



# Flying Saucers Have Ancestors

By T. GILMACK

**F**LYING saucers — whether they are hoaxes, balloons, or

they are noxes, banoons, or  
spots before the eyes—are gener-  
ally regarded as phenomena

any regarded as phenomena peculiar to the last three jumpy post-war years.

Published accounts indicate, however, that they are not the first apparitions of this kind.

Long before World War I flying saucers, or apparently related objects, seem to have been observed, though reports of them have been overlooked or forgotten.

In the "Literary Digest" for November, 1925, there is an account of queer lights seen on Brown Mountain, Burke County, North Carolina. These "spooky" lights, about the size of a toy balloon, smaller than the full moon, and very red, were reported to "rise mysteriously over Brown Mountain, proceed into the air a short distance, waver as if palsied, and then in less than a minute disappear."

These lights, said some, were "as old as the Civil War (1861-65); others have known them for a quarter of a century." In 1913, the U.S. Geological Survey sent a man to investigate. In his opinion, the phenomenon was due to the headlights of locomotives flashing up over the mountain.

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**I**N 1922, another geologist attributed them to automobile and locomotive headlights, bushfires, and the like. But all these theories were discarded—the lights had been observed long before the development of railroads in the locality.

Charles Fort, an American, who died in 1932, wrote a remarkable book entitled "Lo!" in which he

book entitled "Lo!" in which he assembled records of strange occurrences that seemed to defy explanation by natural or normal means. He tells of the happenings on Brown Mountain, together with many more.

Curious objects had been seen, from time to time, in the sky. As far back as July, 1880, before dirigibles became practicable, an unknown object had been seen in various parts of the United States.

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Observers at Madisonville, Kentucky, said that "it sometimes appeared in a circular form, and then changed to an oval. It passed out of sight, moving south."

From across the Atlantic came numerous accounts of queer things seen in the sky over England and Wales, between 1904 and 1909. Sometimes they were as a ball of fire, or shining things descending over revivalist meetings; others were dark globular objects, and still others, from Norfolk, were explained as being "luminous owls."

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**A** RECENT report that a metal cylinder containing a small "aluminium man" had been found on a mountainside in the United States has its parallel in a story in the magazine, "Popular Mechanics" (vol. 14, p. 801), of a cylinder of white marble which, it was said, had fallen from the sky in Ohio about August, 1910.

Perhaps the metallic nature of the "recently found" cylinder may be taken as an indication of the progress of mechanical engineering

gress of mechanical engineering since 1910. A complementary marble man appears to have been wanting in the early version of the story.

Three years ago, there were reports of a succession of flying saucers passing in orderly rotation before the eyes of observers. A strange occurrence, surely, but one not new in history; for there are records that on September 21, 1910, numerous "round objects were seen passing from west to east over the lower part of New York City. Crowds stood in the streets watching them . . . For several hours this procession continued."

Possibly these are the earliest records of flying saucers in the present-day sense of the term.

The only similar occurrences recorded in "Lo!"—and, of course, before the current epidemic—are of "intense lights" seen hovering or travelling over Warwickshire in 1923 and 1924, and of a flying light seen some 400 miles off the Virginia coastline, far away from any scheduled aircraft, in 1929.