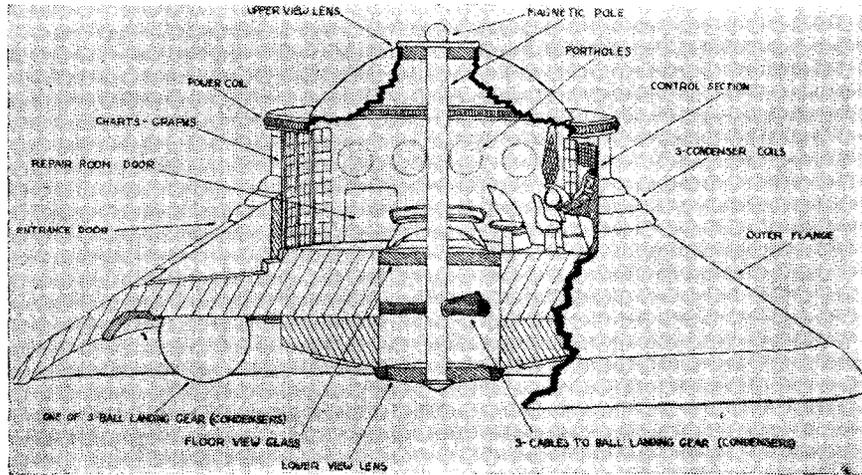


THE OCCULT



—From "Flying Saucers Have Landed."

Interior diagram of one of the Venusians' interplanetary vessels.

The Great Saucer Hunt

You may never have seen flying saucers, but if you look around enough you are sure to spot a galaxy of books about them. Here Siegfried Mandel examines the contents of ten such volumes.

By Siegfried Mandel

AT THIS moment there is at large in this country and in Europe a sizable group of men and women propelled by a missionary fervor and determined to inform mankind that flying saucers from Venus and Mars have landed on our "execrable" planet—a signal that it is high time for us to mend our petty ways. They are busy grinding out their visions in pamphlet, amateurish magazine, newspaper, and book form, all the while assuring readers and members of "flying saucer clubs" strung across the North American continent that the pure in heart who turn their eyes heavenward with soulful expectation may be rewarded by similar Venusian or Martian visitations.

Judging by the sales of their books during the past several years, these missionaries have found a sympathetic audience. One book, George Adamski's "Flying Saucers Have Landed," has sold 80,000 copies including foreign translations. Others are doing so well that their authors are promising sequels. Adamski has already carried out his promise with a volume of "eye-witness accounts" of what it's like to be "Inside the Space Ships." Another "saucerian," Cedric Alling-

ham, inspired by a friendly how-do-you-do encounter with a man from Mars who by design or accident landed in North Scotland last year, has decided to set up shop with his trusty 10-inch reflecting telescope in California, a favorite area of saucers and their students. But, after plodding through some ten representative volumes on the current flying-saucers shelf, I am obliged to conclude that they are only one more symptom of the anxieties of our times. Almost without exception they capitalize on these anxieties to a shameful degree, dishing out opiates designed to create infantile illusions, fears, and hopes, ranging from facile solutions to world conflicts to the-saucers-will-get-you-bugaboos.

One way for a reader to test the degree of nonsense contained in a typical book on saucers is to examine its bibliography carefully. There one discovers that there is a mutual admiration society among flying-saucer writers who cross-reference one another for substantiation. Another curious and significant characteristic is the number of works on theosophy that are earnestly cited. Theosophists, you will recall, claim a special insight into divine nature through special revelation. Their ideas, traceable back to Oriental magic-mystic teachings, were popularized in the United States from the 1870s on by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and her 100,000 followers. It has been their custom through the years to ride on the coat-tails of the latest unexplained phenomena in the news. At one time they

achieved revelation through mesmerism, then magnetism and electricity, and now they have pounced on the saucer and gravitational fields.

Polish-born George Adamski, a jack-of-all-trades and lately a farm and restaurant worker near California's Palomar Mountain, has been described by his collaborators as a "saint-like person devoted to teaching 'the universal laws,'"—which sounds suspiciously like theosophy. With the publication of his book two years ago, "Flying Saucers Have Landed," Adamski gained wide attention as a saucer expert. When he first encountered what he claims was a man from outer space three years ago, Adamski had a group of witnesses watch the proceedings from a considerable distance through binoculars. Two of the "witnesses," George H. Williamson and Alfred C. Bailey, later wrote "The Saucers Speak," issued by a press which specializes in philosophical tracts and flying saucer magazines. A group of ham radio operators headed by Williamson and Bailey claim that they have accomplished radio and telepathic contact with space ships and with the planets Jupiter and Mars after "weeks of meditation and concentration, holding self down, and allowing ourselves to become attuned to the influx of the universe." One of the messages from space which their group received reads: "Earth's last mile, we sad." Cosmic attenuation apparently has affected more than just their radio sets.

ACCORDING to Adamski, on frequent trips in the spaceships he has received divine instructions from "the master," meaning some extra-galactic swami. Typical is this bit of information he reports in one of his books:

After the crucifixion of Jesus, who was sent [from Venus] to be incarnated in your world to help your people, as had others before him, we decided to carry on our mission in a way less perilous to those concerned than actual birth on your planet.

Such a reincarnation may seem to be a novel idea, but actually it is a repetition of a doctrine propounded by theosophists decades ago. For thirty years Adamski has been dabbling in telepathy, teaching "natural laws" to a group of disciples, and retailing dream premonitions. Now he has hitched them on to space flights and flying saucers and found a bigger audience than he was able to reach before.

Adamski is the best-known and the most prolific of the literary saucerians, but there are others almost as interesting. One is a thirty-two-year-old

Britisher named Cedric Allingham, whose experience includes a two-year bedridden stretch in a sanatorium, service with Britain's Royal Army Ordnance Corps, "thriller" writing, bird watching, and nomadic roving. He, too, belongs to that exclusive club whose members have met interstellar visitors. In his book "Flying Saucers from Mars" he offers a photograph of his Martian friend. The only trouble is that the photo is so blurred and the background so indistinct that skeptical observers are likely to remain skeptical. Since Allingham lacks Adamski's telepathic genius in communicating with his friends from outer space, he could only make primitive signs and sounds, and these yielded no startling information. Perhaps he can remedy this deficiency by taking instructions from Adamski, who has invited him to pay him a visit.

Having written about lost civilizations in his book, "Mysteries of Ancient South America," author Harold T. Wilkins decided to undertake a change of pace by discovering new "etheric worlds." With more diligence than critical aptitude he has collected newspaper clippings and magazine articles on saucer phenomena from all over the world, and in his book "Flying Saucers on the Attack," he ominously notes the hostile character of some of the saucers from other planets.

M. K. Jessup, explorer and college instructor of astronomy, should receive some sort of prize for the speculations on unidentified flying objects, including saucers, which he has gathered into an odd book called "The Case for the UFO." Here are some of his contentions:

- Mankind has an unfathomable antiquity, including prehistoric atom scientists (who presumably blew themselves off this planet).
- Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO) are inhabited by or consist of spatial beings and intelligences manifesting themselves in varying physical forms.
- They reside near the moon about 165,000 miles from the earth.
- Russia may have captured a UFO, or space people possibly have taken over Russia.
- By levitation and teleportation humans have been kidnapped and their grisly, shredded remains have been disgorged over China and Nova Scotia.

Another believer in "those shining ones who ride the highways of the universe" is Leonard G. Cramp, a dissenting member of the Interplanetary Society of England. In "Space, Gravity, and the Flying Saucer," Cramp uses his psychic experience—bouncing

piano chairs and tables at levitation sessions—to explain the anti-gravitational movement of saucers. Taking the variously published photographs of saucers as genuine evidence, he subjects them to schematic analysis and finds similarities in dimension and characteristics. Then, with the help of psychic mumbo-jumbo he works out a theory for interplanetary travel which utilizes gravity-field type of propulsion. Cramp's analyses sound scientific until one considers the hearsay evidence on which he builds them.

"I rise before God and man to swear that this story I have written . . . is a true account . . . of the flying saucers of today and the supreme supernatural." So concludes Cecil Michael, an automobile mechanic and gold prospector, after narrating his "Round Trip to Hell in a Flying Saucer." A tongue-in-cheek query I addressed to its publisher as to whether this book ought to go on the fiction or non-fiction shelf evoked a charming reply: "That's up to the reader." Actually, Mr. Michael's delightful nightmare is as plausible as the other "non-fiction" titles already discussed, realistically taking readers on a space flight to a hellish abode where the dead arise only to face incineration on a lake of fire.

The most persuasive and influential of all the saucer-writers is Donald E. Keyhoe, a retired U. S. Marine Corps major, who is convinced that outer-space beings exist, that their crafts are navigated by radio astronomy, that they understand our own radio transmissions, and that they are keeping our world under constant surveillance. From his contacts with the Pentagon and the Air Force, Major Keyhoe surmises that "some Air Force officers think that people are better off not knowing the truth about saucers, at least until they find out the motive." In "Flying Saucers from Outer Space," he probes for the motives of the space people and comes up with the hypothesis that they are planning an invasion of the earth.

A POTENT antidote to all gibberish on saucers and fiends from outer space is offered by a scientific study, "Flying Saucers," by Donald H. Menzel, professor of astrophysics at Harvard University. Through photographs and diagrams he convincingly demonstrates "the rags and tags of meteorological optics"—mirages, reflections, mock and sub-suns, halos, radar mirages, shooting stars, which have been mistakenly interpreted as flying saucers. As for the many photographs of unidentified objects, Dr. Menzel analyzes them as freak images, deliberate hoaxes, or other explainable phenomena.

The United States Air Force, whose job it is to keep tabs on UFO's since they represent a potential threat to our national security has frequently been accused of concealing the facts about flying saucers. Recently I decided to question the Air Force section of the Department of Defense as to what it now knows about interplanetary space craft. Part of the answer I received reads:

We have never received any *authentic* information which would show that space craft have landed, or that they even exist. In fact, we feel that given all the necessary information, each sighting can be explained in a natural and unsensational manner.

This frank and clear statement will be disbelieved by those who are victimized by their wish to believe what they want to believe. Readers with a normal degree of objectivity will understand that saucers are auto-suggestive myths. If the time comes when interplanetary strangers are ready to announce themselves to us earthmen, they will approach persons more reliable than psychic cooks-and-bottlewashers and present unmistakable credentials of their galactic origin.

FLYING SAUCERS HAVE LANDED. By Demond Leslie and George Adamski. British Book Centre. \$3.50. Two encounters and interviews with outer space visitors are described here, and embellished with numerous "saucer photos."

INSIDE THE SPACE SHIPS. By George Adamski. Abelard-Schuman. \$3.50. Adamski's further adventures with Saturnian and Venusian brothers who invite him aboard their "saucer" crafts.

FLYING SAUCERS FROM MARS. By Cedric Allingham. British Book Centre. \$2.75. A half-hour signed interview with a man from Mars, together with some photos and memory sketches, commemorate Allingham's brief encounter and subsequent reflections.

SPACE, GRAVITY AND THE FLYING SAUCERS. By Leonard G. Cramp. British Book Centre. \$3. Cramp advocates a new anti-gravitational method of space propulsion based on his analysis of Adamski photographs and other saucer sightings.

FLYING SAUCERS ON THE ATTACK. By Harold T. Wilkins. Citadel Press. \$3.50. An assorted collection of saucer reports culled from newspapers, magazines, and books.

THE CASE FOR THE UFO. By M. K. Jessup. Citadel Press. \$3.50. Unidentified Flying Objects like saucers, meteors, and fireballs which have haunted the skies of yesterday and today are given detailed interpretation from an ominous angle.

ROUNDRIP TO HELL IN A FLYING SAUCER. By Cecil Michael. Vantage Press. \$2.50. A personal account of a weird trip to outer space in a saucer.

THE SAUCERS SPEAK. By George H. Williamson and Alfred C. Bailey. New Age Publishing Co. \$2. A group of "ham" operators reveal the messages they have received and sent by radiotelegraphy after establishing contact with outer space beings.

FLYING SAUCERS FROM OUTER SPACE. By Donald E. Keyhoe. Henry Holt. \$3. The author analyses scores of case histories cleared by the U.S. Air Force and concludes that the saucers definitely are of interplanetary origin.

FLYING SAUCERS. By Donald H. Menzel. Harvard University Press. \$4.75. A scientist debunks "saucers from outer space" theories, substituting rational explanations of optical illusions caused by a variety of meteorological phenomena.