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## Introduction

*The Emergence of a Phenomenon*, the second volume of what will be, when completed, a three-volume *UFO Encyclopedia*. The first volume, *UFOs in the 1980s*, (1990) dealt with recent sightings, influential personalities, theories, rumors, folklore, controversies, organizations, and publications in ufology (as its practitioners call the study of unidentified flying objects). The third volume will examine the UFO controversy from 1960 through 1979.

The current volume is concerned with the UFO phenomenon from its somewhat nebulous origins through 1959, by which time definitions had been made, lines had been drawn, and the stage had been set for all, or at any rate most, that would come after. In some instances, when logic and coherence so insist, entries plunge beyond the boundary of the 1950s, and events follow their natural courses and meet their destinies in the later years of the century. This is true especially of organizational histories and personal biographies. On occasion interest in early cases or individual claimants (for example, contactee George Adamski) continued practically up to the present, and this book takes note of subsequent developments, which sometimes clarified issues, at other times only clouded them further.

Still, one thing seems relatively sure: The UFO phenomenon of the modern era-dating from the June 24, 1947, Kenneth Arnold sighting which brought "flying saucers" to the world's attention-is relatively recent. It begins to appear as a significant presence in the 1890s, though sporadic reports of recognizable UFOs are scattered throughout the nineteenth century. Long before the UFO phenomenon, however, there were other kinds of aerial oddities, both natural (astronomical and meteorological) and supernatural (visionary). These phenomena were not "UFOs" in the modern sense (though some uncritical writers have treated them as such), but they are certainly precursors of a sort, doing for our ancestors what UFOs have done for us: transform the sky into a realm of wonder and mystery and a starry field of dreams about other worlds and beings. An extended essay on anomalous aerial phenomena before 1800 considers this broad subject.

Other entries-airship sightings; crashes of UFOs in the nineteenth century; flying serpents; Springheel Jack; UFOs in the nineteenth century-review UFO or UFO-like reports in the 1800s. Still others (for example UFOs in Australia and New Zealand through 1959 and Charles Hoy Fort) deal in part with the previous century's experience of the phenomenon.

This volume also is concerned with pre-1947 twentieth-century reports in such entries as foo fighters, ghost rockets, and UFOs, 1900-1946, and in sections of other entries (close encounters of the third kind, 1901 - 1959, for instance). The rest of the book looks at the twelve and a half years after June 1947—the early period of what is often called the UFO era in its multitudinous dimensions.

The UFO phenomenon is, of course, rooted in experiential claims. Typically we have only the testimony of one "witness" or several "witnesses" to what seem, if the testimony is taken at face value, to be extraordinary events. In the absence of other evidence, reports of this nature are properly called "allegations" or "anecdotes." For reasons of readability, however, this book forgoes the use, in all but a few instances, of such qualifying adverbs as "allegedly" or "supposedly." Most of the reports recounted here are intended simply to exemplify the kinds of stories people relate about UFOs and their occupants; they are not intended on their own to argue a case for either alien visitation or mass hallucination. When neither supporting nor disconfirming evidence exists, how we as individuals feel about them will mirror how we feel about the reality or unreality of UFOs.

Beyond that, even the Air Force's Project Blue Book conceded that, popular perceptions to the contrary notwithstanding, relatively few UFO reporters are conscious hoaxers. Some of the exceptions to this rule are identified in hoaxes through 1959 and other entries. It should also be said that recurring patterns, including subtle, not-so-obvious ones, in many reports lend themselves more readily to the view that interactions with a relatively stable, lawful phenomenon (whatever its ultimate nature) are being described than that personal fantasies are being indulged. Though favored by debunkers and some ufologists, the (eminently testable) hypothesis that close-encounter claimants are "fantasy-prone personalities" has repeatedly failed to withstand empirical scrutiny and has little support from mental-health professionals who have actively pursued what would seem, superficially anyway, to be a reasonable explanation. The absence of evidence for it as a significant element in UFO-reporting will not, alas, keep fantasy-proneness from being waved as a talisman by those who have the need to drive off unacceptable phenomena. UFO study is no more for the timid than it is for those who prefer to dwell in an emotional universe devoid of discomfiting uncertainties.

In instances where positive or negative evidence pertaining to a claim's credibility is available, that evidence is discussed in relevant entries. Sometimes such evidence is sufficiently robust to permit judgments to be rendered; sometimes it may not be enough to settle an issue, but it may at least point in the direction where the answer is likely to be found.

Lengthy as this book is, it could well have been twice as long. Space considerations (not to mention a beleaguered author's sanity) have led to the postponing of some issues until the next volume. These are issues which were not necessarily specific to the time period *Emergence* covers, though as part of the scenery they are dealt with, more briefly, in other entries. For example, individual radar/visual sightings are recounted in several entries, but a broader treatment, summary, and analysis of these kinds of cases (which are central to the question of the physical reality of UFOs) in their totality will have to wait. So will extended overviews of waves, electromagnetic effects, men in black, psychic communications with extraterrestrials, UFO debunkers, aliens in our midst, ufology in non-English-speaking countries, and secret-weapon theories.

Even so, in the 113 entries that comprise this book, no aspect of pre-1960 ufology goes untouched on. As the fullest treatment of the subject's early history yet written, *Emergence* traces the evolution of UFOs both as observed phenomena and as foci of speculations, movements, publications, lies, denials, and official and scientific inquiries. It also contains, particularly after the longer pieces, extended bibliographies whose citations include rare, ephemeral, and obscure materials. Much of the information here appears between book covers for the first time.

I have written all but two of the entries. I would like to express my gratitude to Thomas E. Bullard, author of an Indiana University Ph.D. thesis on UFOs and folklore, for contributing the entry on pre-1800 aerial anomalies, and to Bill Chalker, a scientist and leading figure in Australian (and world) ufology, for his history of the phenomenon in Australia and New Zealand. Bullard is also the compiler of *The Airship File* (1982, 1990), a massive collection of primary materials on historical sightings. I have drawn extensively on his work in my own examinations of pre-1947 cases—though he should not be held accountable for the conclusions I have drawn from it.

In this area and others I have made use, as well, of the considerable holdings of the Santa Barbara Centre for Humanistic

Studies and the J. Allen Hynek Center for UFO Studies (CUFOS) in Chicago. (I am vice-president of CUFOS and edit its bimonthly magazine, *International UFO Reporter*. ) I have drawn, too, on my private collection, the product of over three decades' interest in the UFO controversy.

Like anyone trying to reconstruct the history of this complex, confounding subject, I often turned to Loren E. Gross's series of privately published monographs, *UFOs: A History*, a virtual day-by-day chronicle (the most recent volume covers a single month, September 1954), and to my CUFOS colleague George M. Eberhart's two-volume *UFOs and the Extraterrestrial Contact Movement* (Scarecrow Press, 1986), a comprehensive bibliography of books and monographs as well as magazine and journal articles from the nonspecialist literature. Bullard, Gross, and Eberhart have made life easier for all of us who work in their wake.

My wife Nancy kept me sane through all the twists and turns and peaks and valleys that existence took as I was writing this book, an enterprise that at times seemed to be turning into a life sentence. Eric Berger and Laurie Harris of Omnigraphics, Inc., lent sympathetic ears when they were most needed, and Helene Henderson exercised her superb editorial skills. Thanks also to these friends and colleagues for being there with information, ideas, advice, and support of all kinds: Robert Achzehner, Roger J. Birner, Darryl Collins, Lucius Farish, Curtis Fuller, Mary Margaret Fuller, John Griffin, Richard Hall, Richard Heiden, Budd Hopkins, David M. Jacobs, Pierre Lagrange, J. Gordon Melton, William L. Moore, James W. Moseley, Kevin D. Randle, Frank John Reid, Mark Rodeghier, Sven RosCn, Donald R. Schmitt, Michael D. Swords, Marcello Truzzi, and John White.