

The Season For Seeing Flying Saucers On Again

WASHINGTON.—Eight years ago this summer a Boise businessman, flying alone in his private plane, suddenly spotted mysterious objects playing about Washington's Mt. Rainier, in the north-western U.S.A.

When Kenneth Arnold came down to earth he dutifully reported what he had seen.

His report was to set off an astonishing chain reaction that was to sweep around the world, causing fright, wonder, disbelief.

Air forces sprang to the alert; radar experts anxiously scanned the skies. Scientists scurried to their laboratories.

Experts dredged up words like "muscae volitantes" or "scintillating scotoma" to explain what had happened.

Authors went to work on their typewriters. And there were official comments from the only two Presidents the U.S. has had since that day — June 24, 1947.

The First

Kenneth Arnold said that he had seen a flying saucer.

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Probably it was no accident that the first of thousands of flying saucers to be reported was seen in the Summertime. The big harvest has been in the hot months.

It will surprise no student of unidentified aerial phenomena, as the U.S. Air Force calls them, if before the Summer is over another rash of flying saucers breaks out somewhere in the world.

Following Arnold's discovery, more and more saucers were seen in the U.S.A. during 1952, when a record 1700 were spotted. Then came a slump, with only 429 seen in 1953.

The decline has continued, the Air Force man in charge of saucer counting says, until the reports are hardly more than a trickle.

But America's loss has been England's gain. Last year English saucer sighters

made a bountiful catch. Naturally, the peak season was the summer.

Anyone looking into this situation quickly learns that opinions of flying saucers slip into two widely separated slots:

● Those who believe in them, sincerely and often belligerently. These range from those who think the air force really has a flying saucer but won't admit it to those who think the saucers sail in from outer space, operated by fantastic little creatures.

The Unbelievers

● Those who don't believe in them, sincerely and often sarcastically. These range from those who feel they can be explained away by optical illusions to those who think it's sort of a mass delusion, perfectly in keeping with our edgy times.

Arnold, who represents a fire control equipment firm, told investigators that on historic June 24, 1947, he saw not one, but nine of the weird objects.

"I could see their outline quite plainly against the snow as they approached the mountain," said Arnold. "They flew very close to the mountain top . . . like geese in a diagonal chain-like line, as if they were linked together . . .

were linked together . . . a chain of saucer-like things at least five miles long, swerving in and out of the high mountain peaks.

"They were flat like a pie pan and so shiny they reflected the sun like a mirror. I never saw anything move so fast."

When the story came out there was a lot of sniggering at Arnold. But soon so many people, including some trained pilots, were reporting celestial mysteries that Arnold feels he has been vindicated.

A man who takes his saucers seriously, Arnold told a reporter recently that he not only has spotted flying saucers four different times since that first memorable occasion, but also has worked out a theory.

His view: "They're living organisms of some sort that come down to the lower atmosphere when they are disturbed by earthquakes, atomic explosions or things like that."

In his theory Arnold seems to be pretty much alone. But expert testimony can be found to support his view that something seems to be flying around up there.

In July, 1948, for instance, two Eastern Airlines pilots, C. S. Chiles

lines pilots, C. S. Chiles and John B. White, saw "a wingless aircraft, 100 feet long, cigar shaped and about twice the diameter of a B-29, with no protruding surfaces . . .

"Whatever it was it flashed down toward us and we veered to the left," they told investigators.

Rocked A Plane

"It veered to its left and passed up about 700 feet high to our right and above us. Then, as if the pilot had seen us and wanted to avoid us, it pulled up with a tremendous burst of flame from the rear and zoomed into the clouds, its propwash or jet wash rocking our D.C.-3."

A 72-year-old Air Chief Marshal, Lord Dowding, who commanded the home fighter plane forces in the World War II battle of Britain, last year told a group of spiritualists:

"I believe there are people on other planets who are operating — through flying saucers — to help our world in our present crisis."

Flying right along with them, at least in fancy, is a group of industrious authors who have turned out a shelf full of books on the subjects.

Last Summer, Desmond Leslie, a tall, 33-year-old Englishman who had served

in the R.A.F., announced he had arrived in America to do research on flying saucers.

Leslie, who had already helped write "Flying Saucers Have Landed," said recorded history is full of allusions to mysterious flying objects.

He is sure they are piloted by very high type creatures from outer space, and that the Bible has a reference to these celestial goings on.

"Ezekiel Ten," he said. "A wheel within a wheel. What a fine description of a flying saucer!"

The Scientists

But if there are true believers, there is also a formidable array of scientific opinion on the other side of the fence.

Dr. J. G. Porter, chief scientific officer of the English Royal Observatory at Hursmonceaux, said flatly there's no such thing as a flying saucer.

A Los Angeles doctor, Edgar F. Mauer, suggested it could be either muscae volitantes or maybe even scintillating scotoma. Either way it added up to approximately the same thing: Spots before the eyes.

Dr. Urner Liddle, chief of the nuclear physics branch of the Office of

of the nuclear physics branch of the Office of Naval Research, noted that the first saucer story came out shortly after plastic gas bags were sent far into the air for observations.

In 1950, the late Presidential Secretary, Charles Ross, speaking for President Harry Truman, said the flying saucer was not a secret weapon of this or any other country.

On Dec. 15, 1954, President Eisenhower told a news conference he had been assured it was completely inaccurate to believe flying saucers were coming from outer space.

But some U.S. Government experts have supplied pictorial hints as to where such ideas may originate. On July 1 the Navy released a photograph of an "unusual cloud formation over the city of Marseilles, France."

It looked startlingly like a flying saucer.

As for the Air Force, it continues to check each report thoroughly.

"In a way," the Air Force's saucer man said, "All this looking for flying saucers is a good thing. You never can tell when they might spot an enemy aircraft."

He also had a suggestion on why Summer seems so

popular for saucers: "It could be as simple as this — more people are out of doors then."

Attempts Fail

Whatever the explanation, it's interesting that two serious attempts to pin down the flying saucer got nowhere.

Last Summer Dr. Warren Hickman, dean of Ohio Northern University, announced that after two years his school was dropping its study on "the phenomenon of the flying saucer."

"We needed basic sightings," Hickman said, "and these we didn't receive."

A similar study by the Canadian Government also was dropped, and for the same reason. Not enough business.

The Canadians gave up on another project, the building of a flying saucer. But they went far enough to reach this conclusion: It would cost a billion dollars to build one.