type airplane, described some time later by the magazine *U. S. News and World Report*.

At 1:45 a.m. on July 24, 1948, a "strange flaming" object was seen by observers at a U. S. Air Force base at Macon, Ga. It was described as "a huge, projectile-like craft" traveling at high speed and trailing "a vari-colored exhaust." An hour later, an Eastern Airlines  
(Continued on next page)



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## FLYING SAUCERS continued



Three years ago Kenneth Arnold, civilian pilot, sighted flying disks in Washington state. His report set off a whole series of saucer stories.

## The report of the "Mexican midgets" was never verified

DC-3, in flight west of Montgomery, Ala., encountered what may have been the same object. Pilots Clarence S. Chiles and John B. Whitted said that it was about 100 feet long, cigar-shaped, wingless, and seemed to have a very brightly lighted interior. There was "an intense dark blue glow" along the entire length of the ship, and a red-orange exhaust flame in the rear, extending 30 to 50 feet. The speed was estimated at 500 to 700 miles per hour. Most of the passengers were asleep, but one of them, Clarence McKelvie of Columbus, O., said he had seen a brilliant streak of light flash past his window.

Dr. Craig Hunter, of Berkeley Springs, W. Va., saw a flying saucer close to the earth. He was driving between Clearfield and Penfield, both in Pennsylvania, and heard a "hissing, whistling sound." He looked up and saw "a circular object," between 250 and 400 feet above him, traveling northwest. He says it was 150 feet in circumference, in three concentric circles which were rotating, two of them apparently in opposite directions. At the center it was "fifteen to twenty feet thick" and the speed was "60 to 70 miles per hour." The noise suggested to him rocket propulsion.

### Strange Visitors

Early in 1950, reports were circulated that a flying saucer had crashed on a mountainside in Mexico, and that it contained the bodies of two "intelligent beings," three feet tall. According to some reports these creatures were "covered with hair," and according to others, they had "down on their faces." The origin of this story appears to have been a salesman in Los Angeles who, in the course of

a convivial evening, told it to a perhaps overcredulous newspaperman. The salesman later denied that he had seen the crashed object himself; he had just heard about it. Nobody has been able to trace the story even one step farther back.

### They Saw Something

The 400 or 500 people who have reported seeing flying saucers obviously perceived something, or think they did. Did they see visitors from another planet? Military aircraft flown from Russia? Secret experiments of the U.S.? Did they misinterpret ordinary phenomena, such as conventional airplanes, balloons, birds, stars or meteors? Or were these objects wholly imaginary? Let us consider these various hypotheses one by one.

Are the flying saucers visitors from another planet or a star? A writer in a recent issue of a popular magazine says firmly that they are. He reports that the earth has been under systematic close range examination by "living, intelligent observers from another planet" for the past 175 years. He adds further that this activity has greatly increased in the last two years, and that the objects used for this observation are the same as the various types of flying saucers that have been reported. The editors of the magazine say "we can document every occurrence reported here," and that these conclusions "are logical and reasonable in the light of the full facts [and] have long since been fully accepted by informed authorities." But if the magazine has any evidence about interplanetary visitors, it is keeping such evidence to itself, and thus bottling up what would seem to be the greatest news story of all time. To support the statement

that we have been observed for 175 years, the magazine says that reports of strange objects in the sky have been going on that long. The author of the article thinks the intelligent visitors could come from a planet of the star Wolf 359, which is eight light years away. (A light year, you remember, is the distance light travels in a year at a speed of 186,000 miles per second.) In other words, Wolf 359 is about 46,900,000,000,000 miles away. Even if the space ship traveled 2,000 miles an hour, the visitors would require about 2,600,000 years to reach the earth.

All available scientific evidence is against the theory of interplanetary visitors. The notion that some sort of space ship could come within a few hundred feet of the ground, hover for a while and then take off again with a standing start from a point in the air, at seven miles per second (the speed required to break out of the gravitational pull of the earth), strains credulity far beyond the breaking point.

#### Planets Not Inhabited

So far as astronomers know, there is no reliable evidence of organic life on the planets, to say nothing of the stars. The difficulties include a lack of atmosphere, cold approaching absolute zero, and heat far above the boiling point of water. Geneticists point out that the evolution which has produced mankind on this earth has been the result of millions of successive random genetic developments. Even if conditions on the other planets were favorable to human life, the likelihood of a parallel development of "conscious and inquisitive" beings is so small that it can be dismissed. It would be like a billion-horse parlay.

The writer of the magazine article hints darkly that the U. S. armed services know the flying saucers come from some hostile source, but are so alarmed at the prospect that they are saying nothing to anybody about it. I know something about the armed services, and I don't believe it. If they

thought the United States was threatened by flying saucers from a hostile source, whether on this planet or somewhere else, they would certainly tell the world about it—and promptly ask Congress for a lot of money with which to offset this menace.

*Do the flying saucers come from Russia?* If they do, then we must assume that the Russian military authorities have gone stark, staring crazy. The first rule of any war, cold or hot, is that you try to keep all important military secrets out of the hands of real or potential enemies. Yet the flying saucers have been seen chiefly over American territory. The answer to this could be that they are intended for observation and espionage. But there appears to be no correlation between the places they have been seen and American military installations or other areas of strategic importance. Anyhow, the amount of valuable espionage that is possible by hovering briefly over an object under study for a few minutes, at a height of hundreds or thousands of feet, is almost zero.

#### They Aren't Visitors

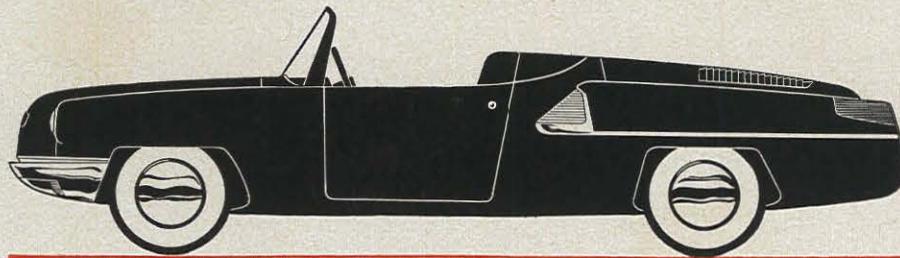
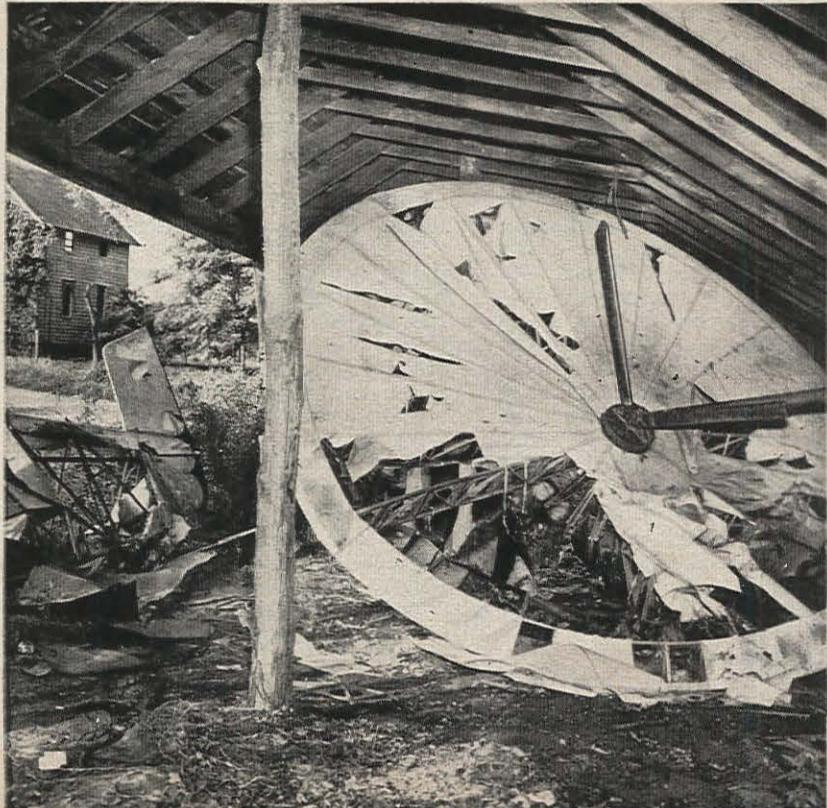
*Do they come from some other power such as Great Britain, France, one of the Scandinavian countries, or Brazil?*

This notion is as fantastic as the idea that they are Russian, and for the same reason.

*Are the flying saucers a new, secret military weapon developed by some branch of the United States armed forces?* Here, obviously, we come much closer to the realm of the possible. A recent article in *U. S. News and World Report* says flatly that the saucers are real. The magazine describes experiments which began in 1942 under the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics. It talks about a combination helicopter and fast jet plane, with a diameter of 105 feet (Commander McLaughlin, you remember, gave the same estimate of diameter). It says that this plane, development of which has been taken over by the Navy, has a speed of 400 to 500 mph, can

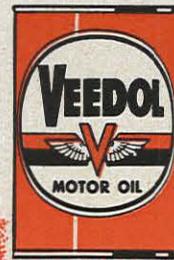
(Continued on next page)

This contraption, found in an abandoned Maryland barn, was tagged by an Air Force officer as "definitely the prototype of the flying saucer."



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Some observers of flying saucers may have been fooled by the Navy's plastic balloons, which go aloft to record weather and cosmic ray data.

## Truman denied that the disks are secret U. S. projects

rise almost vertically, maneuver in any direction by turning its jet nozzles or cutting off part of them, and can land as slowly as 35 mph. The magazine shows photographs of some early models of this plane, the XF5U. Photographs of a 3,000-pound scale model, the V-173, were published four years ago.

The Columbia Broadcasting System found the original designer of the plane referred to, Mr. Charles H. Zimmerman, who said that while the scale model "made a large number of successful flights," the plane itself "never flew." It is hard to believe that if it, or a later prototype, were flying today, Mr. Zimmerman wouldn't know it.

The reports that the U. S. is engaged in secret experiments which have given rise to the flying-saucer stories, have been denied by President Truman (through his press secretary, Charles Ross) and by leading officers of every branch of

the U. S. armed services. They have also been denied by leading manufacturers of aircraft.

A plane like the one described by *U. S. News and World Report* would require extensive testing fields, and flying-saucer reports would come from the region of these fields much more often than from the rest of the country. Actually, however, the reports follow a random pattern all over the whole country.

No secret as big as this could be kept, or has ever been kept. Even in wartime, with the emphasis on security-mindedness and the special wartime powers of the government, the atomic-bomb secret was not fully kept.

*Are the flying saucers the result of mistaken identity and mass suggestibility?*

The U. S. Air Force thinks the answer to this question is Yes.

Shortly after the first flying sau-

cers were reported, the Air Force set up "Project Saucer." Since then it has investigated 375 of these reports, or nearly all of them that were known up to Jan. 1, 1950, when "Project Saucer" was closed down.

Its investigations have been patient, plodding and thorough. Under orders from Gen. Carl Spaatz, then Chief of Staff of the Air Force, teams of astronomers, meteorologists, physicists, psychologists and electronics engineers were put into the field. Witnesses were questioned exhaustively, the terrain involved was examined, weather conditions and astronomical facts were recorded. The result was described for CBS by Maj. Gen. William F. McKee, Assistant Vice-Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, who said:

"It had been suggested that what people had actually been seeing is the result of some of our own se-

cret experiments, guided missiles or new types of planes or flying weapons. This is emphatically not the case. None of the three military departments nor any other agency in government is conducting experiments, classified (secret) or otherwise, with disk-shaped flying objects which could be a basis for the reported phenomena."

If people haven't been seeing flying saucers, what *have* they been seeing? Naturally, nobody can answer this question definitively, but here are some well informed guesses made by the Air Force and others. The following are some actual objects which may have been seen:

*Conventional aircraft.* An airplane at a distance, especially with sunlight glancing off its fuselage, could look like almost anything. The same is true of a plane at night, with illumination of its exhaust.

*Weather balloons.* It is of course  
(Continued on page 18)

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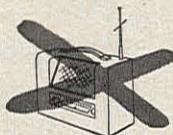
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FLYING SAUCERS continued

## Why haven't flying saucers been visible to everybody?

easy to mistake a globe in the sky for a disk. Weather balloons are sometimes sent aloft in an attached series of as many as four.

**Radar target balloons.** These balloons dangle below them an aluminum-colored target, usually hexagonal, which could be thought to be saucer-shaped. Any spinning object, of course, would seem round, no matter what its shape.

**Birds in flight.** Comment unnecessary.

**Meteors or stars.** Comment unnecessary.

**Other meteorological phenomena,** such as sunlight on water vapor or snow crystals in the upper atmosphere.

### What Did They See?

Trained observers are not impressed by reports, no matter who makes them, which give the exact height, size and distance of an *unfamiliar object in the sky*. It is impossible to estimate any two of these things with the eye alone, unless you know the third. Nobody without complicated instruments can tell whether an object is far away, large and going fast, or nearby, small and going slow.

Cameras are not subject to the human frailty of suggestibility; they have no imagination. As far as I can learn, nobody who has seen a flying saucer has taken a picture of it which is clearly a disk-shaped object and not something else. It is also significant, not that flying saucers have been seen by as many as 400 or 500 observers, but that they have been seen by so few. Any genuine phenomenon in the sky, an unusual condition of the moon, a striking sunset, even a plane in trouble, over a well-populated area, is almost invariably seen by hundreds or thousands, not merely by one, or by a little handful of observers.

Every elementary textbook on psychology is full of cases proving

the complete unreliability of the human senses. A favorite trick in college psychology classes is to stage a mock fight in the classroom and then ask the other people present to describe the details. Their stories will vary so completely that it is impossible to believe they are talking about the same thing. In the witchcraft trials in Salem, there were plenty of good, honest, pious folk who swore, with a human life at stake, that they had seen the alleged witch riding through the air on a broomstick.

Thousands of alleged religious miracles have been investigated by the Roman Catholic Church and ruled to be mere hallucinations, the result of mass suggestion. All too familiar are the sea serpents seen at seaside resorts, the people who saw the Loch Ness monster, sailors' stories of mermaids or the Flying Dutchman.

### People Can Be Fooled

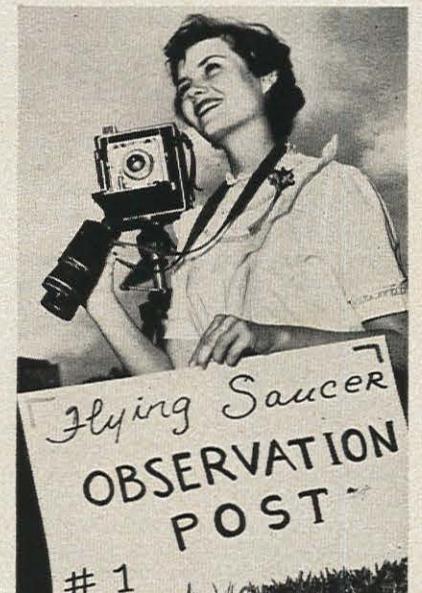
Anybody who looks at the sun and then looks away, sees an "after image." Usually it lasts only a few seconds but in some cases, it may linger for several days. This after-image is in two phases, a positive and a negative, in the second of which, light and dark are reversed. A person who was experiencing an after-image of the sun might readily think he was seeing an aluminum disk in the sky.

In saying all this, I am of course not impugning the honesty of the 400 or 500 Americans who say they have seen flying saucers. While a small minority of them may be pranksters or publicity seekers, I am sure that the great majority are perfectly honest. Neither do I say that there are no flying saucers. As I said at the beginning, I merely observe that scientific probability runs very heavily against them; and that scientific probability is the best guide we have, or can possibly have, to the truth.

END



Flying saucer gags include a hat, worn by singer Marguerite Piazza.



University of Houston students do not take the saucers too seriously.

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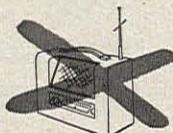
*\*Prices slightly higher in South and West*



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NO loops to raise



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FLYING SAUCERS continued

## Why haven't flying saucers been visible to everybody?

easy to mistake a globe in the sky for a disk. Weather balloons are sometimes sent aloft in an attached series of as many as four.

**Radar target balloons.** These balloons dangle below them an aluminum-colored target, usually hexagonal, which could be thought to be saucer-shaped. Any spinning object, of course, would seem round, no matter what its shape.

**Birds in flight.** Comment unnecessary.

**Meteors or stars.** Comment unnecessary.

**Other meteorological phenomena,** such as sunlight on water vapor or snow crystals in the upper atmosphere.

### What Did They See?

Trained observers are not impressed by reports, no matter who makes them, which give the exact height, size and distance of an *unfamiliar object in the sky*. It is impossible to estimate any two of these things with the eye alone, unless you know the third. Nobody without complicated instruments can tell whether an object is far away, large and going fast, or nearby, small and going slow.

Cameras are not subject to the human frailty of suggestibility; they have no imagination. As far as I can learn, nobody who has seen a flying saucer has taken a picture of it which is clearly a disk-shaped object and not something else. It is also significant, not that flying saucers have been seen by as many as 400 or 500 observers, but that they have been seen by so few. Any genuine phenomenon in the sky, an unusual condition of the moon, a striking sunset, even a plane in trouble, over a well-populated area, is almost invariably seen by hundreds or thousands, not merely by one, or by a little handful of observers.

Every elementary textbook on psychology is full of cases proving

the complete unreliability of the human senses. A favorite trick in college psychology classes is to stage a mock fight in the classroom and then ask the other people present to describe the details. Their stories will vary so completely that it is impossible to believe they are talking about the same thing. In the witchcraft trials in Salem, there were plenty of good, honest, pious folk who swore, with a human life at stake, that they had seen the alleged witch riding through the air on a broomstick.

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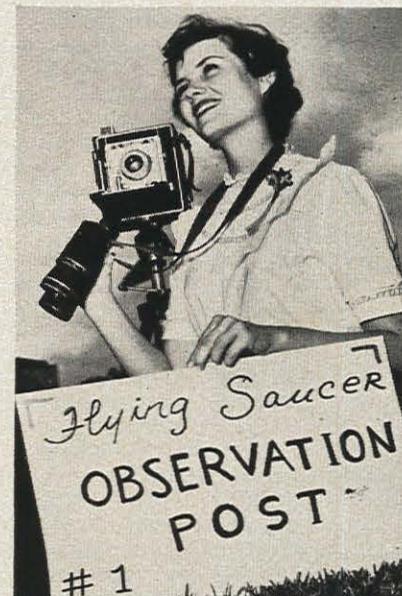
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