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UFO UpDates Mailing List

UFO REPORT, November, 1960

From: KENNY <task@fuse.net>
Date: Sun, 07 Sep 1997 15:50:10 -0700
Fwd Date: Sun, 07 Sep 1997 16:20:17 -0400
Subject: UFO REPORT, November, 1960

Could anyone assist by finding newspaper articles of this event from other hometown newspapers where sighted? Additional details may better help to triangulate altitude of object and direction of travel... thanks

Report on 1960 UFO SIGHTING, November 23

Item #1:
Re-typed Newspaper article:

Widespread Reports- UFO FLAMES ACROSS NATION
By Joe Eble, Enquirer Science Reporter
The Cincinnati Enquirer, November 24, 1960

A huge, luminous flame-tailed something flashed across the pre-dawn sky yesterday, stirring a storm of UFO (unidentified flying object) reports throughout the Midwest, including Cincinnati. The final explanation was still 'up in the air' last night.

The sighting was noted by residents of Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin and New York.

Most of the reports agreed that whatever was seen was in the eastern sky between 6:15 and 6:30 a.m. about 25 to 30 degrees above the horizon.

They described it as a bright light veiled in a sort of mist and having a fan-shaped tail or "headlight."

Ideas, official and unofficial, on what it was varied.

- * Tiros II, the man-made weather satellite launched from Cape Canaveral at 6:13 a.m. yesterday.
- * One of two giant weather balloons launched early yesterday, one at Sioux Falls, S.D. the other at Wayne, Mich.
- * A shower of Tinfoil dropped over Carleton, Mich. by an Air Force jet in a radar obstruction test.
- * Two B-52 bombers flying at 40,000 feet.
- * A meteor.
- * An experimental aircraft.

The last suggestion was advanced by B.J. Sharrock, 266 Oakmont Ave., Hartwell, apparently the only one of hundreds of observers of the strange object who looked at it through binoculars.

Among the Cincinnati observers was Escal Bennett, head of the Weather Bureau office here. He watched it briefly from 6:22 a.m. from Abbe Observatory in Clifton.

"I have no idea what it was," he stated, but he discounted meteorological phenomena and weather balloons. It looked like a "hard core of light" on the edge of a cumulous cloud, with another light 'flaring out about five degrees' at its bottom.

It was veiled in a "faint curious white stuff like smoke or vapor," he said.

Bennett said observers at both Lunken and Greater Cincinnati Airport towers saw it, and William Howe, in charge of the Miami Conservancy District's observation program at Dayton, Ohio, confirmed the description and added that he saw two smaller lights near it.

Raymond Spitznagel, 544 Burr Oak St., Winton Pl. and his son, Richard, 13, watched it for 10 minutes as they were going to church.

His description matched the general reports. "It was too bright to be a star," he said. He stated that it was motionless at first, then moved to his left, made a half-circle, stopped, went back to its starting place and disappeared.

Mrs. Bailey Dickerson, 1734 Tuxworth Ave., Price Hill, said her husband called her attention to it as he left for work. "It looked to me like a star, but with a streamer on the bottom of it."

Sharrock had just arrived at work in Sharonville when he noticed it. He snatched a pair of 10-power binoculars from his car and watched it for six minutes before it disappeared.

>From what I could see it was a definite solid man-made object." He said it looked 'cigar-shaped,' like two saucers upside down, rim to rim.

At one end was a 'searchlight or floodlight, shining down on a cloud.' This light was at one end and then at the other, suggesting to Sharrock that the object was revolving.

"On the side appeared to be a row of lights - where the rims would meet. The top and bottom were real black... real shiny jet black." He said he couldn't see the ends clearly because of 'gaseous vapors' which surrounded it.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration in Washington said Tiros II could not have been the mysterious object since it went the other direction and was too high to be seen by the eye.

University of Michigan officials, who put the Sioux Falls balloon (a 16 story camera observer) aloft, also discounted it.

They pointed out that the balloon was seen west of Michigan at the same time of the sightings, while the object was reported to the east.

End of article

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Item #2:
Re-Typed Newspaper article:

What-Is-It Sweeps Across City's Sky
The Cincinnati Post and Times Star,
Wednesday, November 23, 1960 Page 1:A

A bright moving object like a star with a V-saped tail was seen this morning by hundreds of Greater Cincinnatians and early risers in many other cities as far away as Detroit and Chicago.

There were several theories about what the bright object might have been, including a balloon launched in connection with a new Tiros II weather satellite, rockets on the satellite, reflections of the rising sun on a high-flying jet plane, or metal foil dropped from a jet in a test of radar jamming equipment.

The balloon was released from Sioux Falls, S.D. at 4:50 a.m. Cincinnati time. The Tiros satellite was fired from Cape Canaveral at 6:13 a.m. Most of the sightings throughout the Midwest were reported within 12 minutes after the Tiros was fired.

Air Force authorities in Washington at the North American Air Defense Command at Colorado Springs, Col. at Traus Air Force Base, Madison Wisc. conferred by telephone, and then concluded it was a reflection

from the balloon. However, the balloon was reported over Mason City, Iowa three hours after the sightings.

A spokesman at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge, Mass. said the object sighted over the Midwest could not have been the Tiros satellite.

A member of the moonwatch team in Cincinnati said it was possible that persons in this area could have seen the rockets from Tiros as it went up.

He said the time and direction of persons who reported seeing the object in this area coincided with the firing of Tiros. He said a rocket launched from Florida was seen a year ago as it exploded.

Everyone here agreed on what it looked like, but not on which direction it was traveling.

Mrs. Gloria Gayhart of Middletown told The Post and Times-Star she and her husband, James, saw the object shortly after 6 a.m. "I thought it was a star at first," Mrs. Gayhart said.

"Then we noticed it had a V-shaped tail, something like a jet-stream." She said the tail stretched out at a great length from the main object.

She said it appeared to be traveling from the southwest to the northeast.

Escal Bennet, in charge of the Weather Bureau office in Cincinnati, saw the object at 6:22 a.m. while he was making observations at the Abbe Observatory in Clifton.

"There was a hard core of light with a trailing light behind it," Mr. Bennet said. Mr. Bennet described it as being shaped like a flashlight with a V-shaped beam.

"I know it was not a meteorological phenomenon," Mr. Bennet said. "I had the definite feeling that it was lifting or going up. I have no idea what it might have been."

Mr. Bennet said the object appeared to be 25 to 30 degrees high. He was looking east at the time and noticed it several times while making weather observations.

Richard Guinn and Clarence Berry, trouble shooters for the Cincinnati Gas and Electric Co. were on North Bend Road near the new St. Xavier High School when they saw the object. They said they watched it from 6:21 until it disappeared at 6:25 a.m.

Carl Haefner of Hillside Terrace, Milford, said he saw what appeared to be two objects. He said the second light with a fan-shaped tail was not as large as the other.

Mr. Haefner, an amateur astronomer, went into the house to get his wife. He said one object was gone when he got outside again. He said the remaining object moved south, then wound up clockwise and disappeared like a fading light.

"Just at that moment, something like a huge meteor came down," Mr. Haefner said.

End of Article

Analysis of Reported UFO Sighting- November 23, 1960

Time of Event: 6:15 a.m. until 6:30 a.m.

Duration of Event: Some reported constant observations for 4-minute periods, others reported 6 & 10-minute durations.

Locations of where sighted from: Ohio (Dayton, Middletown, Cincinnati, Toledo), Illinois (Chicago), Michigan (Detroit), Wisconsin, New York, Indiana and Missouri.

Descriptions given of object:

- Bright light veiled in a sort of mist and having a fan-shaped tail or 'headlight.'
- Big light too bright for a star
- Star with a streamer on bottom

- Cigar-shape resembling two saucers upside-down, rim to rim with a floodlight shining down on a cloud. This light was at one end and then appeared at the other, suggestive of a 'revolving' motion. A row of lights where rims would meet were described. The top and bottom were "shiny, jet black." The ends couldn't be seen clearly because of 'gaseous vapors' surrounding it
- "Hard core of light" on the edge of a cumulous cloud, with another light 'flaring out about 5-degrees' at its bottom.
- Star with "V-shape" tail like a jet stream which stretched out at a great length from main object.
- 25 to 30-degrees above horizon
- Generally reported in the eastern sky
- East of the Abbe Observatory, Clifton (suburb of Cincinnati, OH)
- Two lights, 2nd light w/fan-shaped tail not as large as other
- Veiled in a "faint curious white stuff like smoke or vapor."

Ballistic Characteristics:

- Motionless at first, then moved to left (from observer vantage point), made a half-circle, stopped, went back to its starting place and disappeared." (Raymond Spitznagel)
- Traveling from southwest to northeast (Mrs. Gloria Gayhart)
- Lifting or going up (Escal Bennet, Cincinnati Weather Bureau)
- Object moved south from original position then 'wound-up' clockwise and disappeared like a fading light. At that moment, something like a huge meteor "came down." (Carl Haefner, amateur astronomer)

Witnesses:

CARL HAEFNER - Amateur astronomer
 ESCAL BENNETT - Supervisor of The Cincinnati Weather Bureau
 RICHARD GUINN - Cincinnati Gas & Electric Trouble-Shooter
 CLARENCE BERRY - Cincinnati Gas & Electric Trouble-Shooter
 JAMES GAYHART - Middletown resident
 GLORIA GAYHART - Middletown resident
 B.J. SHARROCK - Hartwell (Cinti suburb) resident
 WILLIAM HOWE - Miami Conservancy District's Observation Program
 RAYMOND SPITZNAGEL & Son - Winton Place, Cincinnati, OH
 Mr. and Mrs. BAILEY DICKERSON - Price Hill (Cinti suburb) residents
 GREATER CINCINNATI & LUNKEN AIRPORT AIR TOWER CONTROLLERS

Reportage: The news articles sought to apply various prosaic explanations to the event, all of which were listed as being incompatible to the fully deal with the reported incident.

1. TIROS II weather satellite launched from CAPE CANAVERAL at 6:13 a.m.
2. "One of two" giant weather balloons launched from two locations: Sioux Falls, South Dakota and Wayne, Michigan.
3. Shower of tinfoil dropped over Carleton, Michigan by an Air Force jet in a radar obstruction test.
4. Two B-52 bombers flying at 40,000 feet
5. A meteor
6. Experimental aircraft
7. Reflections of the rising sun from a high-flying jet plane

The following conclusions were drawn (regarding the above explanation attempts):

- Meteorological phenomena and weather balloons discounted (Bennet, Cinti Weather Bureau)
- NASA said TIROS II went the other direction and too high to be seen by the eye. NASA said TIROS II "could not have been the mysterious object." The NASA contention was also bolstered by a spokesman at the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory in Cambridge. In disagreement with the above is a member of "the moonwatch team" in Cincinnati, who said persons in this area could have seen the rockets from TIROS II as it went up.
- University of Michigan discounted that the Sioux Falls balloon was the object, because it was seen west of Michigan at the time of the sightings while the object was reported to the east. However, AF persons in Washington at the North American Air Defense Command at Colorado Springs, Col. at Traus AFB, Madison, Wisc said it was a reflection from the balloon. Again, however, this balloon was reported over Madison City, Iowa, three hours after the sighting.

ADDITIONAL NOTE:

Two days earlier during the evening of Nov. 21, 1960, mysterious lights were reported by many people in Cincinnati,

reference the following article:

Re-typed Newspaper Article:

No UFO!
The Cincinnati Enquirer
November 22, 1960

Lunken Airport control tower operators last night quickly solved the "mysterious lights" reported seen by many in the sky over Cincinnati. Merely the navigational lights on three tanker planes flying formation from Clinton County Air Force Base at Wilmington, Ohio, the tower said.

End of article

Other Mention:

Entry for November 24, 1960 from NICAP's THE UFO EVIDENCE: OHIO- White elliptical UFO observed by scientist. Although the date in NICAP files is one day after the mass-sighting, this could, nonetheless, be the same event.

Comment:

As stated above within the text of the reportage, most basic explanations have been ruled out. Exploring variations of these theories could lead us to ask the following questions:

SUNLIGHT REFLECTING OFF OF JETS (B-52's flying at 40,000 feet spotted at the same moment in the eastern sky and over 7-states doesn't seem likely.

The position of the available sunlight is also a factor. At which time would the breaking sunlight be striking any such hypothetical planes from whatever altitude necessary to produce this effect over 7-states? The actual sunrise in Cincinnati on November 23, 1960, was 7:30 a.m., well over an hour after the time of the sighting. Sunlight peeking around the curvature of the earth would not be visible to jets over Cincinnati while flying at a 40,000 ft. elevation at the 6:15 a.m. time frame, so no glare or reflection would be possible at that moment. Even so, no such illumination from one aircraft would be seen simultaneously over 7-states across a range of well over 1,174-miles from New York to Wisconsin, Chicago and Cincinnati.

Furthermore, what is the possibilities that a sunlight reflection from the surface of a plane would produce the same result, as seen from the ground, from Wisconsin to New York? Wouldn't the angle and intensity of the reflection vary from one location to another, and also at differing times?

Also, the descriptive characteristics such as 'veiled in a mist w/fan-shaped tail,' sounds meteoric or rocket-like as opposed to a localized, specific object such as a jet aircraft. Reference is also made to vapors and clouds surrounding or partly concealing the object, again, further indications that would lead us away from the balloon or jet theory.

The rocket launch, Tiros II, headed the opposite direction, according to NASA, and shouldn't be visible to people in the midwestern and eastern U.S.

The meteor aspect, when considered, is not plausible if the accounts of apparent course deviation beyond natural possibilities are to be considered. The course-change descriptions are provided by two independent witnesses (Spitznagel & Haefner) who described its motion as moving in a 'half-circle' and that it 'wound up clockwise.' Bennet (from the Cinti Weather Bureau) thought it was 'moving up.'

The scrutiny through binoculars by Mr. Sharrock revealed a 'revolving, cigar-shaped object like two saucers upside-down, rim to rim' with a searchlight or floodlight on one end. Where the rims met, he described a 'row of lights.' The ends weren't visible because of 'gaseous vapors.' These details are shaky when one considers what light source he was viewing the object from (existing pre-dawn daylight or darkness). If daylight was insufficient, his qualification of a solid, cigar-shaped

