

HE SAW THE FIRST FLYING SAUCER OVER 100 YEARS AGO!

**By Robert E.
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American scientists are now studying a report on "Flying Saucers" made by an Austrian professor of geography in 1851—perhaps the earliest and certainly one of the most amazing Flying Saucer stories ever published.

THE first flying Saucer was seen by an Austrian teacher of geography, Professor Karl Schneider, on July 23, 1851.

I went to Vienna some weeks ago to talk to his great-granddaughter about his experience.

Professor Schneider, a teacher at a well-known school in Vienna, did not use the expression "Flying Saucer" to describe the fantastic object which he saw hurtling through the sky in the summer of 1851.

... hurtling through the sky in the summer of 1851. He used a more poetical name — "Sternenschiff" — the "Ship from the Stars." He also described it as a "Flying Potter's Wheel."

People in Vienna dubbed him "the mad star gazer" and laughed at him when he walked through the cobblestone-paved streets of the capital. The scientists called him a liar, and the clergy a heretic.

Yet neither ridicule nor persecution, neither friendly advice nor gentle blackmail could shake his conviction that he had seen a fabulous space ship from another planet make a furtive inspection of mother earth in the afternoon of July 23, 1851.

One cannot blame the

One cannot blame the scientists in Vienna who ridiculed his report. They were still another half-century from the day when Count Zeppelin would make his ascent in a dirigible airship, and 58 years from the day when Bleriot would cross the English Channel in his clumsy box-kite aeroplane.

It all started when Professor Schneider, his wife and his two daughters went to Tyrol for their summer holidays in 1851.

They stayed in a small hotel at the foot of the snow-capped Grossglockner mountain.

The professor, then in his 43rd year, was a keen mountaineer.

In the second week he set out to climb the mountain, a feat which he had performed several times in the past. He started at 4.30 a.m. on July 23, 1851, and planned to spend the night in one of the small primitive huts erected to shelter mountaineers.

At 3 p.m. he reached one of these wooden huts, still some 3,000 feet from the summit.

The Ship From The Stars

"I WAS sitting on a stone outside the hut"

stone outside the hut" (wrote Schneider four days later to his friend, the Viennese Doctor Salzer). "It was a brilliant afternoon, and the sky without a single cloud.

"Suddenly I heard a noise like a faint chord played on a distant organ. It grew in intensity until it became a loud humming.

"I looked up and there it was in the sky, the object that I shall call a 'heavenly body,' for want of a better term.

"It looked like a potter's wheel to me at first, flying through space, and it moved across the sky with unbelievable speed.

"It made a full circle, remaining in my view all the time, that is for the better part of a minute. It was silvery, but not made of silver — but of a strange

unknown metal that glittered in the sunlight and dazzled my eyes.

"It was round in shape, but slightly narrowing at one point, and from this narrowing point came a thick fog that sometimes looked like ordinary smoke, sometimes turned milky-white, and sometimes scintillated yellowish in the sun.

"After completing this circle, the thing twisted round all of a sudden,

round all of a sudden, then rose vertically and with lightning speed. It climbed — not like a bird, but in a brilliant flash, like lightning, though not so fast. I noticed now that it had a kind of snout, like a swordfish, and from its tail came blue and red flames

"I cannot tell you its size — it is so difficult to measure things flying about far away — but I would say that it was about a 100 metres (roughly 330 feet) in diameter, but perhaps even more.

"How this monstrous thing kept in the air I do not know.

"As I wrote before, it first circled, a flat disc on an unearthly tour of inspection of the scene, then it shot up into the vastness of the sky, and I lost sight of it"

THE Austrian professor of geography and history sat there "rubbing his eyes and doubting his senses, dumbfounded." He decided to remain where he was for some time, probably the first aircraft spotter!

And two hours later he saw the same object, this time only for a fleeting moment, much higher up and smaller to the eye, but "perfectly clear, eine schmale Scheibe vorwar-

tsgetrieben im Weltall"— a small disc hurtling forward into space, covering an indescribable distance in the time of a heart-beat."

The professor decided at once to return to his family to tell them about his experience.

During his first talk to his wife was born his theory of the **Sternenschiff**, the Ship from the Stars, a messenger from a distant planet visiting the Earth.

Two days later Frau Schneider accompanied her husband to a little hut high up in the mountain. They stayed there for several hours, scanning the sky and listening for the soft humming. They were disappointed and waited in vain.

On the silent descent to Heiligenblut, Frau Schneider probably became the first sceptic, the first disbeliever of many who later made the professor's life a misery.

THE story of the **Sternenschiff** was greeted with a howl of derision in Vienna.

The scientists dealt with it in no uncertain manner.

"Schneider was dreaming, he fell asleep ex-

ing, he fell asleep exhausted by the difficult climb, the heat, and affected by the thin air so high up in the mountains," said one group. "He is a brazen-faced liar," said another. "He was probably drunk," said a third.

Some people believed that he had seen a meteor, or a cloud. Others put forward the theory that he had been tricked by blood corpuscles moving in his eye.

The "swordfish snout" and the "flames from the tail" convinced even his friends that he had suffered a delusion, had been plagued by a hallucination. (Today the snout would be explained as a radar antennae, and the flames as the exhaust gases from the jet-engines).

The Catholic Church used its immense influence in Vienna to prevent a public controversy over the **Sternenschiff**. In the St. Stephen's Cathedral the clergy preached against the wickedness of a heretic belief in the existence of "human intelligent beings in other worlds."

Schneider's colleagues

pressed for his resignation. They also demanded that he should renounce his mad story which had "brought discredit to the entire school."

school."

The professor did not yield to this pressure. If anything, he became more stubborn. "How can I deny what I saw with my own eyes, as clearly as I see you now," he told his colleagues.

Life became unbearable to him in Vienna, and he accepted a poorly-paid job as a teacher on a private school in Innsbruck, the capital of Tyrol.

I think he was prompted by the hope to see the

strange object again, but this time in the presence of reliable witnesses. He came back to the Grossglockner mountain every summer and it speaks for his honesty that he did not try to invent another **Sternenschiff**, but admitted sadly, in 1859: "The ship from the Stars has either left us, or has withdrawn to such heights that it cannot be seen any longer by human eyes."

The Evidence

DID Schneider really see what he described, or was he a victim of self-delusion?

Even his own family was worn out by criticism and doubts.

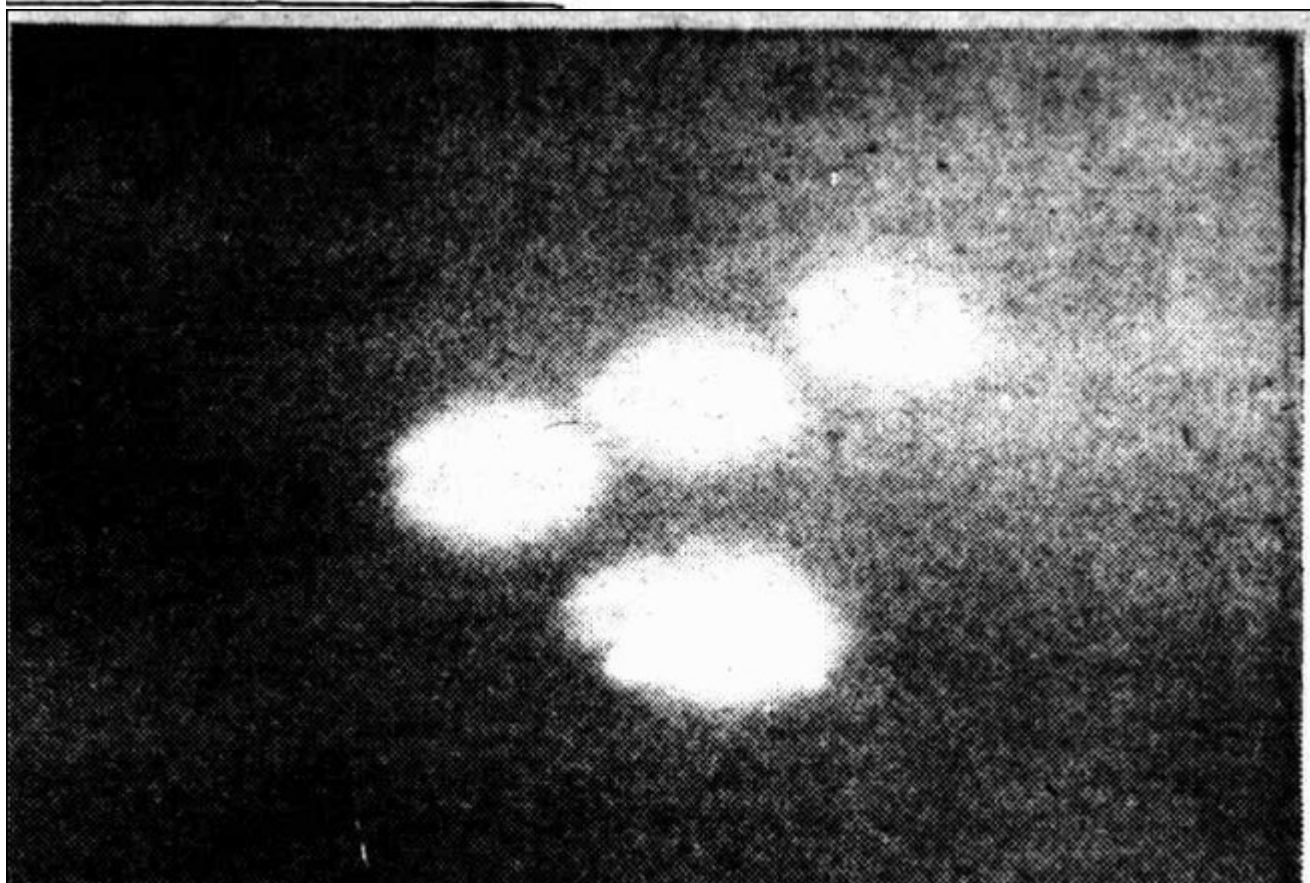
"He was a lovable, kind and considerate man in everything, as long as you did not speak about his ex-

did not speak about his experience in the Alps" his daughter described him.

Yet Schneider's description tallies in important details with those given of Flying Saucers by experienced aircraft spotters using modern observational apparatus.

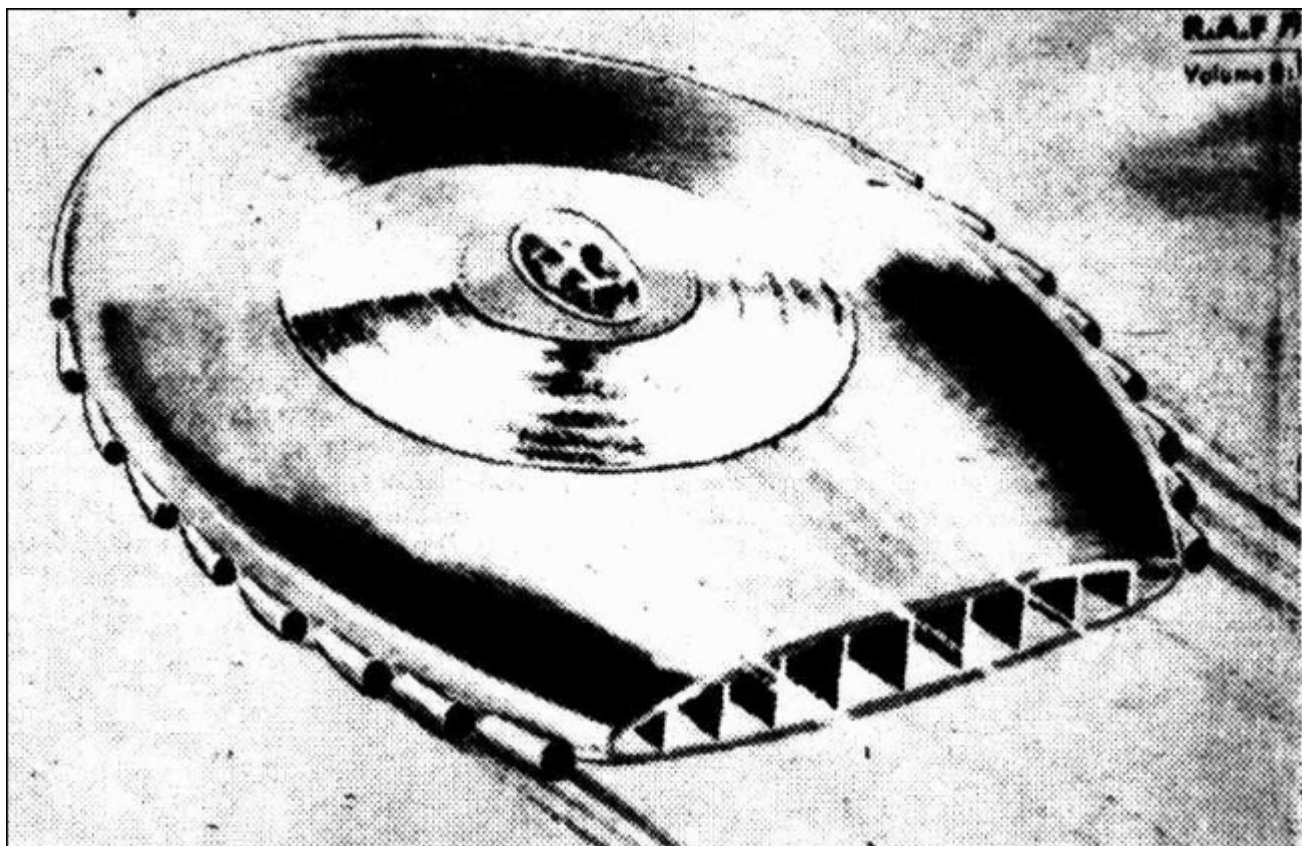
Modern scientists studying the "Schneider mystery" are surprised that he described his strange airship as wingless. It would have been only natural if he had given it immense wings, beating the air rapidly as it circled the

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FLYING SAUCERS? A United States Coastguardsman took this picture of white lights which appeared in formation over a Massachusetts Coastguard station.

RAFF



And here is a man-made flying saucer. This illustration was published in the Toronto "Daily Star" in Canada and shows a machine said to be in an advanced stage of design at the Avro Canada works at Malton, near Toronto. It is claimed that when it flies all other types of supersonic aircraft will become obsolete.

The First Flying Saucer

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mountain range like a fabulous bird of prey.

The wingless disc looks more like a sister ship of the strange craft observed over White Sands (in New Mexico, USA) on a Sunday in April, 1949, when the Senior Officer, Commander Robert McLaughlin, reported that the "space

lin, reported that the "space ship" had been within the range of his telescope for a full sixty seconds. It was flying at a height of 56 miles, and its speed was 5 miles per second—that is, 18,000 miles per hour.

What makes Schneider's story so intriguing is that he had no chance of mistaking conventional aircraft for his ship from the stars, his *Sternenschiff*. In his days there were no radar target balloons with aluminium trailers scintillating in the sun, no meteorological balloons shot across the sky, nor did secret experimenting rocket stations fire

menting rocket stations fire guided missiles 250 miles up into the air at fantastic speed.

Did Professor Schneider fall asleep and dream in the rarified air of the mountain?

Or did he really see what scores of trained observers claim to have seen during the last few years—the atomic-power space ship from another planet?

One cannot doubt the sincerity of his belief in his "Star Ship." And, unlike 1851, modern science does not dismiss it forthright as a "technical impossibility."