

SUNlite

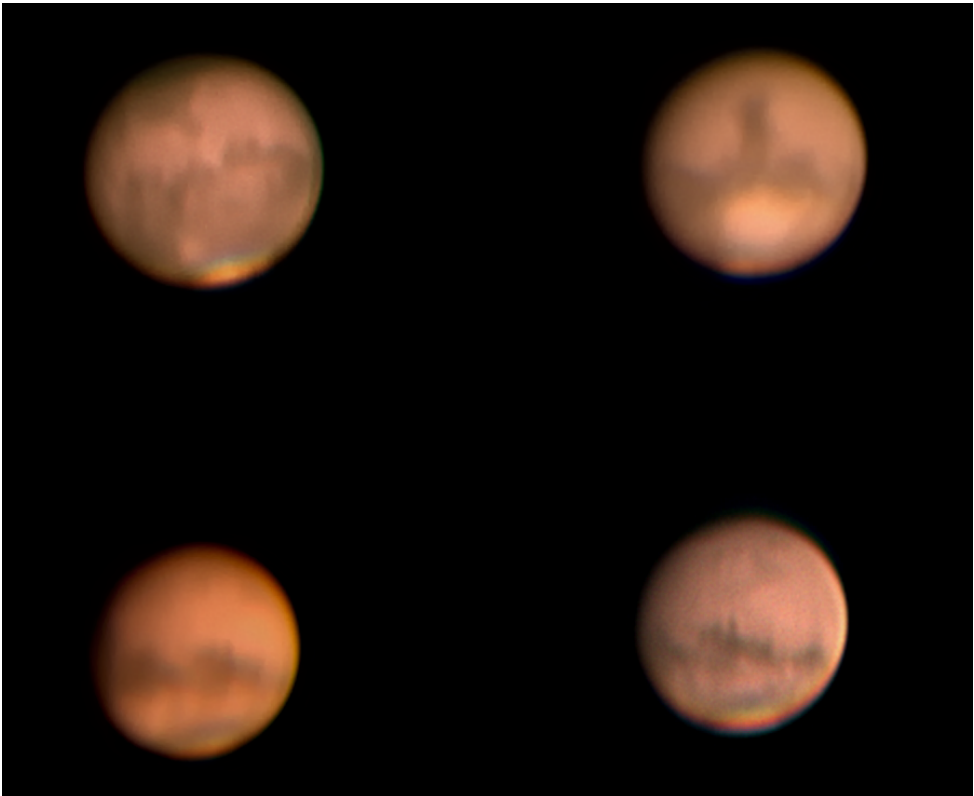
Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

Since we are surrounded by them all of our lives, I still find it quite remarkable that so many adults can observe a stellar body and see fit to call it in as a "UFO." Furthermore, what does it say about the total UFO phenomenon when these adults are often in groups and watch these stars for hours?

Allen Hendry (The UFO Handbook)

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Front: Mars dominated the southeastern evening sky for July and August.

Left: A collection of Mars images I obtained this last August. It is interesting to note how the various features appear to the eye. My images do not show any "canals" but, when staring at an eyepiece for hours, the very minute details can appear to look like lines. Percival Lowell's arguments with the astronomical community about the canals he mapped/observed tend to mirror some of the arguments found in UFOlogy.

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No one would have believed.....

Nope....there is no hidden message here. It is just the opening to the book "The War of the Worlds". With the recent Mars opposition dominating a lot of my free time on clear nights, I just thought I would include it here as well as the images I was able to capture. The low angle of elevation has made recording of the planet in New Hampshire very difficult. Still, one can't miss the planet dominating the southwest sky after sunset. I am sure Mars generated a lot of UFO reports across the world as people were probably surprised to see a unusually bright orange light being visible in the evening sky after sunset.

The current state of UFOlogy appears to be stuck on the usual collection of UFO reports, UFO conventions, and waiting for the "To The Stars Academy" (TTSA) to reveal their earth-shattering evidence that proves UFOs are some sort of advanced technology that are not made by man. From what I have seen, I am not very convinced this is going to happen. I would not bet the farm.

Besides the TTSA, the most interesting news these last two months was the Canadian UFO survey. As always, I am critical of such things and present my critique in this issue. I admire what the authors of the survey attempt but I am also unimpressed by the results. It tells us nothing new and I lay out why I think that on page 8.

I am noticing that most of the "Who's blogging" section is dominated by the TTSA. They are the only ones really producing anything new or interesting. Most of the rest are just repeating some of the same old stories. For that matter, SUNlite has become stuck in the same quagmire. Other than my articles about the 701 club, UFO evidence, and Blue Book review, I am just not inspired to write much about anything else.

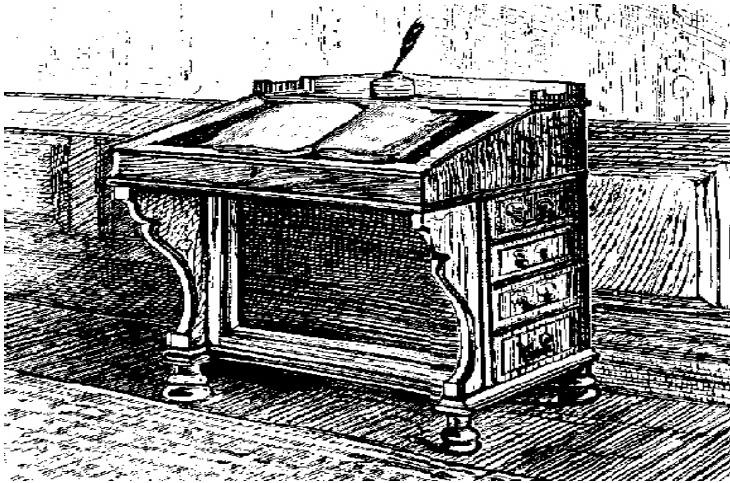
I did receive some input from Herb Taylor, who has gathered a listing of reports in the Blue Book files that involve the Moon. He desired that I present it and comment about it in this issue. You can find this starting page 21.

In the last issue, I discussed the BOAC case of June 30, 1954 but made an error on describing the incident. Geoff Quick pointed out that the plane involved was not a Stratoliner but a Stratocruiser. I am not sure where I determined it was a Stratoliner but it is a mistake that needs to be pointed out. Geoff also provided me a link to a news story showing the aircrew describing the sighting. It was very interesting and pretty much mirrors what Martin Shough had put together in his report on the case. I appreciate such input and am always willing to admit, and correct, mistakes involving facts.



Who's blogging UFOs?

Hot topics and varied opinions



Apparently, the History Channel has created a program about project Blue Book. Looking at the trailer, it appears that the "History" channel has butchered the history of Blue Book. My initial impression is that it will be more fiction than fact. The program claims that Blue Book was "Top Secret". This is false. When it was project SIGN, most of the documents/reports were classified "secret". The only "Top Secret" document I am aware of was the Air Intelligence study written in late 1948. Meanwhile, Blue Book was known by everyone interested in flying saucers shortly after it began its work. Its classification was low. They even issued press releases about some of their investigations! Will "Hanger one" have some competition for the worst UFO program ever?

Jesse Marcel's family is teasing UFO crashologists with an upcoming release of Jesse Marcel Sr's journal. Strange that the journal is just now appearing. Both he and his son never produced such a document. Now we are to believe that sud-

denly it has been found? Color me skeptical on this one. I suspect that the journal, if it is authentic, contains very few, if any, entries from 1947 and probably was written many years later.

Tom DeLonge of the "To The Stars Academy" (TTSA), posted a photo on his facebook page showing a "pill bottle" with a blacked out label. He hinted that this was a piece of material of "unknown origin". This appears to be just another effort to hype his organization, collect money from gullible individuals, and deliver nothing in return.

George Knapp decided to give us a list of all the studies that were submitted to the Advanced Aviation Threat Identification Program (AATIP). Most of these are articles appear to be written about speculative studies into things like "warp speed", "worm-holes", "Invisibility cloaks", and "Anti-gravity". Few, if any, of these studies appear to have anything to do with identifying advanced aviation threats or UFOs! The taxpayers paid for all these papers but got nothing of significance in return. The only people who benefited were the authors of these papers and BAASS. This is just another example of what a waste of time, and money, the AATIP was.

M. J. Banias wrote about the TTSA's program to analyze meta-materials recovered from UFO sites. It is called the "Acquisition and Data Analysis of Materials" (ADAM). Again, I am not overly impressed. Banias spends some time talking to Hal Puthoff, who has never impressed me with anything he has presented. Puthoff told Banias that the TTSA had some materials with interesting histories in their possession but no analysis has been done on them. That makes me wonder what Bigelow did with all that money the taxpayers gave him. Does this mean he did no analysis or are these samples new items that have recently been recovered? I also have to wonder what the TTSA has been doing for the past year. If they had these samples all along, why didn't they rush to get them analyzed if they were so promising? Instead, they continue to dribble out bits and pieces. Once again, this all appears to be nothing more than hype and little, if nothing, in substance.

In another TTSA incident, a load of documents surfaced on the Internet that were associated with AATIP and TTSA. Keith Basterfield documented what was present and states the source can be traced back to Chris Mellon of the TTSA. Either Mellon leaked this on purpose or somebody hacked his web site. The documents have since disappeared. There was little earth shattering in the documents seen. However, there was an apparent resignation letter written by Luis Elizondro. The substance of the letter mirrors what he has stated in the past. Another item was the "report" about the Nimitz incident. It was the same "report" released previously but the information that was redacted was now visible. This included contact information and names of witnesses. As M. J. Banias wrote, to allow such information to be leaked either on purpose or by accident is not very professional. Is this what the TTSA is about? It seems publicity is more important than integrity.

Keith Basterfield reported that Roger Glassel unearthed a congressional record that mentions the AATIP. More interesting is that this record was dated April 8, 2018. The record states that congress was interested in all products produced by the AATIP. It sounds to me like somebody in Congress saw the press stories about the AATIP and was interested in finding out what the AATIP discovered/revealed. Maybe this will result in some records being released to the public.

Apparently, somebody saw something that looked like a really tall Alien cross a highway in Ohio one night. One has to wonder, "Why the alien crossed the road?" Was it....."To get to the other side?" Seriously, I don't consider these kinds of case very credible without some serious evidence to support them. In this case, we have an unconfirmed story and nothing else. Despite this lack of evidence, somebody thought it was important enough to publish it on the Internet. Are UFOlogists that desperate for publicity?

Paul Dean continues his efforts to look into old UFO reports/documents in order to drive home the point that the USAF has lied that they stopped investigating UFOs when Blue Book closed down. He described his latest revelation as a "bombshell".

Who's blogging UFOs? (Cont'd)

However, I don't consider it that great a revelation that the USAF investigated UFOs related to defense installations. It has been known that such cases have been reported after 1969 and the upper chain of command showed interest in those reports to varying degrees. UFOlogists had been aware of the infamous Bolender memo for many decades. It stated that, "*Termination of Project Blue Book would leave no official federal office to receive reports of UFOs. However, as already stated, reports of UFOs which could affect national security would continue to be handled through the standard Air Force procedures designed for this purpose.*" This meant that Blue Book was canceled and the USAF would not collect/investigate UFO reports from the civilian populace. However, reports from the military, as well as from other government agencies, would be made through the local channels and handled accordingly. Additionally, Bolender specifically discussed if a central agency would be needed for this and dismissed it. Until the reveal of the AATIP last year, that was apparently the case and Dean has yet to present evidence otherwise. While he considers this information a bombshell, I consider it nothing new.

The Roswell corner

A not so different perspective

Kevin Randle recently wrote an article stating that his review of the government documents indicated that an alien spaceship did not crash at Roswell. This is nothing new since he stated this in his recent book, *Roswell in the 21st century*. Almost twenty years ago, Mr. Randle had dismissed these same documents as some sort of deception to cover-up the alien spaceship crash. Now he suddenly flips to the same argument that skeptics have been making for decades. Still, Kevin can't bring himself to completely divorce himself from the Roswell legend that he has helped create. After mirroring his book's argument against an alien spaceship crash, Randle also trotted out the same old arguments that I have addressed several times here in SUNlite.

In my opinion, Mr. Randle is trying to find a way to make himself sound like the rational proponent and paint skeptics as the irrational individuals, who blindly accept the USAF explanations. While he seems to be willing to admit that what was recovered might not have been an alien spaceship, Randle is reluctant to state that what was found at the Foster Ranch is what we see in the photographs. Both skeptics and proponents agree, with some exceptions, that what is seen in the photographs are old balloon debris and one, or more, ML-307 reflectors. The most likely source of that debris is project MOGUL. Unfortunately, Randle has been anti-MOGUL for so long he can't seem to bring himself to admit there is the possibility, however small, that MOGUL might have been the source of the debris. To convince himself, and his followers, he creates absolute statements that he cannot establish as facts like "there was never a flight #4 because it was canceled and then disassembled" or "the cluster of balloons statement means no reflectors were involved". As I have previously stated, these are Randle's biased interpretations of what he thinks happened based on the entry in Crary's journal. While it is a fact that Crary wrote these passages in his journal, it is not a fact that these passages absolutely state what Randle says they do.

I think it is best to summarize the rebuttals I have published regarding Randle's, and others, arguments regarding Roswell by simply listing them here:

- Project Mogul does not explain the debris for numerous reasons: See "Crashology's last stand" in SUNlite 5-5.
- The testimony of Thomas Dubose proves there was a switch of the real debris with that of a weather balloon: See "Flip-Flopping" in SUNlite 4-6
- Marcel was a radar expert because of his training and would have recognized a radar reflector for what it was: See "Drooling idiots and elite units" in SUNlite 4-6.
- The debris in the photographs was some off the shelf balloon materials that were laid out in the sun for a few hours then photographed for the press: See "Balloon testing" in SUNlite 4-4 and 4-5.
- There was not enough debris in a Mogul flight to account for Brazel's description: See "Debris field simulation" in SUNlite 4-4

In summary, I would like to repeat what I wrote in SUNlite 5-5:

The whole idea of the MOGUL theory offered by the USAF/Todd/Pflock/Moore is that it is the most likely source for the debris described and photographed in 1947. The NYU team used the same types of materials in their balloon flights prior to July of 1947. It does not mean MOGUL is the only possible source of the debris but, based on what we know, it is the most probable source. If some evidence were unearthed that either produces a more reasonable solution or conclusively falsifies the MOGUL hypothesis, skeptics would be more than willing to accept it. However, that evidence has to be verifiable and not based on speculation, biased interpretation, opinions, or guess-work.

October 2, 1955 Ohio

October 2, 1955--Akron and Alliance, Ohio. Hovering disc- like UFO observed over wide area. [VII]¹

Section VII has a rather lengthy discussion of the UFO reports seen by several people, who observed an object in the western sky around sunset. To summarize²:

There were 8 observers. Six were interviewed by Walter N. Webb. They saw the object from three different locations. To summarize:

- Alliance, Ohio. The Ansleys saw the object as they were driving west in town. It was about 15 degrees above the horizon and it was 6:10 PM EST. To them it looked star-like and they thought it might be Venus or Mercury. It was as bright as Venus. The object changed its size and shape. It changed from a small disc to a thin crescent and then a cigar shape. No angular size estimate, in degrees, was given but it appears to have been about a half-degree or less. By 6:20 PM, it had faded out.
- North Georgetown, Ohio. Wilma Barker and Rudolph Holloway saw the object driving home to Alliance. To them, it also changed shape and faded out when they arrived home, which was around 6:20 PM.
- Akron, Ohio. Donald J. Karaikos, and his wife, saw the object in the west about 10 degrees above the horizon. They also gave one of those size comparisons that were meaningless (1/3 the size of a pin) but it seems that it was at the half-degree size, or less. It was first seen at 6:00 PM. It was visible for about 10 minutes.

The UFO Evidence then concludes³:

If the angular altitudes and azimuths given were absolutely dependable -- and they are not -- it might be possible to discover the object's actual size, distance, and height. It must have been huge -- several hundred feet in diameter -- to have been seen over such a wide area. Using the times and descriptions of all three groups of observers, it is possible to work out a continuous change-of-phase pattern for the UFO (see diagram). This apparent change in shape and size could have been due to a disc turning vertically in flight and presenting its edge to the observers. Or it may have been a real alteration... Whatever the explanation, it is evident that eight persons did see a UFO -- an extraordinary UFO -- from three different areas around the same time...

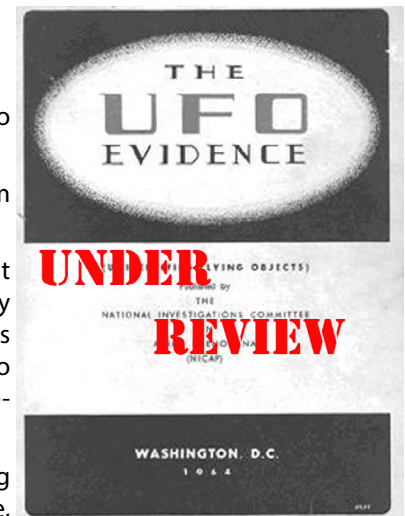
Analysis

I found the UFO investigation to have been less than adequate. Angular sizes of the object were never truly determined. All we know is that it was small but large enough that a shape could be perceived. The largest it appeared to have been was about the size of moon. However, it could have been smaller than that. With the directional data, one might have been to determine a general location but, once again, the investigation did not attempt to get better azimuth values from the witnesses. As a result, the data was not adequate for computing a triangulation plot.

The fact that it was visible at sunset (6:06 PM EST), changed shape as the sun set further below the horizon, and then was not visible as it got dark indicates the object was being illuminated by the sun. As the sun set, the illumination of the object changed producing the changing shape reported by the observers. The fact that the object was visible from a wide range of locations (the distance between the two farthest observers was about 30 miles) indicates the object was both very high, very large, and very far away. It is hard to say but the angle of elevation appears to have been between 10 and 20 degrees and the azimuth was almost due west. There were no bright, or large, astronomical objects visible on that date and in that direction. That means that what was visible was probably man-made.

The most likely candidates are a research balloon or airplane contrail. The duration tends to eliminate the contrail explanation, which leaves the research balloon. During 1955, Lowry AFB in Colorado had been launching balloons called "Moby Dick Hi". According to Curtis Peebles⁴, the balloon system carried a payload of about 1400 pounds which included a large parachute and four packages of radar chaff that was released when the payload was dropped. Moby Dick Hi was supposed to test the balloons capabilities for use in the upcoming Genetrix program, which would use these balloons to spy on the Soviet Union. The tests had problems in early summer and, according to Stratocat, the balloons were still being launched in September (the last listed is September 14). Stratocat's database is incomplete as several Moby Dick Hi balloon launches that appeared in project Blue Book are not in the catalogue.

On October 5, the Bridgeport newspaper reported a balloon being found floating in the ocean on October 4.⁵ It probably was a Moby Dick Hi balloon as it was described as being associated with the 456th Troop Carrier Wing. That organization was practicing airborne retrieval of future Genetrix balloons.⁶ Moby Dick Hi was practice for launching such balloons. The fact that the balloon was found floating in the ocean, indicated it probably had come down recently. If this was a balloon from Lowry, its trajectory would have overflown the northern Ohio region a few days prior to this.



'THING' FOUND AT SEA; BELONGS TO AIR FORCE

MELVILLE N. I., Oct. 5.—(UP) A mysterious object found floating in the Atlantic ocean yesterday was identified today as part of an Air Force balloon research project. But the Air Force wouldn't say just what the object was or just what it was used for. It was found off Nantucket Island by a fishing vessel and brought ashore by the Coast Guard.

"It almost certainly is part of a balloon test program being carried on by the 456th Troop Carrier Wing at Charleston Air Force Base in South Carolina," the Cambridge Mass., research center of the Air Force said.

"The object has absolutely no value and can be destroyed," a spokesman said.

Conclusion

It is tough to solve this one because we are missing pertinent data regarding the activities at Lowry AFB and other research balloon launch locations. It seems likely, based on the descriptions, distances involved, and time of day, that this could have been a research balloon reflecting the setting sun. While this is not a conclusive solution, it is a possible solution that could explain what was seen without invoking the desire to proclaim it was a "*manifestation of extraterrestrial life*".⁷

Notes and references

1. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 135.
2. *ibid.* P. 70-1
3. *ibid.* P. 71
4. Peebles, Curtis. The Moby Dick Project: Reconnaissance balloons over Russia. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. 1991. P. 144-5
5. "Thing found at sea; Belongs to Air Force". The Bridgeport Post. Bridgeport, Connecticut. October 5, 1955. P. 1
6. Peebles, Curtis. The Moby Dick Project: Reconnaissance balloons over Russia. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. 1991. P. 137
7. Hall, Richard M. (Ed.) The UFO evidence. The National Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP). New York: Barnes and Noble. 1997. P. 179.

THE 701 CLUB: CASE 3212 - SEPTEMBER 18, 1954 KIMPO AFB, KOREA

Don Berliner lists the case as follows:

Sept. 18, 1954; Kimpo Air Base, Japan. 5:55 a.m. Witnesses: two control tower operators, a weather forecaster and a weather observer. One round object, like polished aluminum, flew straight and level for 11-13 minutes.¹

Sparks' entry mirrors Berliner's indicating there was little investigation other than listing the case.

The Blue Book file

The file contains one document. It is a seven-page Air Intelligence Report documenting the incident. It is informative to the point that a lot of pertinent information was obtained.²

- The object was observed between 2055Z and 2108Z
- There were five observers
- Three observers said the shape was round. The other two stated it had no shape but commented about its brightness.
- When first observed the object was estimated to be at azimuth 175 degrees and 50 degrees elevation.
- When last observed the object was estimated to be at azimuth 180 degrees and 50 degrees elevation
- The object disappeared into clouds.
- The object was observed with binoculars and determined to be the size of a pea at arm's length and was brighter than a star.
- Sunrise was at 2118Z
- A weather balloon was released at 2100Z.
- The balloon was traveling towards the east shortly after launch.
- For some reason, the observers convinced themselves it was not a star because it was moving in a westward direction, which is what one would expect a star to do.

In the preliminary analysis, the reporting officer, 2nd LT. Anthony Ingrad, stated:

The preliminary analysis of this office reveals that there is apparently no explanation for this sighting. The fact that a weather balloon was released during the time of the sighting has no apparent bearing on the sighting since the balloon was never plotted in a southerly direction where the object was observed. The object was travelling in a westerly heading against the west wind at the time. These reasons seem to eliminate the assumption that the object was the weather balloon released by the K-14 weather station. The local radar station had no plots in the K-14 area during the time the object was sighted.³

There was a comment on the first page by the D/I, which stated:

It is believed that the object was either a star (Circus)(sic) or a high flying aircraft for the following reasons:

- a. Circus (sic) (the brightest star) would have been in almost the same locations as the object except at a 12 1/4 degree smaller angle of elevation. Observers are generally 10 to 15 degrees high when estimating elevation.*
- b. Although the sun was not yet visible at the surface, an aircraft at over 45,000 feet would have been illuminated by the sun at the time of the sighting.⁴*

These are the only explanations offered.

Analysis

It is probably best to examine the two explanations that were offered, but ignored, by Blue Book. The least likely of the two explanations was the high flying aircraft. Since the sighting lasted 13 minutes and the object only moved 5 degrees, the aircraft would have to be moving very slow and be very high. It seems unlikely this was the case.

Another possibility not mentioned is a research balloon of some kind. Unfortunately, there are no records of any such balloons being in the area. Most balloons being tested at the time would be launched with an West to East trajectory. This object was moving westward.

This leaves us with the other offered explanation. That being the star Sirius. Using Stellarium, I had the following results for the times given for Sirius and another potential candidate, Rigel.

Time	UFO azimuth	UFO elevation	Sirius azimuth	Sirius elevation	Rigel Azimuth	Rigel elevation
2055Z	175	50	154	31.5	180	44
2108Z	180	50	158	33	184	44

The five degree westward motion matches with the motion of the two stars. If we were to consider only the estimates of azimuth and elevation, the star Rigel (+0.1) would probably make a better candidate. However, Sirius is much brighter and would be more easily visible in twilight. Seeing Sirius, at magnitude -1.5, visually over twenty minutes prior to sunrise should not be difficult.

I decided to see how quickly after sunset, bright first magnitude stars could be readily visible. I discovered that, in late August, about 15 minutes after sunset, the stars Vega and Arcturus were easily seen without any optical aid. Venus could be seen before sunset, while Mars and Jupiter were visible only a few minutes after sunset. I then attempted this process before sunrise. In late August, I was able to see Sirius with the naked eye about 15 minutes before sunrise. Because of its proximity to the sun, it was in strong twilight. In mid-September, when Sirius is further west and out of the twilight glow, it would be easier to see around this time.

The only problem with Sirius being the explanation is that the angle of elevation was off by almost 20 degrees and the azimuth was off by the same amount. We must remember, that the observers were "estimating" the azimuth and angle of elevation of the object. How good were they at estimating the direction and elevation? This is an unknown. According to the Condon study,

*The angular elevation, or apparent location above the horizon, of objects is generally not estimated very accurately at all. The difference from 0° or from 90° of angles near the horizon or near the zenith tends to be substantially overestimated. Anything that is more than 45° or even 30° above the horizon is often reported as overhead.*⁵

While some might consider this only applies to untrained observers, I discovered that even experienced observers have problems estimating elevation and azimuth angles. Using stars as tests, I discovered that the amateur astronomers I tested made estimates of azimuth and elevation that averaged to within about 5-10 degrees of the star's actual position. This was under a dark sky with the position of Polaris available for determining true North. Making estimates in twilight would introduce some additional inaccuracies. The best one can state is the object was to the south, southeast, or southwest of the observers.

Conclusion

The likelihood that this was Sirius is pretty good. The only reason I can't give this a positive confirmation has to do with the angular elevation and azimuth estimates not precisely lining up with that star. Rigel was much closer to that location but really did not match the description of the witnesses that the object was brighter than the stars. In my opinion, this should be reclassified as possibly the star Sirius.

Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. "The Bluebook unknowns". NICAP. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. "Air intelligence information report IR-4-54" Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/253/8726741>
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5. Condon, E. U., et al., eds. Scientific Study of Unidentified Flying Objects. New York: Bantam 1968. P. 565.

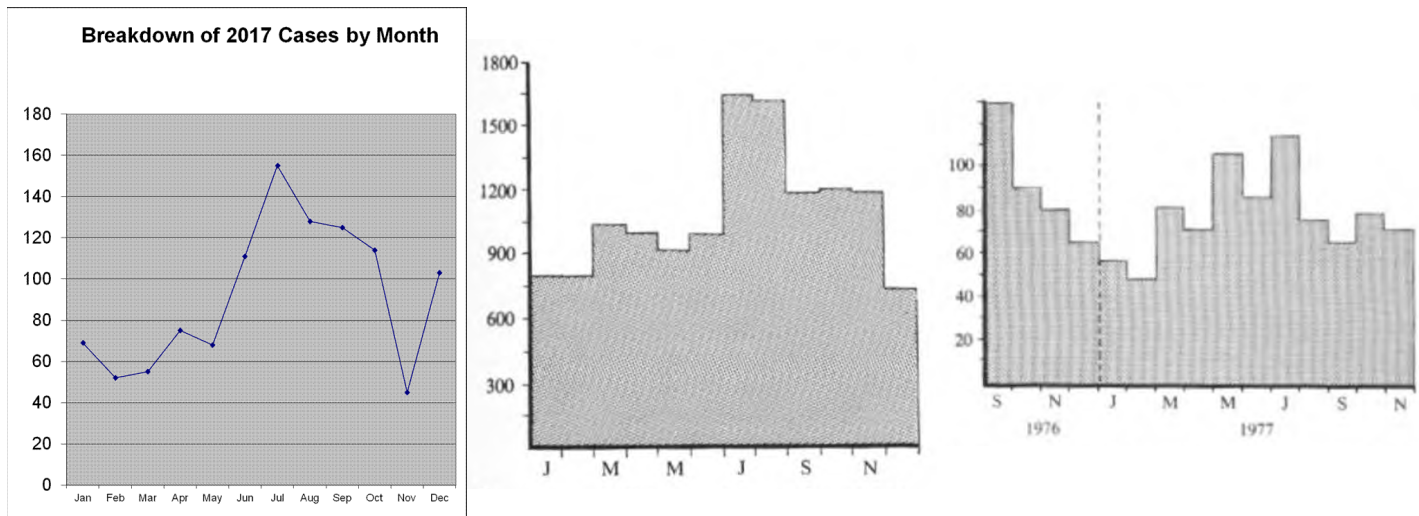
Canadian UFO survey results

With their annual press release, the Canadian UFO survey got some headlines about how UFOs were alive and well in the “Great white north”.¹ This is nothing new. UFOs exist because UFO reports exist but did 2017 present us with anything new that we did not know before?

Before I describe what I found wrong with the survey, I think it is important to commend the individuals who compiled all of this information. It is an impressive feat to collect all the data and go through each case to assign a possible explanation and obtain specific details that can be analyzed. After reviewing the Bluebook cases, I can feel their pain as they struggle with each report and attempt to find additional information that might be useful in resolving the case.

The data²

With all of the effort expended on collecting this data, I have to wonder if it is really worth it. The essay presents us with a bunch of charts but does it really tell us anything new? For instance, we get this table about cases by month. Is it that much different from the same basic table compiled by Project Blue Book or Allan Hendry?³



With some exceptions, the survey simply restates the fact that most UFO observations occur during the summer. I suspect that if one were to look at tables for the southern hemisphere, the peaks would be opposite those of the northern hemisphere (peaks during December-February).

We can pretty much say the same for duration and time of observation. Hendry had a peak at 3-10 minutes and Blue Book had a peak around 1-5 minutes in duration for their “unknowns”. The Canadian survey had two peaks between 21 seconds and 5 minutes for their unknowns. It is important to point out that only 64% (56/87 by my count) of their unknowns had a time duration listed, which might have resulted in a slightly different table. The bottom line is that most unknowns have a duration of between 1 and 10 minutes.

Then there is the time of day. Once again, it is no surprise that most sightings happen around 9-11 PM local time. This is when the sky is dark and it is difficult to determine what is being seen.

While interesting, it appears that the data from the survey simply confirms what we already knew. There is nothing new and little we can learn from the results of the survey.

The unknowns

As usual, I like to examine the unknowns from any list. Back in SUNlite 9-6, I stated the Blue Book definition of what was declared an unknown. Ruppelt, during his tenure at Blue Book, defined it as:

If the report contains a relatively good amount of data, it is then checked against the location of known objects, phenomena, etc. If none of these explain the sighting, it is classed as unknown⁴.

The key words had to do with the “data” found in the report. If the report is incomplete, it should not be listed as “unknown” but “insufficient data”.

As I pointed out in my count of cases listed with duration, I could only identify 64% of the “unknowns” in the survey as having a duration. Others that were classified “Unknown” had no time listed. How can one even classify the case if there is no time duration estimate or time for the event? Allan Hendry felt such reports should never receive a UFO/IFO designation with such information missing:

In my own reports, I would never have dreamed of making an IFO/ UFO judgment without important parameter like shape and duration.

Instead of dumping these reports into the “insufficient information” pile where they belong (or better yet, seeking out the additional data) they saw fit to make commitments on them.⁵

Perhaps these cases that lacked duration or a event time should have been placed in the “I” category instead of “U”. Of course, that would lower the total number of “unidentifieds” to about 5%, which may be too low for some UFOlogists to accept.

The really good unknowns⁶

At the end of the essay, the survey report that there were ten cases that the study described as “high-quality unexplained UFO reports”. This is based on their “strangeness” and “reliability” ratings. Both values are “subjective” measures. In my opinion, the “reliability” rating is probably the most ambiguous. How does one place a “reliability” rating on a report? If there are clear photographs that can be verified as being original images and not touched up, I might suggest this has a form of reliability. That being said, blurry cell phone images of nocturnal lights, which do not show much should be considered only reliable to the point that the witness recorded something but not much more than that.

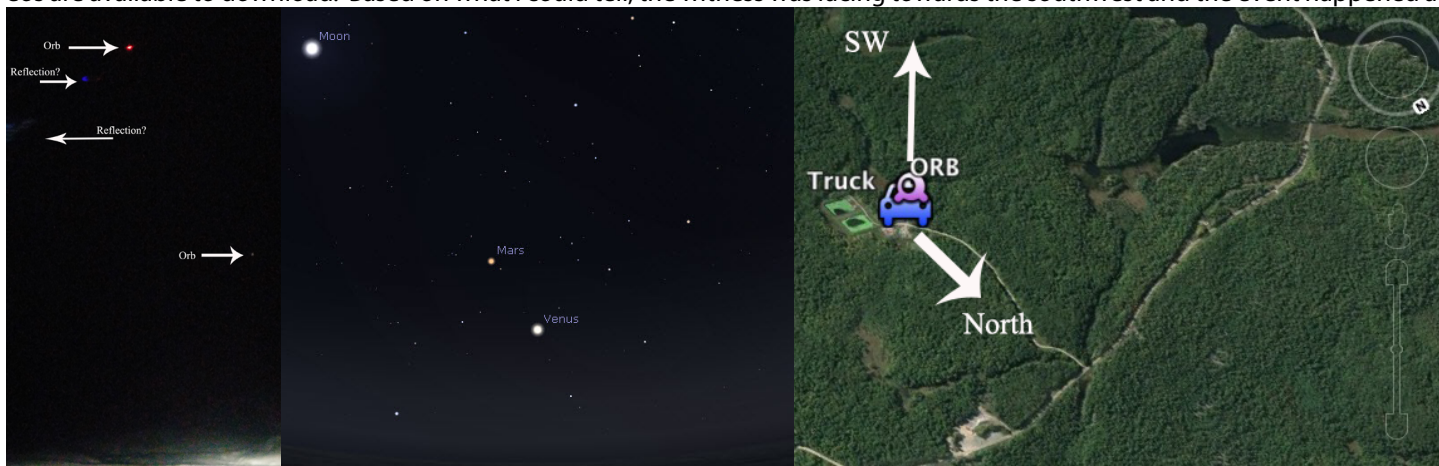


In the trail camera case, there is a lot of information that was missing.⁷ One would think that a case that was referred to as “high quality” would have a lot of information. Instead, we don’t even know which direction the trail camera was pointed! This is important because the object appears to be the moon rising through the trees! The image to the left is a stack of the three images showing the bright light moving to the upper right. The overlay is from Stellarium showing the moon’s motion during the same time period. It paints a pretty convincing image that what was imaged was the moon. Hoping Chris Rutkowski might have additional information on the case (like the direction the camera was facing), I contacted him. He had no specific details but he was recently made aware that the case was determined to be explainable by the MUFON investigator. I wonder if they thought it was the moon as well?

The airliner report lacked a lot of details as well. It is a report that two airliners had seen a flashing light above them. The location was over British Columbia and was about 100 nautical miles north-northeast of Vernon, British Columbia.⁸ The location of Vernon is important because this is a location where weather balloons are launched daily at 0000 and 1200Z. Winds that night were from the Southwest, South, and Southeast directions. A balloon launched at 0000 with an ascent rate of 300 feet/min would have reached an altitude of 60,000 feet around 200 minutes after launch, which is when this sighting happened. The balloon could have been fitted with an anti-collision strobe because it was launched at night. This is a plausible explanation for the event. It is interesting to note that the actual report lists under “Occurrence event information”, “Weather balloon, meteor, rocket, CIR-VIS/UFO”. Does this mean they also considered it possible that a weather balloon might be involved? In any case, this case should be listed as insufficient information because, other than time and location, we have no idea what happened to the flashing light. Where did it go? How long was it visible? What directions did the two aircraft see the object? If we had the azimuth and elevations of the two aircraft and their locations, we might be able to deduce where the light was located and its altitude. Instead, we have nothing more than a mysterious flashing light. In my opinion, it is not a very good case and has a potential explanation that cannot be eliminated.

Air Marine Rail Road Safety Security Environment Innovation Resources Regions			
CADORS Report			
Record # 1			
CADORS Number:	2017/00370	Occurrence Category(ies):	Other
Occurrence Information			
Incident:	0320 Z	Occurrence Date:	2017-03-16
Occurrence Time:	0	Day Or Night:	night-time
Parade:	0	Injury:	0
Canadian Aeronautics ID:	658H NNE ENDERBY DC NDB	Airframe Name:	
Occurrence Location:	British Columbia	IC Region:	Pacific Region
Province:	Canada	World Area:	North America
Country:	NAV CANADA	ADG Number:	21234-V1
Reported By:		TSD Occurrence Ref:	
TSD Class Of Investigation:			
Occurrence Event Information			
Weather balloon, meteor, rocket, CIRVIS/UFO			
Aircraft Information			
Occurrence Summary			
Date Entered:	2017-03-21		
Narrative:	A WestJet Boeing 737-700 (C-GWJN/WJA244) from Vancouver, BC (CYVR) to Winnipeg, MB (CYWG) and a WestJet Boeing 737-600 (C-GWSB/WJA185) from Calgary, AB (CYXC) to Abbotsford, BC (CYXX) reported a bright, white strobe type light above them. No known aircraft in the vicinity. No operational impact.		
Please note that for the most part, CADORS reports contain preliminary, unconfirmed data which can be subject to change.			
Date modified: 2017-03-21			
Terms and conditions Transparency			

Another “good” case involved a photograph and video taken on January 5, 2017.⁹ This is a MUFON case so the photographs and videos are available to download. Based on what I could tell, the witness was facing towards the southwest and the event happened at



1800 EST. Using Stellarium, I noticed that the planet Venus was visible in that direction at that time. The photograph EXIF data says the image was taken at 1904 EST. The image is not that good but there is a bright "orb" visible in the middle bottom that probably was Venus. The red object to the upper left of the object that was probably Venus is a bit confusing. During the video, it disappears and reappears like something is blocking it or one needs to look at it a certain way to make it appear. The photograph appears to indicate it was taken through the window of the vehicle. I suspect that this may be either a reflection on the window of the moon, which was to the upper left of Venus that night. While some might doubt this, I want to point out the witness shows the object to the southwest of his location. The moon and Venus were in that direction. If these are not Venus and the moon, one has to wonder why the moon (azimuth 191 degrees) and Venus (azimuth 232 degrees) were not recorded in the image? Was the witness pointing his phone in a direction other than Southwest (azimuth 225 degrees)? It seems this case might be explained as probably the moon and Venus or the case is not as reliable (7) as suggested by the UFO Survey when the witness could not get the directions correct. In either case, this is not as good a case as suggested by the survey.

The remaining seven cases may or may not be "excellent" reports. We do not really know. Other than stating these people saw something they could not identify, we cannot conclude anything else. Remember, these are just reports that may or may not be an accurate representation of what was actually seen.

A new frontier?

Once again, I want to commend the survey for their hard work. However, the mere listing of cases does not appear to advance the study of the subject very much. In the forward to Allan Hendry's book, Dr. J Allen Hynek wrote:

Indeed, the message herein is clear: unless we alter our methodology, and use to the full extent what we learn from close attention to the manner in which IFOs are allowed to masquerade as UFOs because of the desire of the untutored and the wishful thinkers to transform IFOs into UFOs, we shall make little progress. There is little point of continuing the uncritical reporting and recording of IFOs and UFOs. We should then continue to "mine low-grade ore," a pointless exercise. And to continue the analogy, our "mining" and "smelting" methods must be changed or we shall have another quarter century of misinformation and misguidance.¹⁰

While I believe that the study does a pretty good job of classifying most of these cases, I also perceive some bias in allowing some cases to bleed into the "UNIDENTIFIED" category. This makes the results of the survey suspect and we have to wonder how good the statistics are. Even if the statistics are reasonably accurate in representing the "unknowns", what is being done with the data? Will there be some sort of effort to try and collect better data (other than UFO reports) during peak hours or months? What is the next logical step?

I have some ideas that I have floated here in SUNlite several times regarding video recordings. Perhaps one can learn from astronomers who are studying meteor showers and setting up fireball networks. Why can't UFOlogist create camera systems like these and deploy them en masse?



Left: Amateur astronomer, Frank Johns' personal meteor station¹¹ Right: The Lowell observatory's meteor camera network¹²

A dozen stations within a 50 mile radius might be used to capture the elusive data that UFOlogists so desperately crave. All it takes is a little bit of effort and money. Amateur astronomers are willing to invest their personal money in scientific endeavors. Why aren't UFOlogists willing to do the same? If they have already produced such systems, why are they so quiet in revealing the results of the program?

Notes and references

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2. The Canadian UFO Survey data. Available WWW: <http://www.canadianuforeport.com/survey/data/2017data.pdf>

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4. "Project Blue Book Special briefing to Air Defense Command. March 1953 P. 9". Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/1/12428151>
5. Hendry, Allan. The UFO Investigators Handbook. London: Sphere Books Ltd. 1980. P. 267
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12. Malik, Tariq. "New Cameras to Track Perseid Meteor Shower from Meteor Crater". Space.com. August 12, 2018. Available WWW: <https://www.space.com/41429-perseid-meteor-shower-2018-meteor-crater.html>

Project Blue Book case review: January-June 1955

This is the fifth edition of the Project Blue Book case review covering the first half of 1955. Like the previous evaluation, I tried to examine each case to see if the conclusion had merit. I added comments to help clarify the explanation or if I felt it was not correct or adequate.

January 1955

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Cochise, NM	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
3	Williamsburg, VA	Stars/planets	Only record card description. Possibly Venus, which was a bright morning star.
3	St. Ignace, MI	Stars/planets	Seen to the NW. Probably Vega
6	Trinidad	Aircraft	Agreed
6	Bradenton, FL	Meteor	Agreed
8	Tyndall AFB, FL	Meteor	Agreed
9	Falls Church, VA	Aircraft	Agreed
11	Queens, NY	Aircraft	Agreed
11	Jersey City, NJ	Meteor	Agreed
11	St Albans, NY	Insufficient data	Possible meteor based on description.
11	Salona Beach, Mt. Laguna, CA	Meteor	Agreed
12	Forsyth, GA	Reflection inside a/c	Agreed
14	Between VA and KS	Insufficient data	Agreed. No report on file. Description lacks any details
14	Sullivan Island, SC	Insufficient data	Possible Aircraft
17	Yuma, AZ and South Gate, CA	Meteor	Agreed
18	Kalispell, MT	Meteor	Agreed
18	Pacific Ocean	Aircraft	Agreed
20	Murietta, CA	Balloon	Agreed
21-22	Hutchinson, KS	Balloon	Agreed
24	Macomb County, MI	Ground light	Agreed
26	Lakeland, FL	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
28	Boynita Beach, FL	Insufficient data	Insufficient data to identify source but description matches a star.
28	West Palm Beach, FL	Balloon	Agreed
29	Guam	Meteor	Agreed
29	San Mateo, FL	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
29	Winterset, IA	Aircraft	Sighting was at 0307Z. Weather balloons were being launched in vicinity at 0300Z. Incident similar to Gorman incident in 1948. Possible lit weather balloon.
30	Jacksonville, FL	Meteor	Agreed
30	St. Lawrence Island, AK	Ship light	Agreed
31	Fuji, Japan	Insufficient data	Agreed
31-8 Feb	Pittsfield and Detroit, ME	Venus	Agreed

February 1955

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Cochise, NM	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
2	Del Ray Beach, FL	Insufficient data	Possibly Jupiter
2	Miramar NAS, CA	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
3	Bettles, AK	Missile	Insufficient data. No report on file.
4	Pomona, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
5	Long Beach, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
7	Harrisburg, PA	Meteor	Agreed
7	Kings Landing, CA	Aircraft	Agreed. Witness had some personal problems that appear to have affected his objectivity.
7	Platte City, MO	Balloon	Agreed
7	Fort Wayne, IN	Insufficient data	Agreed. Information is second hand. Data missing.
7-15	San Diego, CA	1. Mars 2. Aircraft	Agreed
9	Mayport, FL	Aircraft	Agreed
9	Dobbins AFB, GA	Balloon	Agreed (possible grab bag balloon launched on Feb 8 from Minnesota)
10	Bethesda, MD	UNIDENTIFIED	Possibly the Moon. See SUNlite 5-4
11	Okinawa	Insufficient data	Agreed.
12	Saipan	Rigel	Venus. Time listed as Kilo time in msg (Z+10) and not Zulu. Daylight sighting. While azimuth/elevation readings don't line precisely up with Venus, the readings are within a few degrees and match the apparent motion of Venus (see comments section on this case).
14	Milan and Green City, MO	Balloon	Agreed
14	New York City, NY	Searchlight	Agreed
15	New York City, NY	Reflection	Agreed
15	Ellesmere island, Canada	Contrails	Agreed
15	New Orleans, LA	Aircraft	Probable balloon. Object drifted with winds. It was suggested by investigators that it was a balloon released during Mardi Gras.
17	Blackstone, VA	Insufficient data	Agreed. No time or direction of sighting.
18	Bowling Green, KY	1. Refueling 2. Aircraft 3. Stars/planets	1. Possibly Sirius 2. Military aircraft activity was high in the region. Possible aircraft. Note: This is a confusing report by the individual making identification difficult.
19	Palm Springs, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
19	San Diego and Pacific Beach, CA	Meteor shower	Possibly birds. Multiple formations visible for a few seconds before fading in distance. No meteor shower that evening.
19	San Diego, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
23	Wilton, CT	Meteor	Agreed
25	Snowhill, MD	Flare	Agreed
28	Baltimore, MD	Detergent bubble	Agreed
28	Edwards AFB, CA	Aircraft	Possible birds. Visible for less than a minute. Formation broke up and went different directions.

28	Palm Springs, CA	Balloon	Possibly Canopus. Characteristics sound like scintillating star low on southern horizon. Canopus 2.5 degrees elevation at azimuth 169.5 degrees
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March 1955

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
2	Huntley, IL	Reflection	Agreed
2	Las Vegas, NV	Insufficient data	Agreed. Second hand report. Missing data such as actual direction and duration.
2	Parkburg, PA	AA Firing	Agreed
3	Wiesbaden, Germany	Meteor	Agreed
3	Pittsfield, ME	Venus	Agreed
3	Brooklyn, NY	Searchlight	Agreed
5	Anderson AFB, Guam	Balloon	Agreed
8	Charleston, WV	Insufficient data	Possible balloon. 4602nd AISS revealed balloon released in area that might explain event.
8	Lake Okechobee, FL	Flares	Agreed
9	Paris, IL	Psychological	Agreed
9	Chesapeake Bay, MD	Insufficient data	Agreed
10	Edwards AFB, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
10	Edwards AFB, CA	Birds	Agreed
10	Mattawamkeag, ME	Meteor	Agreed
11	Redwood Valley, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Klamath Falls, OR	1. Jupiter 2. Meteor	Agreed
15	Avalon, Catalina Is., CA	Meteor	Agreed
16	Salton Sea, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
16	Laguna, CA	Balloon	Agreed
16	Hamilton-Cleves, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
17	Ripley, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
17	29 Palms, CA	Balloon	Agreed
18	Azuza, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
18	Burbank, CA	Meteor	Agreed
18	San Francisco, CA	Aircraft	Possible meteor
19	Farmingdale, Long Island, NY	Insufficient data	Possible birds. Formation of dull red lights flying north at night. Visible only 10 seconds.
20	Tokyo, Japan	Weather inversion	Agreed
22	Colorado Springs, CO	Shorted power lines	Agreed
25	Fitchburg, MA	Meteor	Agreed
26	Modesto, CA	Searchlight	Agreed
28	Montivedeo, Uruguay	Balloon	Agreed. Possible grab bag balloon launched from adjacent Brazil.
28	Oakland, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
28	Iran	Balloon	Agreed
29	Soledad, Sonoma, CA	Balloon	Agreed

29	Pendelton, OR	Aircraft	Agreed
29	Richmond, CA	Meteor	Agreed
29	San Jose, CA	Meteor	Agreed
30	Bakersfield, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
31	San Francisco, CA	Meteor	Agreed

April 1955

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
5	Elk, NM	Meteor	Agreed
6	Dayton, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
6	Jamestown, CA	Balloon	Agreed
6	Beaumont, CA	Balloon	Agreed
6	Bakersfield, CA	Jupiter	Probably astronomical but insufficient data in report.
7	Atlantic Ocean	Insufficient data	Agreed
8	Gander AFB, Newfoundland	Insufficient data	Agreed
9	Plattsburg, NY	Unreliable report	Agreed
9	Mira Loma, CA	Balloon	Agreed
9	San Francisco, CA	Meteor	Agreed
11	Hollywood, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
16	Harrisburg, PA	Kite/debris	Agreed
16	Los Angeles, CA	Balloon	Agreed
17	Burtonwood, England	Meteor	Agreed
17	Manitou Springs, CO	Reflection	Agreed
18	Decatur, GA	Balloon	Agreed
18	St. Johns, Newfoundland	Aircraft	Agreed
20	Kansas City, MO	Searchlight	Agreed
20	Van Nuys, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
21	New Orleans, LA	Aircraft	Agreed
22	Jersey Shore, PA	Aircraft	Agreed
23	Flathead Lake, MT	Meteor	Agreed
23	Hollywood, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
25	Roscommon, MI	Unreliable report	Agreed
27	Kisarazu, Japan	Meteor	Agreed
27	Bryn Mawr, PA	Jupiter	Sirius. Witness report of direction is more applicable to the star Sirius than Jupiter, which was much higher in the sky and near the moon, which would the witness probably would have mentioned.
28	Dahlgreen, VA	1. Jupiter 2. Balloon (radar)	1. Venus. Jupiter was rising. Object described as getting lower. Venus was at the elevation angles described. 2. Agreed
28	Pendelton, OR	Aircraft	Agreed
30	Newfoundland	Venus	Agreed
30	Live Oak, FL	Insuficient data	Agreed. No duration. Very little information in report other than course.
30	Travis County, TX	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
30	Rome, GA	Aircraft	Agreed

May 1955

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
May	Miami, FL	Unreliable report	Agreed. Report made 9 years after the event.
2	Limestone, ME	Astronomical	Possibly Venus. Venus rising in the east. Aircraft on Northeast track to Newfoundland. Pilot reported aircraft in front of or to the right of his aircraft..
3	NY City, NY	Insufficient data	Possible cloud. Dark object hovering near cloud bank. Changed shape and slowly disappeared.
4	Keflavik, Iceland	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
4	Fellows, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
7	Baltimore, MD	Valve Wheel	Agreed
7	Glenburnie, MD	Balloon	Agreed
7	29 Palms, CA	Aircraft	Sirius. Object observed in west for two minutes before disappearing. Sirius at azimuth 248 degrees set approx. ten minutes after sighting.
8	Klamath Falls, OR	Balloon	Venus. Weather listed as both clear and overcast (weather underground lists as fair). Sighting began in east and moved towards SE over an hour and 12 minutes. Venus rising in east and moving SE during that time period. Tracked with binoculars making tracking after dawn possible.
8	Long Beach, MS	Insufficient data	Arc of faint objects moving through sky. Seen from Drive-in. Possible bird formation.
9	Ukiah, CA	Jupiter	Could not be Jupiter. Although Jupiter was in the west, it was reported to have been visible for 5 hours. Jupiter set one hour after initial sighting. Message states it was overcast at 15,000 feet. UNIDENTIFIED
10	Terryville, CT	Aircraft	Insufficient data. No direction given. Possible astronomical object. Time appears erroneous. Conditions listed as dusk. Time of 0145Z is dark sky.
11	Thurman, CO	Aircraft	Possible Moby dick balloon launched from Lowry AFB.
11	Yonkers, NY	Aircraft	Possible meteor
11	Munday, NY	Jupiter	Characteristics more indicative of scintillating star. Probably Capella.
11	Tinker AFB, OK	Meteor	Agreed
13	Bear Island, ME	Flares	Agreed
13	Charleston, ME	Flares	Agreed
13	Duluth, MN	Aircraft	Agreed
13	Old Town, ME	Flares	Agreed
13	Hollister, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Fargo, ND	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Syracuse, NY	Balloon	Agreed
15	Little Falls, NJ	Aircraft	Possible meteor
15	NY City, NY	Hoax	Agreed
16	Winchester, VA	Insufficient data	Agreed
17	Mojave, CA	Aircraft	Possible birds
17	San Francisco, CA	Jupiter	Agreed
17	MacDill AFB, FL	Searchlight	Agreed
18	Niagra Falls, NY	Meteor	Agreed
18	Los Angeles, CA	Insufficient data	Object to the northwest. Jupiter in WNW. Possibly Jupiter.

19	Berkley, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
19	Van Nuys, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
19	Alameda, CA	Balloon	Agreed
19	Kentfield, CA	Meteor	Agreed
19	San Gabriel, CA	Balloon	Agreed
20	Alexandria, MN	Hard Coal	Agreed
20	Tokyo, Japan	Insufficient data	Agreed
20	Orville, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
20	Yuma, AZ	Meteor	Agreed
20	La Guardia, NY	Aircraft	Agreed
20	Brooklyn, NY	Aircraft	Agreed
20	Malvern, PA	Aircraft	Agreed
21	Norton AFB, CA	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft
23	Elyria, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
23	Cheyenne, WY	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
24	Long Island, NY	Insufficient data	Agreed
25	London, England	Psychological	Describing this as psychological is a bit harsh. Witness was described as "flying saucer enthusiast". Sighting report was detailed. Witness tracked object with hand-held binoculars and saw object as he was tracking aircraft. Possible astronomical with Arcturus as likely source. Movement attributed to use of hand-held binoculars and biased observation.
26	Chitose AB, Japan	Aircraft	Time appears to be in error. Listed as "dusk" but 0018Z is 0918 JST. It is possible the time was supposed to be 1018Z. There is also a weather report that states 1912. Is this 1912 JST or 1912Z (412JST)? In both cases, the sun was either just setting or just rising. Without more concrete information, I consider this "conflicting data".
26	Euclid, OH	Balloon	Agreed
26	Clearfield, PA	Altair	Agreed
27	Englewood, OH	Slag	Agreed
28	Wabuska, NV	Meteor	Agreed
29	Colorado Springs, CO	Balloon	Agreed
29	Uruguay	Insufficient data	Agreed

June 1955

	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
Summer	Woodside, CA	Aircraft	Unreliable report. Report made nine years after event. Witness was seven years old at the time.
June	Keenewick, WA	Unreliable report	Agreed. Report made one year after event by "enthusiast".
1	Cape St. George, Newfoundland	Meteor	Agreed. Report of impacting meteor was probably illusion
1	Harrisburg, PA	Hallucination	Agreed
1	Cleveland, OH	Balloon	Agreed
3	Euclid, OH	Balloon	Agreed
4	Steelton, PA	Aircraft	Agreed
4	Parker, AZ	Jupiter	Agreed
5	Camp San Luis Obispo, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon

5	Santa Margarita, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
7	Chitose AB, CA	Venus	Agreed
8	Paine Field, WA	Aircraft	Agreed
8-8 JUL	Fontana, CA	Ground lights	Agreed
9	Warner Springs, CA	Balloon	Agreed
9	San Diego, CA	Balloon	Agreed
10	Ontario, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon (Moby Dick Hi balloon from Lowry AFB in vicinity)
14	Bryan AFB, TX	Balloon	Agreed
15	Minneapolis, MN Topeka, KS	Meteor	Agreed
15	Anita, IA	Insufficient data	Meteor. Same as Minnesota and Kansas sightings.
15	Ne Springfield, MO	Meteor	Agreed
16	Baltimore, MD	Insufficient data	Agreed. No direction or elevation angle.
17	Riverside, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed. Confusing report as to direction of travel
17	Altadena, CA	Balloon	Agreed
20	Dallas, TX	Aircraft	No aircraft in vicinity discovered by 4602nd. No radar contacts. Object (or objects) traveling north with lights. UNIDENTIFIED
21	Glenavon, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
21	Santa Barbara, CA	Balloon	Agreed
22	Poulsbo, WA	Balloons	Agreed
22	Chuckanut Bay, WA	Submarine	Agreed
22	Springfield, MO	Aircraft	Agreed
22	Bethesda, MD	Aircraft	Agreed
23	Camp Poh-Tok, MD	Aircraft	Agreed
25	Duncan, OK	Meteor	Agreed
25	Hillcrest Heights, MD	Balloon	Agreed
26	Fort Worth, TX	Balloon	Agreed
26	Holt, FL	Unreliable report	Agreed
26	Santa Maria, CA	Balloon	Agreed
27	Milford, MI	Aircraft	Agreed
27	Seattle WA	Insufficient data	Agreed
30	Pantelleria Island, Mediter-ranean	Insufficient data	Agreed

Reclassification

There were 226 cases in the Blue Book files from January to June of 1955, that I evaluated. In my opinion, of these 38 were im-properly classified (about 17%). This table describes these cases and how I felt they should have been reclassified. Some of the sightings really did not have enough information for evaluation and other cases that had been listed as "insufficient information" had potential explanations.

Date	Location	Reclassification	Reason
Jan 11	St Albans, NY	Insufficient data	Possible meteor based on description.
Jan 14	Sullivan Island, SC	Insufficient data	Possible Aircraft
Jan 29	San Mateo, FL	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
Jan 29	Winterset, IA	Aircraft	Sighting was at 0307Z. Weather balloons were being launched in vicinity at 0300Z. Incident similar to Gorman incident in 1948. Possible lit weather balloon.
Feb 2	Del Ray Beach, FL	Insufficient data	Possibly Jupiter

Feb 3	Bettles, AK	Missile	Insufficient data. No report on file.
Feb 10	Bethesda, MD	UNIDENTIFIED	Possibly the Moon. See SUNlite 5-4
Feb 12	Saipan	Rigel	Venus. Time listed as Kilo time in msg (Z+10) and not Zulu. Daylight sighting. While azimuth/elevation readings don't line precisely up with Venus, the readings are within a few degrees and match the apparent motion of Venus (see comments section on this case).
Feb 15	New Orleans, LA	Aircraft	Probable balloon. Object drifted with winds. It was suggested by investigators that it was a balloon released during Mardi Gras.
Feb 19	San Diego and Pacific Beach, CA	Meteor shower	Possibly birds. Multiple formations visible for a few seconds before fading in distance. No meteor shower that evening.
Feb 28	Edwards AFB, CA	Aircraft	Possible birds. Visible for less than a minute. Formation broke up and went different directions.
Feb 28	Palm Springs, CA	Balloon	Possibly Canopus. Characteristics sound like scintillating star low on southern horizon. Canopus 2.5 degrees elevation at azimuth 169.5 degrees
Mar 8	Charleston, WV	Insufficient data	Possible balloon. 4602nd AISS revealed balloon released in area that might explain event.
Mar 18	San Francisco, CA	Aircraft	Possible meteor
Mar 19	Farmingdale, Long Island, NY	Insufficient data	Possible birds. Formation of dull red lights flying north at night. Visible only 10 seconds.
Apr 27	Bryn Mawr, PA	Jupiter	Sirius. Witness report of direction is more applicable to the star Sirius than Jupiter, which was much higher in the sky and near the moon, which would the witness probably would have mentioned.
Apr 28	Dahlgreen, VA	1. Jupiter 2. Balloon (radar)	1. Venus. Jupiter was rising. Object described as getting lower. Venus was at the elevation angles described. 2. Agreed
May 3	NY City, NY	Insufficient data	Possible cloud. Dark object hovering near cloud bank. Changed shape and slowly disappeared.
May 7	29 Palms, CA	Aircraft	Sirius. Object observed in west for two minutes before disappearing. Sirius at azimuth 248 degrees set approx. ten minutes after sighting.
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May 8	Long Beach, MS	Insufficient data	Arc of faint objects moving through sky. Seen from Drive-in. Possible bird formation.
May 9	Ukiah, CA	Jupiter	Could not be Jupiter. Although Jupiter was in the west, it was reported to have been visible for 5 hours. Jupiter set one hour after initial sighting. Message states it was overcast at 15,000 feet. UNIDENTIFIED
May 10	Terryville, CT	Aircraft	Insufficient data. No direction given. Possible astronomical object. Time appears erroneous. Conditions listed as dusk. Time of 0145Z is dark sky.
May 11	Thurman, CO	Aircraft	Possible Moby dick balloon launched from Lowry AFB.
May 11	Yonkers, NY	Aircraft	Possible meteor
May 11	Munday, NY	Jupiter	Characteristics more indicative of scintillating star. Probably Capella.
May 15	Little Falls, NJ	Aircraft	Possible meteor

May 17	Mojave, CA	Aircraft	Possible birds
May 18	Los Angeles, CA	Insufficient data	Object to the northwest. Jupiter in WNW. Possibly Jupiter.
May 21	Norton AFB, CA	Insufficient data	Possible aircraft
May 25	London, England	Psychological	Describing this as psychological is a bit harsh. Witness was described as "flying saucer enthusiast". Sighting report was detailed. Witness tracked object with hand-held binoculars and saw object as he was tracking aircraft. Possible astronomical with Arcturus as likely source. Movement attributed to use of hand-held binoculars and biased observation.
May 26	Chitose AB, Japan	Aircraft	Time appears to be in error. Listed as "dusk" but 0018Z is 0918 JST. It is possible the time was supposed to be 1018Z. There is also a weather report that states 1912. Is this 1912 JST or 1912Z (412JST)? In both cases, the sun was either just setting or just rising. Without more concrete information, I consider this "conflicting data".
Summer	Woodside, CA	Aircraft	Unreliable report. Report made nine years after event. Witness was seven years old at the time.
June 5	Camp San Luis Obispo, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
June 5	Santa Margarita, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
June 10	Ontario, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon (Moby Dick Hi balloon from Lowry AFB in vicinity)
June 15	Anita, IA	Insufficient data	Meteor. Same as Minnesota and Kansas sightings.
June 20	Dallas, TX	Aircraft	No aircraft in vicinity discovered by 4602nd. No radar contacts. Object (or objects) traveling north with lights. UNIDENTIFIED

Summary

The 17% incorrect evaluation value was a bit higher than I expected. This is an increase compared to the second half of 1954 (12%) but less than the first half of 1954 (22%). Two of the cases were reclassified as "UNIDENTIFIED" simply because no potential solution could be offered. I was hoping the use of the 4602nd would improve investigations. In some cases, they were helpful in producing additional details that helped identify the source of the report. However, there were still a large number of cases that involved nothing more than a single message or a letter written by a witness. Such reports are difficult to evaluate and it is too bad that the staff at Blue Book was unable to obtain more information about these cases.

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5. "Space History Chronology". Astronautix. Available WWW: <http://www.astronautix.com/s/spacehistorychronology.html>
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PROJECT BLUE BOOK MOON IFOs

Probably one of the most interesting thing I have discovered over the years while reading UFO reports is that the moon can be mistaken for a UFO! It seems strange that something so obvious could be misidentified as something alien but it does happen. However, I don't think UFOlogists appreciate the possibility of the moon being a source of a UFO report. Respected UFO historian, Jerome Clark once wrote:

Jill Tarter looked ridiculous when she admitted (boasted, even) that - as an astronomer yet - she failed to recognize what any Joe Doakes has no trouble identifying instantly: the moon partially hidden by clouds.¹

Clark's misleading comments about Dr. Tarter is indicative of how UFOlogists dislike skeptics. He ignored the fact that she identified her UFO shortly after seeing it. Dr. Tarter was simply trying to demonstrate how she initially was confused by what she was seeing. If we put aside Jerome Clark's personal attack on Dr. Tarter, we have to wonder about his other claim that "any Joe Doakes" could easily identify the moon.

I found it interesting that Clark, in making his statement, seemed completely ignorant of how the moon has been misperceived as a UFO. Allan Hendry noted that 2% (22 reports) of his nocturnal light UFO sightings were of the moon.² He even had one sighting that involved multiple police officers in separate cars pursuing the setting moon! It seems hard to believe but, as UFOlogists like to point out to skeptics, you have to keep an open mind about these things.

Blue Book Moon IFOs

Herb Taylor recently gave me a list of all Blue Book (BB) files that he found involved the moon.³ He included my reclassifications in the list but, while I had exchanged some e-mails regarding a few of these cases with Herb, I had not reviewed all these cases. As a result, I decided to go through his list and, like my BB reassessments, listed if I agreed or not with the conclusions.

Date	Location	Comment
3/20/50	NYC, NY	Photo. Object not seen. Agreed
4/27/52	Pontiac, MI	See SUNlite 7-2
5/25/52	Walnut Lake, MI	See SUNlite 7-2
2/24/53	Dayton, OH	See SUNlite 10-1
2/24/53	Olean, NY	See SUNlite 10-1
6/30/53	Ramore, Ont.	Agreed
8/16/53	Ramore, Ont.	Agreed
1/8/54	Millbrook, AL	See SUNlite 10-3
1/28/54	Seneca Lake, NY	See SUNlite 10-3
6/2/54	San Juan, PR	See SUNlite 10-3
6/5/54	Pasco, WI	See SUNlite 10-3
1/10/55	Bethesda, MD	See SUNlite 5-4
11/7/55	Atlantic Ocean	Agreed
12/21/55	Caribou, ME	See SUNlite 8-6
1/24/56	Beltsville, MD	Agreed
9/9/56	Big Bethel, VA	Agreed
11/25/56	Pierre SD	See SUNlite 4-5
6/2/57	Waterloo, IA	Disagree. Probably Venus.
10/14/57	San Bernadino, CA	Agreed
11/3/57	White Sands, NM	Agreed
12/5-10/57	Cincinnati, OH	Film. Agreed
12/11/57	Guthrie & Parkersburg, W. VA.	Agreed
4/25/58	Ottawa, OH	Agreed
6/24/58	Dallas, TX	Disagree. Probably Jupiter and Arcturus
1/23/59	SW of Herschel Is., Canada	Agreed
2/21/61	Akron, OH	Disagree. Possible meteor

12/26/61	Chicago, IL	Agreed
3/12/62	Bethel, AK	Agreed
6/7/62	Rantoul, IL	Agreed
6/5/64	Texarkana, TX	Agreed
8/12/64	Breckens Corner, MT	Agreed
12/14/64	Falls Church, VA	Agreed
2/8/65	Elk Grove Village, IL	Agreed
7/3/65	Blauvelt, NY	Agreed
1/1/66	Liberty Center, OH	Agreed
1/26/66	Bridgeport, NY	Agreed (witness described object in SE but direction of travel appears NW-W indicating object was in west where moon was setting)
3/12/66	Moultrie, GA	Agreed
3/25/66	Toledo, OH	Agreed
3/27/66	Swansee, MA	Agreed
3/29/66	LaCrosse, WI	Agreed
4/1/66	Bristol, VT	Agreed
4/5/66	Loveland, OH	Agreed
4/11/66	Sharpsville, PA	Agreed
4/25/66	Ghent, NY	Agreed
5/7/66	Columbus, OH	Agreed
5/8/66	New Carlisle, OH	Agreed
5/25/66	Mobile, AL	Agreed
6/20/66	Dayton, OH	Agreed
8/13-14/66	Red Bluff, CA	Moon possibly involved. See SUNlite 9-4
8/24/66	Troy, OH	Agreed
8/28/66	Oregon, WI	Agreed
Mid-Oct/66	Akron, OH	Agreed
1/29/67	Knox city, MO	Agreed
2/1/67	KC, MO	Agreed
2/20/67	Oxford, WI	See SUNlite 9-1
2/26/67	Dayton, OH	Agreed
4/4/68	Cochrane, WI	Herb Taylor: Hynek vs. Menzel (Serious problems with Moon explanation) My assessment: Moon is possible but there are problems as Herb states. As I told Herb, "I have some reservations but cannot totally eliminate the moon. The witness wrote that there was no moonlight. How did she miss the moon?"
7/11/68	Eielsen AFB, AK	Agreed
7/28/68	Attanista, VA	Agreed
8/26/69	Algoma, WI	Agreed

In addition to Herb's list, I have also discussed a few other cases in SUNlite that he missed.

Date	Location	Comments
7/6-12/52	Governor's Island, NY	Photograph. See SUNlite 9-4
11/4/57	Elmwood Park, IL	See SUNlite 3-4

While reviewing these cases, I found several cases that had interesting commentary. One involved Dr. Hynek's letter to a witness, who had misidentified the moon as a UFO:

It seems almost impossible that this could be so, but obvious mistakes are frequently made, and the moon, when rising, and viewed through scudding clouds and perhaps additional meteorological conditions, can fool people. We do have documented cases in which the setting moon has been the source of several UFO reports. ⁴

In another instance, the witness admitted they had made a mistake on their initial UFO report and, after watching the moon rise a week later, they realized their initial report was the moon!⁵

REPLY TO: TDET/UFO
ATTN OF: 17 March 1967

SUBJECT: UFO Observation, 1 Feb 67

TO: Mr. [REDACTED]
Kansas City, Missouri 64131

Reference your unidentified observation. The information which we have received is not sufficient for a scientific evaluation. Request you complete the attached FTD Form 164 and return it in the envelope provided. Thank you for reporting your observation to the Air Force.

JAMES C. MANATT, Colonel, USAF
Director of Technology and Subsystems

1 Atch
FTD Form 164 w/envelope
March 24, 1967

Dear Sir:

Thank you for your inquiry into my UFO. I must say I am very red faced! Since reporting my UFO -?, I believe I have discovered what it was. The night I saw the object was very cloudy and foggy. About a week or so after my sighting I saw the object in the same place, red in color as it was before, only this time it was just a little cloudy and I could determine it was the moon! I watched and it changed colors as before. I feel what I saw was the bottom of the moon, very red, covered by clouds and very heavy fog.

An embarrassed UFO spotter,
[REDACTED]

Sketches

Another thing that caught my eye in reviewing these cases is how witnesses sketched the moon. In some cases, it was obvious that what was seen was the moon. In other cases, it was not. One sketch that stood out for me was the Knox City case of January 29, 1967. In this case, Hynek agreed with the conclusion by initially the solution. I post the drawing on the next page along with the reasons to believe that what was seen was the moon.

7. Draw a picture that will show the shape of the object or objects. Label and include in your sketch any details of the object that you saw such as wings, protrusions, etc., and especially exhaust trails or vapor trails. Place an arrow beside the drawing to show the direction the object was moving.

It was just like a moon only much larger.

19. Draw a picture that will show the shape of the object or objects. Label and include in your sketch any details of the object that you saw such as wings, protrusions, etc., and especially exhaust trails or vapor trails. Place an arrow beside the drawing to show the direction the object was moving.

much of the object is covered by the head of the match. If you had performed this experiment at the time of the sighting, how much of the object would have been covered by the match head?

19. Draw a picture that will show the shape of the object or objects. Label and include in your sketch any details of the object that you saw such as wings, protrusions, etc., and especially exhaust trails or vapor trails. Place an arrow beside the drawing to show the direction the object was moving.

SCOTT LATTICE



From top to bottom:

1. LaCrosse, Wisconsin. 3/29/66⁶
2. Columbus, Ohio. 5/7/66⁷
3. Dayton, Ohio. 6/20/66⁸
4. Sharpesville, Pennsylvania. 4/11/66⁹

Knox City January 29 1967 2200CST¹⁰



- Witnesses looking out east window.
- Moon rising in east around 2145 CST.
- Witness thought it was moon but it was too red and not round.
- Witness never saw the moon
- Object slowly ascended and changed color to yellow-orange

The Moon as an IFO

Contrary to the claims of Jerome Clark, not every “Joe Doakes” can identify the moon and that a surprising number of people have misidentified the moon over the decades. This is still the case even today. I have noted in SUNlite incidents involving the moon as a UFO (See SUNlite 8-5 for an example). UFOlogists need to be careful and make sure that the moon was not a potential source of the UFO report before promoting it as being “unidentified”.

Notes and references

1. Clark, Jerome. “ABC Jennings Special” 27 February 2005. [UFO Updates Mailing list](#).
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