

Journal of UFO History

A Publication of the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives



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Early UFO summit meeting in New York City, March 28, 1959 (story page 3).

In this issue • • •

Editorial	2
NBC special on UFOs, 1966	3
Chronology of early UFO history, 1950	7
Dialogue with Jan L. Aldrich	8
Historical case update, 1964	12

Journal of UFO History
**A Publication of the
 Donald E. Keyhoe Archives**

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EDITORIAL

This issue features a variety of information on UFO history from the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives, including excerpts from a 1966 NBC-TV special. Your suggestions are invited on the types of information you would like to see included in future issues.

Among the planned future content are correspondence and documents of noted UFO researchers from around the world, past news media coverage of UFOs, excerpts of significant letters and reports, rare photographs, and more interviews in the "Dialogue" series. →

Cover photo

Between 1958 and 1965, NICAP staff members made frequent pilgrimages to New York City, to visit Isabel Davis, Ted Bloecher, and Lex Mebane of CSI. Their valuable files were housed in Isabel's apartment in Greenwich Village.

The cover photo was taken during one such trip by Walter N. Webb, NICAP Adviser, Massachusetts. Left to right are Bud Ledwith, Ohio; Albert Andre, Tennessee; Dick Hall, Washington, D.C., and Ted Bloecher.

Just out of the picture in the left foreground is Don Neill, NICAP staff volunteer, who also made the trip from Washington.

Davis and Bloecher later became NICAP staff members and were in Washington during the big UFO wave of 1966-67.

We hope to encourage international coverage of UFO history, and invite contributions from researchers in other countries

If you wish to comment on anything in the Journal, send a clearly labeled "Letter to the Editor" (by e-mail or regular mail) and it will be considered for publication. Please keep it brief and to the point.

Longer commentaries or articles (200 to 500 words) also are invited from anyone who would like to contribute analyses, information, documents, or photographs directly relevant to the history of UFOs. □

NOTABLE BROADCASTS OF THE PAST
“THE OPEN MIND”-NBC PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRESENTATION
February 27, 1966
“Are Flying Saucers Only Science Fiction?”

(Transcript on file at the Donald E. Keyhoe Archives.)

This television special was broadcast from New York City on Feb. 27, 1966, and later re-broadcast on educational TV around the country.

Eric F. Goldman, professor of history, Princeton University, was moderator. Panelists included Dr. Donald H. Menzel, Dr. Frank B. Salisbury, John Fuller, Dr. R. Leo Sprinkle, and Dr. J. Allen Hynek.

The first topic discussed was the then-recent, multiple witness sightings at Exeter, New Hampshire, on Sept. 3, 1965, investigated by John Fuller, and Menzel and Fuller immediately clashed. Following are some excerpts:

Menzel: *The Exeter sightings seem pretty much run of the mill to me...the pattern is very similar to those in the many thousands of cases that I have examined in the Air Force files.*

Fuller: *I went up to Exeter for 24 days. I interviewed 60 people. I tape-recorded 70 hours of tape. I cross-examined these people. I did not just interview them; I threw questions at them that would throw them off. I tried to disprove this. Now, were you up there in Exeter, Dr. Menzel, to investigate this?*

Menzel: *No, I was not...Because I don't have time to investigate every one of*

Sept. 3, 1965 Exeter, New Hampshire

One of the “classic” cases of the American UFO literature, it began when a frightened youth reported to police that he had been approached by a glowing red, elliptical object at low level.

Police responding to the report also sighted the object at close range. It had a row of pulsating red lights on its side. Animals also reacted to the object.

John Fuller's investigation, initially reported in LOOK Magazine, attracted a lot of attention. Later the case was detailed in his book *Incident At Exeter*.

these cases....

Fuller: *...The police officers who were involved with this sighted it at below tree-top level and watched it for 8 or 9 minutes, while two of them checked each other out, and three other civilians reported the same phenomenon within the hour and within a distance of, say, 6 miles.*

Goldman: *Did any of you other gentlemen read Mr. Fuller's piece [in*

(Continued on next page)

Open Mind, continued

NBC Panelists

John G. Fuller, author, journalist and columnist for the *Saturday Review*.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, Chairman of the Astronomy Department, Northwestern University.

Dr. Donald H. Menzel, Director, Harvard College Observatory.

Dr. Frank B. Salisbury, professor of plant physiology, Colorado State University.

Dr. R. Leo Sprinkle, assistant professor of psychology, University of Wyoming.

LOOK Magazine], or do you know the facts?

Salisbury: I read it also....I was very impressed. It seemed to me that this would be the kind of a sighting that ought to be thoroughly investigated...I would like to hear Dr. Menzel's ideas about how it is run of the mill. It seemed to me that it was not run of the mill, that there was enough detail involved that it's pretty hard to imagine [its being] the Planet Venus, or a weather balloon, or something like that-- the usual explanations which must fit many of these sightings....Here [in light of repeated sightings] would have been a chance for the Air Force or whoever was interested to move in and perhaps do something really scientific for a change, instead of studying it after the fact which is what they otherwise

always have to do.

Menzel: By "run of the mill," I meant the disagreement between the two observers, the two police officers. One of them said a hundred feet, and that seems to be the person you have quoted, but the other one said 9,000 feet away and possibly 2 to 3 miles. Now, this is exactly the same place [sic; presumably he meant to say "the same sort of thing"] in the official report.

Fuller: Dr. Menzel...I tape-recorded the two policemen on the spot and I had them re-enact everything that went on. He did not say 9,000 feet. He said it was just immediately over the trees when the second policeman, Patrolman David Hunt, arrived....

[Several of the panelists participated in a discussion of French author Aime Michel's arguments about UFOs being sighted along straight lines.]

Hynek: But it [Michel's work] is an interesting phenomenon in that he tried to do one thing that would be valuable, I believe, and that is he tried to do something objective, where you don't have to believe the witness. You simply tried to see if there was some relationship.

Sprinkle: Or disbelieve the witness.

Hynek: Or disbelieve the witness.

Fuller: Well, Dr. Menzel, I find that I disagree with your book, but I do agree with you in this case, only because there hasn't been enough scientific study on the subject....I don't care what you do, but go out thoroughly to prove or disprove.

(Continued on next page)

Open Mind, continued

[Eventually the discussion came back to the Exeter case. After some further argument between Menzel and Fuller, the moderator intervened.]

Goldman: *Excuse me. Mr. Menzel, there is a question here of fact. You are referring to these two men who are the key to this story as hysterical, and he [Fuller] objects to that. Why do you refer to them as hysterical?*

Menzel: *It was certainly clear from the whole picture that the man was frightened--frightened to death and he became hysterical.*

Fuller: *Which man?*

Menzel: *The original man who saw the --*

Fuller: *What was his name?*

Menzel: *I'm sorry; I don't know his name.*

Fuller: *How old was he?*

Menzel: *I was referring to the question of hallucination of a camera [sic; this was a reference made in a previous exchange] , and then you start giving me an inquisition. Now, will you shut up?*

Fuller: *That's what I gave--everybody I talked to there I gave an inquisition.*

Goldman: *Gentlemen, there is obviously a complete clash in interpreting what these men were like--*

Menzel: *I refuse to be subjected to an inquisition here. Now you--*

Sprinkle: *Mr. Chairman [sic], I would like to speak to this question about hallucination and hysteria and so forth. It seem to me that depending on one's definition of what these conditions are like, that it is just as unscientific to postulate these conditions without*

examination as it is unscientific for me to say, because I have seen two phenomena that I couldn't understand, that this right away is something....

[The moderator raised issues of how scientists should go about investigating UFO reports.]

Menzel: [In response to comments by Salisbury and the moderator] *I agree that we certainly could do a lot more toward scientific investigation of the phenomena of flying saucers than we have, but I certainly would like to come back to this question of hallucinations and cameras, because there have been many, many hoaxes and there have been many unintentional hoaxes because of internal reflections in cameras, and it is very questionable just to believe what you see on a camera film just because the camera has recorded it.*

Hynek: *In fact, most of the hoaxes we had at Wright Field have been accompanied by photographs.*

[Toward the end of the program both Hynek and Menzel summed up their views in the context of discussion about what needed to be done.]

Hynek: *As consultant to the Air Force, I have now strongly recommended to the Air Force directly that a panel of scientists be set up, not only astronomers and physicists, but psychologists and various others, to study the total UFO phenomena [sic], not whether we are being visited or not, but the first step there is that people have got to do some homework. I have looked at these things for 18 years, over*

(Continued on next page)

Open Mind, continued

10,000 reports, and I'm still puzzled.

Goldman: [After saying they had one minute to go] *Is this something that you'll go along with as a sensible suggestion, Mr. Menzel?*

Menzel: *There is one point that I would like to make in conclusion, and this is that there are hundreds and probably thousands of different kinds of flying saucers, and they have natural explanations in terms of natural phenomena, in terms of reflections from material objects.*

Goldman: *You don't think the scientific group is necessary?*

Menzel: *Well, I think that it could help in the elucidation of some of the more erudite [sic] varieties, many of which I have investigated myself.*

[At this point the moderator thanked the guests and concluded the program.]



Post script: Ironically, about two weeks after this broadcast, a major wave of UFO sightings began, focused initially in Michigan and New England. It set in motion a series of events that led to Congressional hearings, an intensive internal review of the Air Force UFO investigation, and establishment of the University of Colorado UFO Project to conduct an independent study. Both Dr. Hynek and Dr. Menzel were invited to brief the Colorado project scientists and staff members. →

NOTABLE QUOTES

Dr. David M. Jacobs, professor of history, Temple University. "Because few scientists have [carefully studied the literature and conducted field investigations], most know practically nothing about UFOs. Their ignorance of the subject has much to do with their attitudes toward it." (UFO congress paper, 1980.)

Albert Einstein, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey. [In answer to a letter from a California minister]: "These people have seen something. What it is I do not know and I am not curious to know. (July 23, 1952 letter.)

Maj. Gen. Donald J. Keirn, chief of Air Force nuclear engine program. "We have no proof that intelligent beings exist elsewhere, but UFO reports have emphasized our innate curiosity... [Some] may have already achieved a higher level of social and technological culture than our own." (Talk to Institute of Aeronautical Sciences, 1959.)

Suggested reading

- John G. Fuller, *Incident at Exeter*. NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1966.
- Donald H. Menzel & Lyle G. Boyd, *The World of Flying Saucers*. NY: Doubleday, 1963.
- Frank B. Salisbury, *The Utah UFO Display*. Old Greenwich, CT: Devin-Adair, 1974.
- J. Allen Hynek, *The UFO Experience: A Scientific Inquiry*. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1972.

CHRONOLOGY OF EARLY UFO HISTORY: 1950

(Note: This is a continuing feature, with installments in each issue.)

(As this sample suggests, March-May 1950 was a period in which significant UFO reports from highly credible witnesses were frequent. This is an important consideration in the interpretation of UFO history. In modern terminology, "Who knew what and when did they know it?")

March 8, 1950. Dayton, Ohio. A round UFO seen by the crew of a TWA airliner was tracked on radar and chased by two F-51 fighter planes.

March 16, 1950. Dallas, Texas. A Navy chief petty officer saw a flat oval UFO pass beneath a B-36 bomber.

March 17, 1950. Farmington, New Mexico. A retired Army captain and many others saw dozens of flying discs gyrating around in the sky.

March 18, 1950. Near Bradford, Illinois. A private pilot reported seeing a luminous oval object pass his plane at high speed.

March 20, 1950. Near Little Rock, Arkansas. The pilots of a Chicago & Southern Airlines plane saw a disc-shaped object with portholes pass above them. (See Vol. I, No. 1.)

March 26, 1950. Near Washington, D.C. A former Air Force aircraft inspector dove his airplane toward a disc-shaped object, which zoomed up into an overcast.

March 29, 1950. Ironwood, Michigan. Seven pilots at the airport observed a round UFO moving directly into a strong wind, oscillating from side to side.

April 27, 1950. White Sands Proving Grounds, New Mexico. A UFO was spotted by ground observers during a missile firing and photographed by an Askania Cinetheodolite team.

April 27, 1950. Goshen, Indiana. A TWA airliner was paced by a reddish disc-like UFO.

May 11, 1950. McMinnville, Oregon. A farm couple saw and photographed a hovering disc. Photos published in LIFE Magazine.

May 20, 1950. Flagstaff, Arizona. A prominent astronomer observed what he said was a "powered" disc-like object from the grounds of Lowell Observatory.

May 29, 1950. Near Washington, D.C. The pilots of an American Airlines plane reported that a dark elliptical UFO completely circled their aircraft.

May 29, 1950. White Sands proving Grounds, New Mexico. A UFO was spotted by two theodolite tracking stations, and was tracked and photographed by both stations.

See Donald E. Keyhoe Archives on
Richard Hall's web site:
www.hallrichard.com

DIALOGUE WITH ...

→ JAN L. ALDRICH

Early UFO History: Documents & Records

Jan Aldrich is a retired U.S. Army master sergeant, and a long-time participant in UFO studies. I



Jan L. Aldrich

recall knowing him back in the 1960s when he was a NICAP member. Also, he resides in my home state of Connecticut, in Canterbury. Jan is still deeply involved in UFO studies, having a particular interest in the historical aspects. I asked him to discuss his UFO-related activities.

Hall: Jan, your "Project 1947" focuses on the early history of UFOs, but also covers UFO history before 1947 and into the 1950s, is that right?

Aldrich: The primary interest of Project 1947 is the events in 1947, then in order of priority pre-1947 incidents, UFO events during 1948-1965, and official and scientific interest and investigations of UFOs.

Hall: Why do you concentrate on the early years?

Aldrich: I have always been fascinated by UFO-like events that occurred prior to 1947. During the 1947 UFO wave many such stories came out or were recounted from earlier sources, so I wanted to research them. Screening newspapers had been very profitable in the past. While clipping services were enlisted in UFO research before 1965, the coverage of press stories was never comprehensive. After 1965 many researchers utilized clippings services, so I used 1965 as an arbitrary cut-off point. In retrospect, probably the end of Project Blue Book would have been a better date.

Hall: The UFO Research Coalition published your report on the 1947 sighting wave in 1997. How did that build on Ted Bloecher's earlier report?

Aldrich: I only found out about Bloecher's research project when it was nearly completed. Ted went on to add hundreds more reports to the over 850 in his published work, *The Report on the UFO Wave of 1947*.

(Continued on next page)

Aldrich dialogue, continued

In 1993, I reviewed the nearly 1,300 incidents from his research, and found that there were still many, many reports from this era to be uncovered in newspapers all over the world. Basically, much of the work of Project 1947 is an extension of Ted's newspaper research which has involved screening 5,000 newspapers. However, the big advantage we now have is access to many official records from this era. Project 1947 confirmed something noted independently by you, Aime Michel, and Dr. James McDonald in letters to Bloecher, that almost all types of UFO behavior and appearance were first noted in 1947 accounts.

Hall: The Fund for UFO Research also published your report on the Scandinavian "Ghost Rocket" sightings of 1946. How do you think those reports, which seemed to be describing missile-like objects, tie in to modern-day UFO reports? Do you think they were part of the same phenomenon or phenomena?

Aldrich: I frankly don't know what to make of the Ghost Rockets (GRs). In an interview I did with Clas Svahn, Swedish UFO researcher, he revealed some surprising information: GRs continued on from 1946 to the mid-1990s, but took a significant drop after the fall of the Soviet Union. Researchers continue to find more and more official documents from the UK, Sweden,

and US archives, but the history is far from complete. One might say that the GRs investigation in Sweden was the first UFO inquiry, and some of the players in GRs became players in UFO investigations.

Hall: In addition to all of your other activities you, along with Tom Tulien, have been a driving force in the Sign Historical Group (SHG). Where did that name come from?

Aldrich: Wendy Connors suggested the name which obviously comes from her interest in the first Air Force UFO investigation, but the name is also neutral. It doesn't mention UFOs, ET, aliens, etc. The Sign name can have many connotations, "sign of the times," "sign of things to come," etc. SHG's purpose is to record and preserve the history of UFOs. It doesn't matter whether UFOs exist or not, the Air Force investigated them, Keyhoe wrote about them, they have history which can be researched.

Hall: What is SHG doing currently?

Aldrich: There are three areas: 1) historical preservation, obtaining files and documents from individuals and organizations and preserving them; 2) research, especially producing oral histories of UFO witnesses, investigators, government officials and scientists; and 3) cataloguing significant UFO

(Continued on next page)

Aldrich dialogue, continued

and related materials. The main thrust of the oral history program is to document incidents involving nuclear weapons or at nuclear facilities.

Hall: I think any serious student of UFO history would want to own a copy of the Sign Historical Group UFO History Workshop Proceedings published in 1999. Are copies of the Proceedings still available? Will you tell the readers a little about its content?

Aldrich: It was not a best seller; plenty of the Proceedings are available. It is also available online at www.project1947.com/shg/. Basically, we now use the Proceedings to introduce ourselves to interviewees. Once they see it, they know that we are serious.

Hall: I know that you and I share a highly critical attitude toward many current activities among UFO proponents who behave less than scientifically. Would you care to comment about some of the things that you find most offensive?

Aldrich: I think the most alarming component is the great lack of critical thinking within the ranks of UFO proponents. Skilled story telling often seems preferred over careful investigations, especially if the story whets the appetite of proponents' by playing into sensational theories and beliefs. I

have also noted argumentation tactics used by both skeptics and proponents which, while not new, are well suited to the computer age. These tactics involve editing or deleting the opponents points, answering only a small detail and pretending that the whole point has been answered, and using rhetorical tricks to try to divert attention from the actual lack of factual refutation in their arguments. While such tactics may be found popular in a debating society, they do not help in reaching reasonable conclusions.

Hall: What would you say to hard-nose UFO skeptics who dismiss the subject as nonsense?

Aldrich: I would say that they prefer pat little skeptical one-liners over careful examination of the core UFO cases. That said, a large portion of UFO proponents act as de facto allies of these people, because they give con-men, hoaxers and other questionable characters credence. This just gives the nay sayers ammunition for their dismissal of any serious consideration of the UFO phenomenon. Unfortunately, it is the UFO witnesses who pay the price for the belief systems of both sides. Most of the hard core case I have read indicate perplexed people trying honestly to describe something beyond their ordinary experience.

(Continued on next page)

Aldrich dialogue, continued

Hall: Where do we go from here? What do you think is necessary in order to make some progress in serious, scholarly study of UFOs?

Aldrich: Overall, I tend to be very discouraged at the foolishness within ufology, however, then, I looked at the large number of people who have contributed to Project 1947 and other serious efforts.

Most of serious ufology is a volunteer effort with people overtaxed and vastly underfunded. One would hope for their sake and for the UFO witnesses, that ufology as a whole would stop chasing every new fantastic claim and fad that comes along.

Maybe the best thing would be to concentrate on a few aspects that would appeal to official or scientific interests. One reason for the interest in the nuclear connection is that it does have national security implications.

SHG proposed about three dozen low cost historical projects to the CFI (Committee for Freedom of Information) and the SCI-FI channel, however these projects do not have the sensational appeal needed in a pop-culture world.

Since a number of these require little financial support, we are proceeding with some of these slowly on our own. □

For further information, see
www.project1947.com

*Proceedings of the Sign
Historical Group UFO History
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UFO HISTORY WEB SITES

Correction. The NICAP web site address was listed incorrectly in the last issue. The correct address for this highly recommended web site is www.nicap.org. A rich goldmine of historical information.

Other web sites of interest:

www.fufor.com (The Fund for UFO Research).

www.cufos.org (The Center for UFO Studies).

www.mufon.com (The Mutual UFO Network). Beautifully designed.

www.larryhatch.net (UFO sighting map plottings and analysis.)

www.cisu.org (Centro Italiano Studi Ufologici-CISU). Italian. English site: www.ufo.it/english/cisu.htm

www.anomalia.org (Fundacion Anomalia; V.-J. Ballester Olmos). Spanish. UFO research funding organization.

HISTORICAL CASE UPDATE

A FAMOUS DATE IN UFO HISTORY: APRIL 24, 1964

On April 24, 1964, in Newark Valley, New York, Gary Wilcox, a young farmer, had an encounter with a shiny egg-shaped object and two small humanoid beings.

This was the same day that in Socorro, New Mexico, Officer Lonnie Zamora encountered a landed egg-shaped object and two humanoid beings.

Wilcox's sighting was at 10:00 a.m. Eastern Time, and Zamora's sighting was at about 5:45 p.m. Mountain Time.

NICAP investigators, including Walter Webb from the neighboring state of Massachusetts, conducted thorough investigations of the Wilcox case. A summary of the case appears on pages 474-476 of *The UFO Evidence, Volume II* (Scarecrow Press, 2001).

On the 40th anniversary of the case, the editor received an e-mail about a follow-up interview, and requested and received permission to reproduce it here. The following is a verbatim quote.

It happened that I knew Gary Wilcox in the years before his sighting and some years after the date. He was a member of my brother's graduating class (Newark Valley Central School, upstate NY, 1954). As a school kid, Gary was very shy, never would have done anything to attract attention to himself. As the record relates, he was a farmer at the time of the sighting, and held another job as well. He may have been stressed out, due to the double jobs, fatigue, and the economics of attempting to survive

with a small, increasingly marginal, dairy at that time.

Later, he worked for IBM, in Endicott, NY, and was a first line manager. He had lost his shyness by this time, and was your average Joe, straight arrow, never had any other questionable stories.

I talked with him on April 24, 2004, by phone. He has been retired from IBM since 1992 and currently runs a small construction firm with 20 employees, in northern Pennsylvania.

The local newspaper, the *Press and Sun-Bulletin*, Binghamton, NY, is re-running Gary's story this week on the 40th anniversary of his sighting. (Gary is not participating.)

Another slant on the story was added this week when a [1964] Newark Valley resident reported that, at the time of the original news story, he had checked out a Geiger counter from his place of employment (IBM) and had checked out Gary's site. The reading was "off the scale" for an area 400 feet square. - Gerry Curkendall 4/24/04

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