

# SUNlite

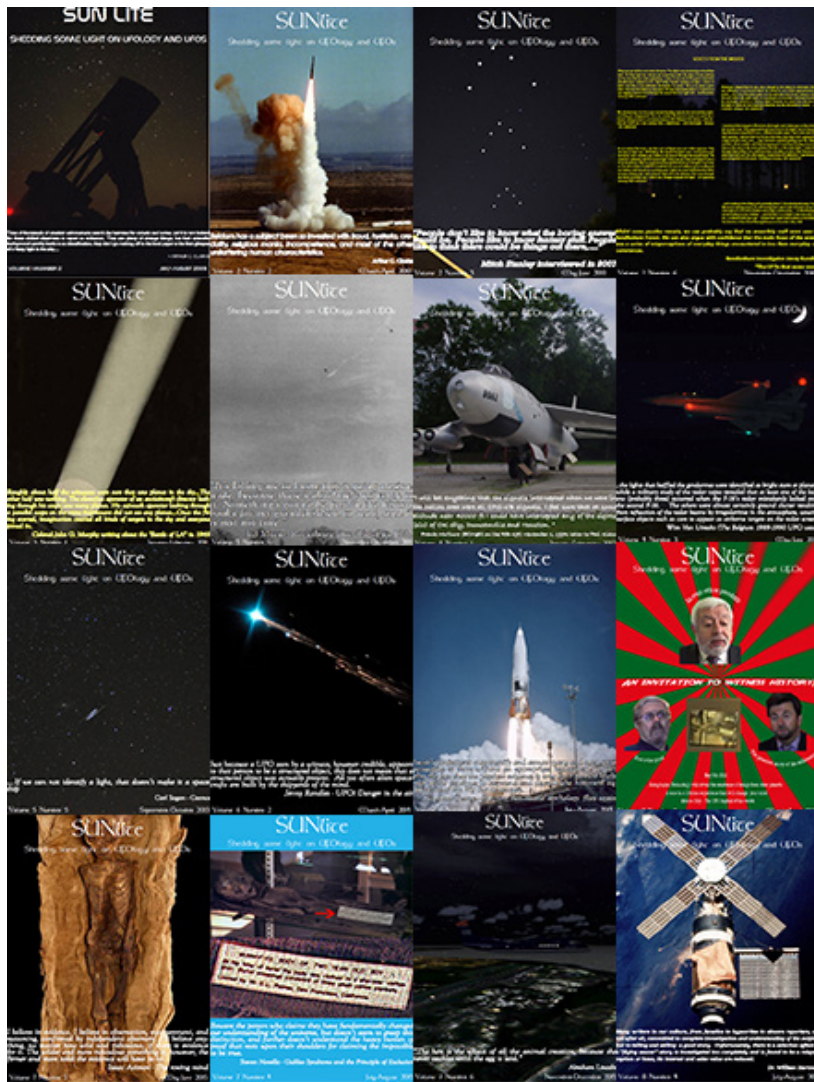
Shedding some light on UFOlogy and UFOs

*The interest in unidentified flying objects derives, perhaps, not so much from scientific curiosity as from unfulfilled religious needs. Flying saucers serve, for some, to replace the gods that science has deposed. With their distant and exotic worlds and their pseudoscientific overlay, the contact accounts are acceptable to many people who reject the older religious frameworks. But precisely because people desire so intensely that unidentified flying objects be of benign, intelligent, and extraterrestrial origin, honesty requires that, in evaluating the observations, we accept only the most rigorous logic and the most convincing evidence. At the present time, there is no evidence that unambiguously connects the various flying saucer sightings and contact tales with extraterrestrial intelligence*

*Carl Sagan July 29, 1968*

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## SUNlite's 10th anniversary

Cover: The dragon spacecraft being launched from Cape Canaveral as viewed from Jacksonville Florida. The rocket was prominently visible until it disappeared into the cloud bank. One could see the rest of the flight between the gaps and I wished I could have seen the rest. It happened early in the morning so there probably weren't many UFO reports filed.

Left: While I think each issue of SUNlite contains something important, I think these issues are ones that stand out as the most significant issues for various reasons.

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This issue celebrates the 10th anniversary of SUNlite. SUNlite 1-1 was released in May of 2009 and this is now the 61st issue produced. My original intent was to write about UFOlogy and discuss the recent UFOlogical news. I was also interested in going back over some old cases. After a few years of writing, it became obvious to me that UFOlogy likes to repeat itself in promoting the same old arguments and not willing to try new methods to gather evidence. While the list of best cases change, the results remain the same. Many UFO proponents don't seem interested in going beyond sensationalizing the same old stories. Meanwhile, those cases that seem to have merit are not that convincing to people outside of the UFOlogical field.

I have become a bit tired of looking at old cases that UFOlogists find compelling for some reason or another. In most instances, the evidence is limited to anecdotal reports by an individual that cannot be verified. Even worse are the cases based on rumor and hearsay. Why are UFO proponents so interested in promoting such weak cases? Is it any surprise that people outside of the UFOlogical field look at these stories skeptically?

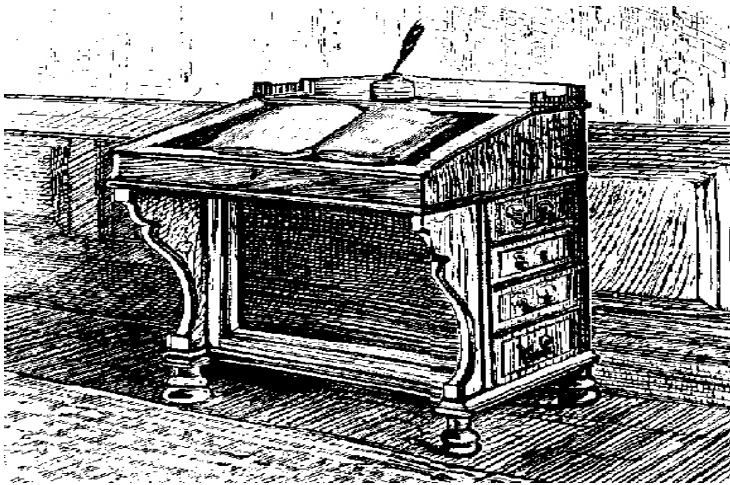
Because of my failing interest in these types of cases, SUNlite has become a bit thin over the past few years. One cannot spend a lot of time swatting at flies. I continue my efforts on the "UFO Evidence" cases to demonstrate that it is not the compilation of convincing evidence that proponents think it is. It is mostly a collection of UFO stories that, after close examination, are not that convincing. While a few cases are interesting, the majority are just "padding". It would have been better if NICAP had simply listed their best twenty cases instead of trying the shot gun approach. My other efforts at examining the Blue Book unknowns and reviewing the Blue Book files, which I expect to take another five years to complete, is equally challenging. So I am not totally bored with UFOs. I am just not that intrigued by most of what UFOlogy currently has to offer and the workload of these three articles, that regularly appear, is taking a lot of my time.

Many thanks to Marty Kottmeyer, who provided me with an interesting article about Roman UFOs. Marty did a lot of research on the subject and his article is worth spending the time to read. There is a second article, which I will publish in the next issue. As always, I appreciate those who contact me with their stories and articles.



# Who's blogging UFOs?

## Hot topics and varied opinions



**It seems that the To The Stars Academy (TTSA) has gotten the History Channel to do a UFO program.** I seriously doubt the cases will have any informed skeptical opinions since it seems to have the TTSA's fingerprints all over the production.

**New witnesses coming forward decades after a UFO event have to be examined skeptically.** The Pascagoula case new witness is suspect. To me, somebody stepping forward after 45 years is just too convenient. The new witness that appeared for the 1997 Arizona event seemed more credible because some of the specifics match what was visible from Kingman on that evening. My biggest question about these individuals is why did they wait so long? Is this a case of "me too" after hearing about these UFO cases in the news?

**John Greenwald wrote about his recent efforts to determine who Luis Elizondo was and his actual involvement in the AATIP.** It seems to me that he was a person of little

significance in the DOD and the AATIP had little to do with studying UFOs. I could be wrong but somebody is going to have to demonstrate that UFOs/unidentified aerial threats were actually recorded/studied by Elizondo/AATIP. So far, all we have seen are a few videos that may or may not have originated from Bigelow. It also appears that the AATIP was nothing more than a powerful senator funneling money towards a prominent contributor, who had a strong interest in the subject of UFOs. Sooner or later, the truth will eventually come out. Will Elizondo be a UFO pioneer or just another individual trying to cash in on the UFO subject for fame or fortune?

**Meanwhile, the Scientific Coalition for UFOlogy (SCU) presented a study they made about the Nimitz UFO event of 2004.** Like the Aguadilla video, the SCU presented us with a huge paper documenting their research. Most of it appears to include the FOIA requests and replaying commentary made over the past two years regarding the case. With the exception of the low resolution video that has circulated on the Internet for over a decade, the rest of the data is anecdotal told years later. I have yet to fully read the SCU's paper so I will fully comment on it at a later date. Meanwhile, Keith Kloor, writing for Issues of science and technology, commented on the case and offered other points of view regarding the case. He seemed to be willing to accept the possibility that what was seen was some sort of military test. While he did not mention it in the article, he later indicated that Mick West's metabunk was the source of the skeptical commentary he mentioned.

**Speaking of the SCU, I went to their web site on the Aguadilla case and noticed they have reposted their argument against the balloon explanation.** However, if you follow their link, you don't get their rebuttal but their original report. Apparently, they don't want people to read their bogus rebuttal, which I demonstrated in SUNlite 7-6 to be highly selective and erroneous. The fact that no author was listed indicated that nobody seemed interested in taking credit for it. I also saw the statement, "If proponents would just provide the latitude/longitude coordinates at specific times for the location of the balloon, we can verify that these positions and times match the objective data." This is amusing because Lance Moody has provided such values to UFO proponents and used them to create a simulation that bears an extremely close resemblance to the Aguadilla video. Didn't the SCU get that information or is this a case of them refusing to admit the data exists? Perhaps they just don't want the readers to see that the balloon explanation does have merit.

**It is interesting that the US Navy has recently announced that it is formalizing a policy for personnel to report unidentified aircraft incursions into air space.** The media seems to have seized on this as meaning UFOs like the "Tic-Tac" encounter of 2004. I am sure that case would fall under this policy but the Navy is not going to be receiving reports from civilians the way Blue Book did. According to the article, "The Navy is updating and formalizing the process by which reports of any such suspected incursions can be made to the cognizant authorities". This means that military personnel will have some form of report that will be filed when "unknown aircraft" interfere or enter restricted airspace. This will include collection of any radar data/photographs/video. Is the Navy going to collect a report made by Seaman Half-hitch, who happened to see a bright fireball pass overhead and thought it was a supersonic aircraft or missile invading the base's airspace? Will the US Navy form an investigative organization to deal with such reports or will they be handled by the upper chain of command on a case by case basis, as it appears to be the current situation? The Navy is going to have to be very careful to avoid the failures of falling into the Blue Book trap in handling such reports otherwise they will repeat them.

## June 1, 1954 Boston, Massachusetts

June 1, 1954--Nr. Boston, Mass. TWA pilot enroute from Paris, control tower operators, saw large white disc. [V]<sup>1</sup>

Section V states:

*White disc paced airliner.*<sup>2</sup>

and

*A disc-shaped UFO paced a Trans-World Airways plane June 1, 1954. United Press reported the incident (newswire copy on file at NICAP):*

*FLYING SAUCER OR A WEATHER BALLOON... THAT SEEMS TO BE THE ISSUE BETWEEN AN AIRLINES PILOT AND THE AIR FORCE.*

*TRANS-WORLD AIRWAYS PILOT CHARLES KRATOVIL OF PORT WASHINGTON, NEW YORK, SAYS HE SAW AN UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT ... LARGE, WHITE-COLORED, AND DISC-SHAPED.*

*HE SAYS HE AND HIS TWO CREW MATES SPOTTED THE OBJECT 10 MILES NORTH OF BOSTON THIS MORNING*

*THAT IT WAS PURSUING THE SAME COURSE AS HIS PLANE BUT WAS OBSCURED BY HIGH CLOUDS.*

*KRATOVIL SAYS HE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM THE AIRLINES BOSTON OFFICE QUOTING THE AIR FORCE AS SAYING THE OBJECT PROBABLY WAS A WEATHER BALLOON.*

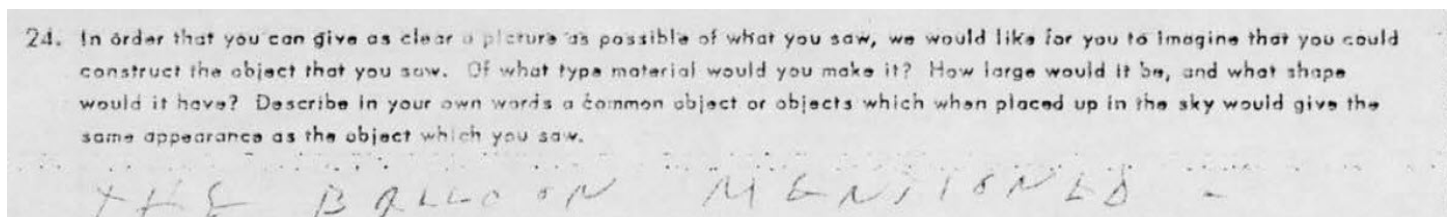
*HOWEVER, THE PILOTS PUT IT THIS WAY:*

*"IF THIS IS A WEATHER BALLOON... IT'S THE FIRST TIME I EVER SAW ONE TRAVELING AGAINST THE WIND."*<sup>3</sup>

The formal explanation appears that it was a weather balloon. Is this correct?

### Other sources

Project Blue Book does have a record of investigation. However, it consists only of the form completed by the witness on August 3, 1954. While the UP story indicated the pilot dismissed the balloon explanation, by August of 1954, his attitude had changed. He became aware that it was not a weather balloon but a large research balloon that had been launched at 0430 from Grenier AFB in Manchester, NH. When he learned of this balloon flight, he now seemed to agree with the explanation.<sup>4</sup>



The Blue Book record card also states that five ground personnel saw the object with binoculars.<sup>5</sup>

Dr. James McDonald wrote the following about the case:

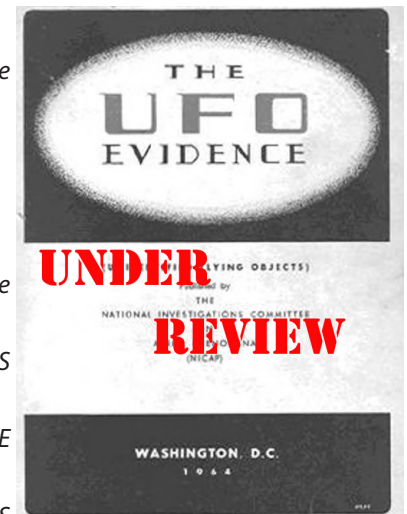
*At 0930 EDT, a Paris-New York TWA Constellation was passing near Boston when the cockpit crew spotted "a large, white-colored disc-like object" overhead (Ref. 41). Capt. Charles J. Kratovil, copilot W. R. Davis, and flight engineer Harold Raney all watched it for a total time of 10 minutes as they flew on their own southwestward course to New York. They would occasionally lose it behind overlying clouds. Knowing that they were flying into headwinds, they concluded that it could not be any kind of balloon, so they radioed the Boston airport control tower, which informed him that jets were scrambled and saw the object, but could not close with it.*

*After landing in New York, Capt. Kratovil was informed that official spokesmen had attributed the sighting to a "weather balloon" released from Grenier AFB, in New Hampshire.*<sup>6</sup>

He would add that a weather balloon could not be the source because the plane flew 50 miles in the ten minutes and the weather balloon could not keep up with the aircraft.

### Analysis

Grenier Air Force Base had been launching "Moby Dick" balloons that spring. The photograph above appeared in the Ogden Examiner on May 10th.<sup>7</sup> McDonald's argument against the balloon explanation assumed a normal weather balloon and not a



**Up Goes a 'Moby Dick' Balloon**

An Air Force "Moby Dick" weather balloon is released at the Grenier Air Force Base in Manchester, N. H. The huge balloons carry instrument packages suspended beneath them so researchers at the base can receive automatic reports of weather data through radio relays. Officials say the balloons aren't dangerous and all aircraft in the release area are notified of the ascent.

high altitude research balloon. The fact that the object was also seen by ground personnel with binoculars indicated that what was seen was large and visible over a large area. A high altitude plastic balloon would satisfy these observations.

It is interesting to note that at least one more balloon launched by Grenier airfield that summer produced UFO reports that were mentioned in the news media.<sup>8</sup> In this instance, the media identified the source. If they had not done so, these reports probably would have also appeared in "The UFO evidence".

## **Weather Balloon Sets Off Flying Saucer Scare Here**

**LOWELL.**—The unusual phenomenon of "flying saucers" and other strange objects which have supposedly been seen gliding through the sky once again were the topic of conversation locally as approximately 275 telephone calls flooded The Sun office last night concerning a strange object in the sky just before darkness.

Calls were received from all sections of the Greater-Lowell area with the floating object being described by a few as a "flying saucer," a shiny round ball as the sun's rays reflected from the unusual sight, and as some strange craft from outer-space by a few of the younger callers.

A check with the Bedford weather station at Hanscom air field revealed that an experimental weather balloon had been released from Grenier air field in Manchester, N. H., at 5 a. m. yesterday morning. The Concord state police barracks also were told by Bedford that a similar balloon was released by them yesterday afternoon.

## **Conclusion**

It seems very likely that the pilot saw a high altitude balloon launched from Manchester that morning. The case should be labeled "probably a balloon" and removed from the "best evidence" list.

## **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. 134.
2. *ibid.* P. 36
3. *ibid.* P. 40
4. "USAF Technical information sheet" Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/8713329>
5. "Project 10073 record card" Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/8712958>
6. McDonald, James. Case studies presented to the Symposium on Unidentified Flying Objects. July 29, 1968. P. 68
7. "Up goes a 'Moby Dick' balloon". Ogden Standard-Examiner. Ogden, Utah. May 10, 1954. P. 2A
8. "Weather balloon sets off flying saucer scare here". Lowell Sun. Lowell, MA. August 19, 1954. P. 1.



## THE 701 CLUB: CASE 4706 APRIL 25, 1957 RINGGOLD, LA

Don Berliner lists the case as follows:

*April 25, 1957; Ringgold, Louisiana. Military witness Robertson. Case missing from official files.<sup>1</sup>*

When examining the files, Berliner could not find this case. Sparks also makes a similar comment.<sup>2</sup>

### The Blue Book file

The file does exist and can be downloaded. It was also investigated to some degree by the local AF base. As a result, there is enough information for analysis. The first report came in the form of a letter to the local Air Base.

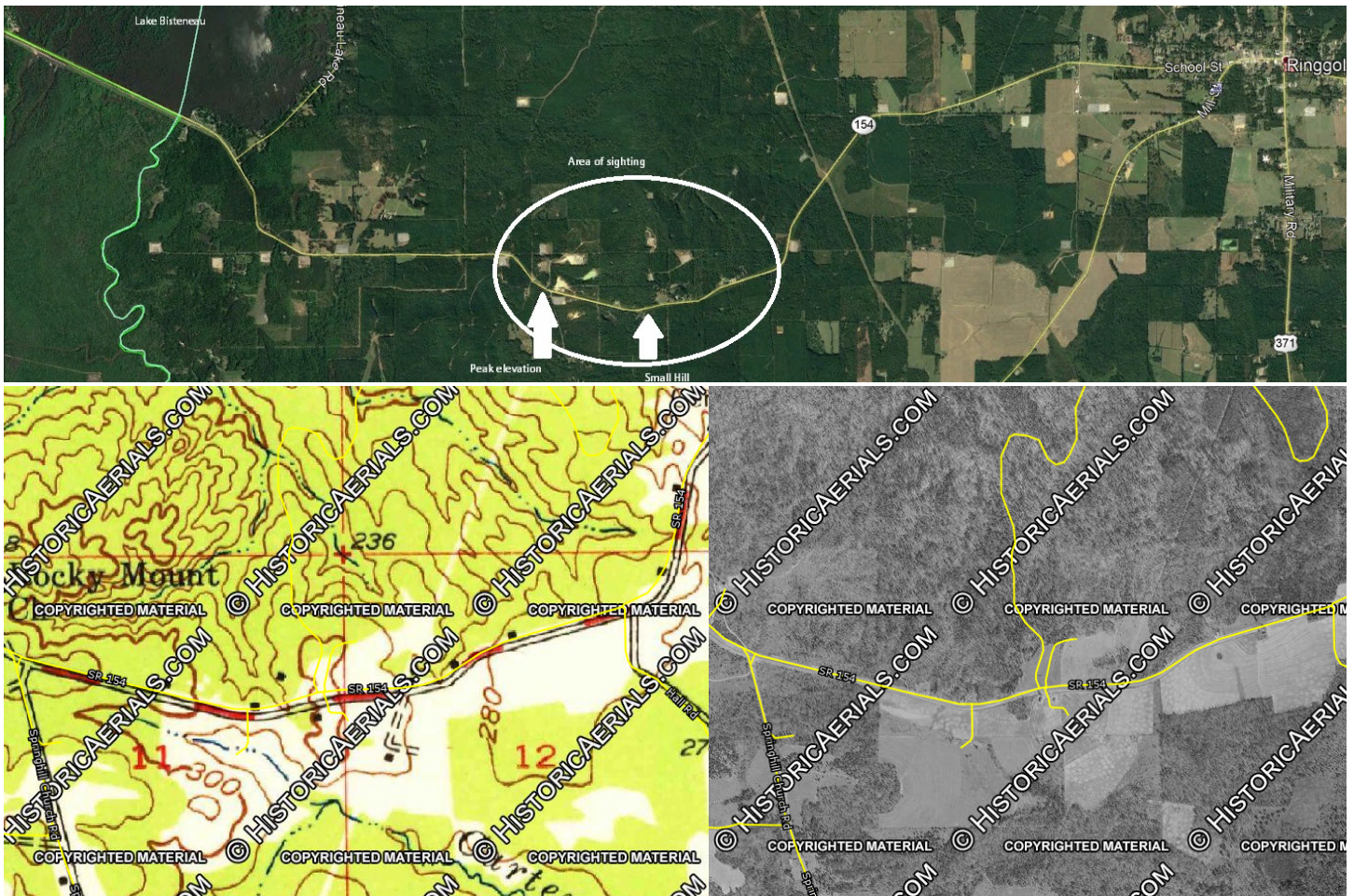
According to the witness' letter, he was on a fishing expedition at lake Bisteneau. When a storm came up, he decided to go to Ringgold. Around 0230 CST and about six miles from Ringgold, he came over a hill and saw a large red colored half-moon shaped object. It was still raining and he went to a nearby house to get the residents to come out look. Because of the rain, the owner stayed inside. The witness added that the object settled above some trees in the distance and disappeared.<sup>3</sup>

When interviewed, the witness stated the object was more crescent than a half-moon. He stated the object was initially at an elevation angle of 45 degrees but then descended to ground level over a 25 minute period.<sup>4</sup> When he had attempted to get the residents of the house to come out, the UFO disappeared. The trees where the UFO supposedly landed was 4.5 miles west of Ringgold and a half-miles south of SR 154.<sup>5</sup>

### Analysis

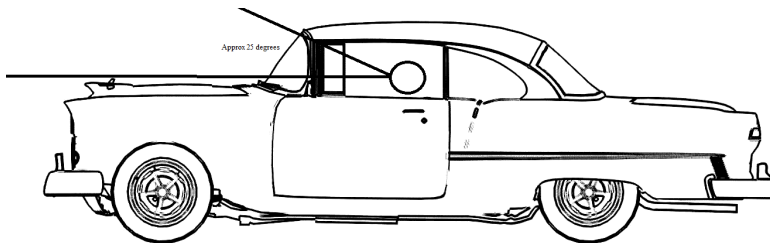
There are some interesting points to consider. The exact time is somewhat confusing. The BB record card lists the time as 0830Z but the AISS card says it was 0730Z.<sup>6</sup> This probably has to do with a confusion about daylight savings time (DST). As best I can tell, Louisiana was not on DST, which means the 0830Z time is correct.

Lake Bisteneau was about 8 miles west of Ringgold. The location of the sighting appears to have been between 4 and 6 miles from town. Using Google Earth<sup>7</sup>, a 1957 topographical map<sup>8</sup>, and a 1955 aerial photograph<sup>9</sup>, we can identify the approximate location of the sighting. The witness mentioned driving over a hill. There are two locations along the stretch of road that involve hills. Based on these locations, it seems the witness was either looking East-southeast or East. The aerial image from 1955 shows the southern side of the road was pretty open compared to current conditions. This is consistent with the comment about the tree line being some distance from the road.

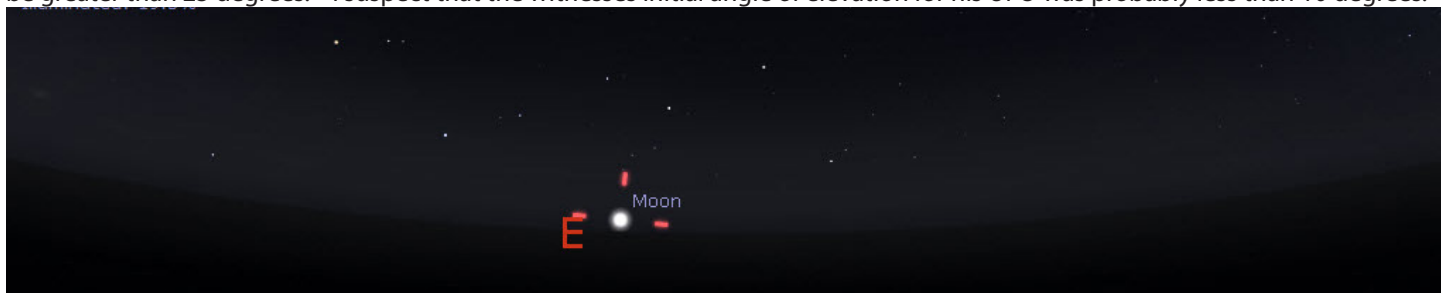




The duration of the sighting is somewhat confusing. The witness was driving from the lake and his location for the beginning of the sighting is about two miles. With the duration listed as 25 minutes, one has to wonder exactly what the witness was doing for that time period. Did he stop the car and take that long to go the house and alert the residents?



The measured elevation angle seems to be inaccurate. According to the witness, the object was initially sighted at an elevation angle of 45 degrees and then descended into some trees. Driving in a car usually does not allow for a witness to see such large elevation angles. This example shows a 1950s vehicle and the approximate maximum elevation angle for a driver. I checked a few modern vehicles using stars and sitting in the driver's seat. The maximum angles of elevation were usually around 15-20 degrees. However, I am 6 foot 4 inches tall. A smaller person would be able to look up at a larger angle while driving. I doubt the angle could be greater than 25 degrees. I suspect that the witnesses initial angle of elevation for his UFO was probably less than 10 degrees.



### Potential solution

At 0300AM CST, a waning crescent moon rose at an azimuth of 93 degrees. As demonstrated in the image below, the direction the moon was rising is marked with arrows. The area where there was a small hill (indicated by the small circle), the moon would have been slightly to the right of the witness and appeared to have been on the tree line just south of SR 154, as mentioned in the report. Between 0315-0330 AM, it would have been high enough to see peaking over the trees. The witness described the object as being "half-moon", "red like blood", and in the direction he was driving. The rising moon matches that description.



Arguments against the moon explanation are:

- The time was listed as 0230. This is 30 minutes prior to moon rise.
- It was raining.

- The witness said it descended from 45 degrees to treetops.

Counter arguments to these points are:

- The time can be wrong. There is no confirmation that the event happened exactly at 0230.
- The weather could have been clear enough in the east to see the moon peaking through some thin clouds or breaks in the clouds. It could have been visible for a short time and then gone back into the clouds, which explains why the UFO disappeared.
- As already pointed out, the angle of elevation is probably a significant overestimation. The act of descending could be due to the witness driving over the hill. The change in elevation would cause the moon to rise and fall with the distant tree line. Additionally, as the witness drove closer to the trees, they would also increase in angular height making the moon appear to descend towards the trees.



## Conclusion

In my opinion, this case should be reclassified as “possible moon”. While there are certain aspects of the case that tend to argue against this explanation, they are not fatal and can be explained as standard errors in observation/memory. If it were not for these issues, I would have classified this as “probable moon”.

## Notes and references

1. Berliner, Don. “The Bluebook unknowns”. NICAP. Available WWW: <http://www.nicap.org/bluebook/unknowns.htm>
2. Sparks, Brad. Comprehensive Catalog of 1,700 Project Blue Book UFO Unknowns: Database Catalog Not a Best Evidence List–NEW: List of Projects & Blue Book Chiefs Work in Progress Version 1.26. Jan. 31, 2016. P. 212.
3. Reilly, Donald. “Report of investigation: UFO sighting five miles west of Ringgold, LA. on 25 April 1957” 15 May 1957. Page 2. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6789152>
4. Reilly, Donald. “Report of investigation: UFO sighting five miles west of Ringgold, LA. on 25 April 1957” 15 May 1957. Page 4. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6789163>
5. Reilly, Donald. “Report of investigation: UFO sighting five miles west of Ringgold, LA. on 25 April 1957” 15 May 1957. Page 5. Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6789170>
6. “AISOP form 5 dated 15 Oct 54.” Fold 3 web site. Available WWW: <https://www.fold3.com/image/6789127>
7. Google Earth. Available WWW: <https://www.google.com/earth/>
8. Historical aerals. Available WWW: <http://historicaerials.com/>
9. Ibid



## Project Blue Book case review: January-June 1957

This is the sixth edition of the Project Blue Book case review covering the first half of 1957. Like the previous evaluations, 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 1957

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1957	South Bend, IN	Insufficient data	Agreed. Report made 9 years later.
1	Russel, KS	Meteor	Agreed
1	Dayton, OH	Sirius	Agreed
2	Holtville, CA	Aircraft	Agreed. It is also possible this was flares being dropped in an MOA.
2	Yuma, AZ	Aircraft	Agreed. It is also possible this was flares being dropped in an MOA.
3	Atlantic	Flare	Witness identified object as flare. Data in message was insufficient.
3	Holtville, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed. Data is confusing.
4	Wadena, MN	Balloon	Agreed
5	Minneapolis, MN	Balloon	Agreed
6	Santa Maria, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
6	Dayton, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
9	Miami, FL	Stars/planets	Agreed. Insufficient data to determine which star/planet
11	Springfield, MA	Aircraft	Agreed
12	Tempe, AZ	Balloon	Agreed
15	Bakersfield, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed
16	Random Lake, WI	Balloon	Agreed. Probably Grab Bag balloon launched from Minnesota based on description
16	NW of Fort Worth, TX	Insufficient data	Agreed. Data not sufficient. No duration. Could have been meteor.
16	Laguna, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
16	Laguna, CA	Antares	Sirius (Antares not visible)
16	Glenwood Springs, CO	Balloon	Jupiter
17	29 Palms, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
18	Franconia, VA	Venus	Sirius (Venus not visible)
19	Rhineland, WI	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
19	Liberty, PA	Aircraft	Agreed
19	Longmont, CO	Meteor	Agreed
22	Glenwood, IA	Meteor	Agreed
27	Hallenburg, GE	Meteor	Agreed
27	Glendora, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed

### February 1957

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
2	Presidio, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
3	New Orleans, LA	Meteor	Agreed
3	High Springs, FL	Searchlight	Agreed
4	Utah	Insufficient data	Agreed. Report made five years after event.

7	Las Cruces AFS, NM	Anomolous Prop.	Agreed
8	Georgetown, MA	Unreliable report	Agreed
8	Randold AFB, TX	Meteor	Agreed
9	Lake Worth, FL	Kite	Object was visible during drive home. Probably not a "Florescent kite" being flown at night. Possibly Jupiter in east. No positional data. Insufficient data.
10	50 mi S of Bismark, ND	Balloon	Arcturus
11	Lancaster, PA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
12	Valley Forge, PA	Balloon	Agreed
12	Floyd Bennet Navy AB, NY	Balloon	Agreed
12	Ottumwa, IA	Balloon	Agreed
13	Lincoln, NE	1. Aircraft (Vis) 2. Balloon (Radar)	1. Agreed 2. Anamolous Prop. (Temperature inversion)
13	Tierra Amarilla AFS, NM	Insufficient data	Agreed. No positional data. Visible for two hours. Possible stars.
13	Marrero, LA	Aircraft	Agreed
13	Yuma, AZ	Sirius	Agreed
13	Burbank, CA	1. Aircraft 2. Meteor	Agreed
14	Stead AFB, NV	Arcturus	Vega
14	Kittery Point, ME/East Nassau, NY	Meteor	Agreed
15	Tuxedo, NY	Balloon	Possibly Jupiter
22	Lake Stevens, WA	Balloon	Agreed
23	Brooklyn, NY	Aircraft	Agreed
27	Ellington AFB, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
27	Omaha, NE	Aircraft	Agreed
27	Castle AFB, CA	Anomalous Prop	Agreed
28	Crane & Logotee, IN	Aircraft	Agreed

### March 1957

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
March	Blaisdell, ND	Unreliable report	Agreed.
1	Rapid City, SD	Insufficient data	Probable Auroral display
3	Herrington, KS	Insufficient data	Agreed. No duration.
3	Oxnard, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
4	Erie, PA	Balloon	Star/Planet (insufficient data to determine which)
6	Great Meadows, NJ	Insufficient data	Possible Balloon/Blimp
8	USSR	Nuclear Explosion	<b>No case file</b>
8	Mockville and Arrity, NC	Aircraft	Agreed
9	350 mi NE of Jax, FL	Meteor	Agreed
9	Brunswick, GA	Insufficient data	Meteor (time listed as 1855Z but report says it was "night" indicating it probably was 1855 EST)
9	Colorado Springs, CO	Box Kite	Balloon
9	Harbor Avon, NC	Insufficient data	Agreed. Second hand report.
9	Laport, MN	Balloon	Sirius
10	Jacksonville, FL	Aircraft	Agreed



11	Glynco NAS, GA	Flare Drop	Possible meteors
12	Dallas, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
15	Bellevue, FL	Star	Possibly Jupiter. Witness reported to see the object while looking at the moon. Jupiter was only about 6 degrees away from the moon.
17	Fontana, CA	Balloon	Aircraft
17	Bellevue, FL	Meteor	Agreed
19	Oakland, CA	Balloon	Agreed
20	Tampa, FL	Searchlight	Agreed
21	Highland, CA	Balloon	Probably Sirius
22	Point Mugu, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed. Object caught on Navy film, which was classified because it shows a missile test. Object caught briefly on film towards the southeast. Film unavailable for viewing.
22	Center Sandwich, NH	Balloon	Agreed
22	Dayton, OH	Balloon	Agreed
22	Trinidad	Aircraft	Agreed
22	Oxnard, CA	1. Stars 2. Conventional lights/barn	Agreed
22	Long Beach, CA	Equip. Malfunction	Radiosonde from Santa Monica indicates temperature inversion present. Anomalous Propagation.
23	Dayton, Clinton County AFB, OH	Meteor	Agreed
23	Pasadena, CA	Aircraft	Sirius setting
25	Fontana and San Bernardino, CA	Meteor	Agreed
26	Redmond, WA	Insufficient data	Agreed. Seen from aircraft, which did not have aircraft heading for reference.
26	Renton, WA	Balloon	Jupiter and Arcturus
27	Roswell, NM	Aircraft	Agreed
28	Manitou Springs, CO	Balloon	Agreed
28	San Antonio, TX	Balloon	Agreed
28	Raseda, CA	Insufficient data	Possibly Capella
30	Lake City, FL	Balloon	Agreed

### April 1957

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
5	Raseda, CA	Insufficient data	Agreed. No time listed.
6	Washington D.C.	Meteor	Agreed
7	Georgia	Balloon	Agreed (note: This is a very good report and contained a lot of information. It seems to be that what was seen was probably a research balloon)
7	Portland, OR	Aircraft	Agreed
8	Shelton, WA	Aircraft	Agreed
9	Columbia, SC	Meteor	Agreed
9	Colorado Springs, CO	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
9	Rhinlander, WI	Star	Sirius
9	Temple, CA	Hole in ground	Agreed

10	High Falls, NY	Meteor	Agreed
10	El Centro, CA	Balloon	Agreed
10	Ogden, UT	Balloon	Agreed
11	Argentia AFB, NF	Meteor	Agreed
11	Bradley Beach, NJ	Aircraft	Agreed
11	Oakton, VA	Aircraft	Agreed
13	East Tawas, MI	Insufficient data	Possible Grab Bag balloon
14	Vins-Sur-Caramay, France	Unreliable report	Insufficient data. Inadequate evidence for UFO landing with beings.
14	Hialeah, FL	Meteor	Agreed
15	Eglin AFB, FL	Mirage	UNIDENTIFIED. Description by witnesses adequate but no satisfactory explanation available.
18	Albuquerque, NM	Balloon	Agreed
18	San Pedro, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
21	Phoenix, AZ	Unreliable report	Agreed. Somebody wanting AF to confess they hit an airliner with a missile.
21	Santa Barbara, CA	Aircraft	Possible meteor
22	Amarillo, TX	Meteor	Agreed
22	SE United States	Meteor	Agreed
23	Guam	Flare	Agreed
23	Harrow-Wesld, England	Aircraft	Agreed
23	Kent, WA	Aircraft	Insufficient data. No positional data.
24	Port Columbus, Dayton, OH	Balloon	Sirius
24	Bedford, IN	Stars	Arcturus and Jupiter
24	El Centro, CA	Flares	Aircraft
25	Ringgold, LA	UNIDENTIFIED	Moon (See SUNlite 11-3)
29	English Channel	Aircraft	Agreed
29	Ferndale, MI	Aircraft	Listed as few minutes but moving at speed of falling star. Possible meteor.
29	Worcester, MA	1-2. Meteors 3. Aircraft	1. Meteor 2-3. Possible birds
29	Seattle, WA	Meteor	Agreed
30	Crane, IN	Aircraft	Agreed
APR-MAY	United states, England	Comet	Agreed

### May 1957

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
1	Washington D.C.	Meteor	Agreed
2	Edwards AFB, CA	Balloon	Agreed
2	Lake Silkworth, PA	Balloon	Agreed
2	Cincinnati, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
2	Denver, CO	Meteor	Agreed
3	Goodland, KS - Stead AFB, NV	Meteor	Agreed
4	McClellan AFB, CA	Rockets	Meteor



5	Santa Rosa Island, CA	Aircraft	Possible meteors. One reported as going over aircraft. Other reported at altitude below aircraft. If light was viewed off of a wing and interpreted as being below, it could be a meteor.
7	Canton, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
7	Jackson, MS	Insufficient data	Possible balloons
7	Fargo, ND	Aircraft	Agreed
7-8	Macon, GA	1. Aircraft 2. Parachute flare	Agreed
12	Bel Air, MD	Stars/planets	Jupiter
13	San Angelo, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Tallmadge, OH	Aircraft	Agreed
14	Springfield, MO	Meteor	Agreed
20	Laredo, TX	Insufficient data	Agreed. Missing specifics of duration/course
21	Ventura, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
21	Berlin, GE	Balloon	Agreed
23	Kansas City, KS	Aircraft	Agreed
24	Sturgeon Bay, WI	Aircraft	Agreed
24	Kings Park, NY	Inconsistent Info	Agreed. Witness may have confused directions based on description of sun's position.
24	Chestertown, MD	Flares	Agreed
25	Elkhorn, WI	Flare	Aircraft
26	Loring AFB, ME	Insufficient data	Possible radar chaff falling
26	Ft. Myers, FL	Balloon	Jupiter and moons viewed through binoculars
26	Yuma, AZ	Meteor	Agreed
27	Miami, FL	Meteor	Agreed
27	Bristol, TN	Star	Agreed (possible planet as well) No direction given to determine which astronomical body was source.
28	Oklahoma City, OK	Meteor	Agreed
29	Houma, LA	Anamolous Propagation	Agreed
29	Worcester, OH	Insufficient data	Possibly Castor and Pollux
29	Great Falls, MT	Balloon	Insufficient data. No Positional data
30	Detroit, MI	Aircraft	Agreed
31	Baltimore, MD	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
31	Terre Haute, IN	Moon	Agreed

### June 1957

Date	Location	BB explanation	My evaluation
June	Uruguay	Insufficient data	Agreed. No date, positional data, or duration.
1	Iran	Meteor	Agreed
2	Chicago, IL	Insufficient data	Agreed. Report did not contain duration.
2	Waterloo, IA	Moon	Venus
3	Shreveport, LA	Aircraft	Agreed
9	Kerrville, TX	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
11	Portsmouth, VA	Aircraft	Agreed
11	Amarillo, Odessa, TX	Balloon	Possibly Vega

12	Milan, Italy	UNIDENTIFIED	UNIDENTIFIED
12	Houston, TX	Aircraft	Agreed
12	South Cotulla, TX	Meteor	Agreed
13	Wake Island	Contrails	Agreed
13	Columbus, NM	Balloon	Agreed
13	La Aurora, Guatemala	Insufficient data	Possible Balloon
14	McCord AFB, WA	Balloon	Agreed
14	Canton, OH	Meteor	Agreed
14	Benton, PA	Meteor	Agreed
16	Gardena, CA	Balloon	Agreed
19	Dayton, OH	Insufficient data	Agreed
19	Salt Lake City, UT	Aircraft	Agreed
19	Clinton, TN	Aircraft	Agreed
20	Floyd Bennet NAS, NY	Balloon	Agreed
20	Vandalia, OH	Balloon	Agreed
21	Pepperell AFB, NF	Insufficient data	Possible Balloon
21	Harlingen AFB, TX	Insufficient data	Agreed. Source of report gave brief and incomplete information that could not be verified by other observers.
23	Carmichael, CA	1. Aircraft 2. Mirage/Inversion	Agree with aircraft explanation. Mirage/Inversion not necessary to explain sighting.
24	Guam	Aircraft	Agreed
24	Villa Grove, CO	Balloon	Agreed
26	Edwards AFB, CA	Balloon	Agreed
26	McKeesport, PA	Aircraft	Agreed
26	South Fork Meadow, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
29	Barstow, CA	Aircraft	Agreed
29	Easton, MD	Aircraft	Agreed

## Reclassification

There were 200 cases in the Blue Book files from January through June 1957, that I evaluated. In my opinion, 51 were improperly classified (about 26%). 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
1/3	Atlantic	Flare	Witness identified object as flare. Data in message was insufficient.
1/16	Laguna, CA	Antares	Sirius (Antares not visible)
1/16	Glenwood Springs, CO	Balloon	Jupiter
1/18	Franconia, VA	Venus	Sirius (Venus not visible)
1/19	Rhineland, WI	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
2/9	Lake Worth, FL	Kite	Object was visible during drive home. Probably not a “Fluorescent kite” being flown at night. Possibly Jupiter in east. No positional data. Insufficient data.
2/10	50 mi S of Bismark, ND	Balloon	Arcturus
2/11	Lancaster, PA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon



2/13	Lincoln, NE	1. Aircraft (Vis) 2. Balloon (Radar)	1. Agreed 2. Anamolous Prop. (Temperature inversion)
2/14	Stead AFB, NV	Arcturus	Vega
2/15	Tuxedo, NY	Balloon	Possibly Jupiter
3/1	Rapid City, SD	Insufficient data	Probable Auroral display
3/4	Erie, PA	Balloon	Star/Planet (insufficient data to determine which)
3/6	Great Meadows, NJ	Insufficient data	Possible Balloon/Blimp
3/9	Brunswick, GA	Insufficient data	Meteor (time listed as 1855Z but report says it was "night" indicating it probably was 1855 EST)
3/9	Colorado Springs, CO	Box Kite	Balloon
3/9	Laport, MN	Balloon	Sirius
3/11	Glynco NAS, GA	Flare Drop	Possible meteors
3/17	Fontana, CA	Balloon	Aircraft
3/21	Highland, CA	Balloon	Probably Sirius
3/22	Long Beach, CA	Equip. Malfunction	Radiosonde from Santa Monica indicates temperature inversion present. Anamolous Propagation.
3/23	Pasadena, CA	Aircraft	Sirius setting
3/26	Renton, WA	Balloon	Jupiter and Arcturus
3/28	Raseda, CA	Insufficient data	Possibly Capella
4/9	Colorado Springs, CO	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
4/13	East Tawas, MI	Insufficient data	Possible Grab Bag balloon
4/14	Vins-Sur-Caramay, France	Unreliable report	Insufficient data. Inadequate evidence for UFO landing with beings.
4/15	Eglin AFB, FL	Mirage	UNIDENTIFIED. Description by witnesses adequate but no satisfactory explanation available.
4/21	Santa Barbara, CA	Aircraft	Possible meteor
4/23	Kent, WA	Aircraft	Insufficient data. No positional data.
4/24	Port Columbus, Dayton, OH	Balloon	Sirius
4/24	El Centro, CA	Flares	Aircraft
4/25	Ringgold, LA	UNIDENTIFIED	Moon (See SUNlite 11-3)
4/29	Ferndale, MI	Aircraft	Listed as few minutes but moving at speed of falling star. Possible meteor.
4/29	Worcester, MA	1-2. Meteors 3. Aircraft	1. Meteor 2-3. Possible birds
5/4	McClellan AFB, CA	Rockets	Meteor
5/5	Santa Rosa Island, CA	Aircraft	Possible meteors. One reported as going over aircraft. Other reported at altitude below aircraft. If light was viewed off of a wing and interpreted as being below, it could be a meteor.
5/7	Jackson, MS	Insufficient data	Possible balloons
5/21	Ventura, CA	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
5/25	Elkhorn, WI	Flare	Aircraft
5/26	Loring AFB, ME	Insufficient data	Possible radar chaff falling
5/26	Ft. Myers, FL	Balloon	Jupiter and moons viewed through binoculars
5/29	Worchester, OH	Insufficient data	Possibly Castor and Pollux
5/29	Great Falls, MT	Balloon	Insufficient data. No Positional data
5/31	Baltimore, MD	Insufficient data	Possible balloon
6/2	Waterloo, IA	Moon	Venus

6/9	Kerrville, TX	Insufficient data	Possible meteor
6/11	Amarillo, Odessa, TX	Balloon	Possibly Vega
6/13	La Aurora, Guatemala	Insufficient data	Possible Balloon
6/21	Pepperell AFB, NF	Insufficient data	Possible Balloon
6/23	Carmichael, CA	1. Aircraft 2. Mirage/Inversion	Agree with aircraft explanation. Mirage/Inversion not necessary to explain sighting.

## Summary

It is interesting that the number of reports received dropped significantly from the second half of 1956. Despite the lower number of reports, the number of cases that required reevaluation was significant. The value increased from 17 to 26%. This probably has to do with a lack of extra personnel to investigate the cases. Very few of the cases were investigated by the Air Intelligence Squadrons meaning they were less on-site interrogations. I noticed that a lot of Ground Observer Corps (GOC) reports lacked positional data. Either the observers did not report such data or the officers writing the report left it out. In either case, such reports were often difficult to analyze.

One of the cases was reclassified as "UNIDENTIFIED" simply because no potential solution could be offered. I also felt that one of the UNIDENTIFIEDS could have a possible solution. I continue to be frustrated by the large number of cases that contain nothing more than a single message or a letter written by a witness. Trying to extract pertinent data from these kinds of reports makes positive identification, or even a proposed possible solution, difficult.

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# Roman Ufos

by

Marty Kottmeyer

In 1963, W. Raymond Drake published in *Flying Saucer Review* an article titled "UFOs over Ancient Rome." He was upfront about his method and intent: "I selected about 50 writers of antiquity and scrutinized their main works through a UFO lens." He would study the Classics for records of extraterrestrial visitation. Most particularly he would focus on the classic historians. He tallied 63 records of celestial phenomena in Obsequens, 30 in Livy, 26 in Pliny, 14 in Dio Cassius, and 9 in Cicero. He gave a breakdown of the types which we have converted into an accompanying pie-chart for those who like pictorial presentations of such statistical niceties. Of more ultimate significance he gave a list of 10 quotes from classical history giving sightings that he averred would have been distinguished enough to appear in any Roman counterpart to *Flying Saucer Review* had it existed. "These celestial objects were seen and recorded two thousand years ago by people who had never heard of flying saucers. Can they be glibly explained away by the double-talk of UFO experts? If the UFOs of antiquity were real, so must those be today... We should sweep away the dust and dogma of centuries and study phenomena as they really happened. The classical sightings of the past confirm the UFOs of the present."<sup>1</sup>

Drake was not the first UFO writer to assert there were UFOs during the Roman era, but his effort began a grouping of historical UFOs adopted by others which were demonstrably influential. His list contained errors and idiosyncrasies that were repeated by others. They've been incorporated into dozens of UFO chronologies on the Web. His list mis-dates multiple items, mis-spells names and places, and has problematic translations.

222 B.C. "Also three moons have appeared at once, for instance in the consulship of Gnaeus Domitius and Gaius Fannius." (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book II, Chap. XXXII.)

218 B.C. "In Amiterno district in many places were seen the appearance of men in white garments from far away. The orb of the sun grew smaller. At Praeneste glowing lamps from heaven. At Arpi a shield in the sky. The moon contended with the sun and during the night two moons were seen. Phantom ships appeared in the sky." (Lycosthenes - Obsequens, *Prodigiorum Libellus*, Chap. XXXI. Livy, Book XXI, Chap. LXII, and Book XXII, Chap. I.)

214 B.C. "At Hadria an altar was seen in the sky and about it the forms of man in white clothes." (Livy, Book XXI, Chap. LXII.)

213 B.C. "At Ariminum a light like the day blazed out at night in many portions of Italy. Three moons became visible in the night-time." (Dio Cassius, *Roman History*, Vol. II, page 46.)

175 B.C. "Three suns shone at the same time. That night several stars glided across the sky at Lanuvium." (Obsequens, Chap. LXVI.)

122 B.C. "In Gaul three suns and three moons were seen." (Obsequens, Chap. XLII.)

91 B.C. "Near Spoletium a gold-coloured fireball rolled down to the ground, increased in size, it seemed to move off the ground towards the east and was big enough to blot out the sun." (Obsequens, Chap. CXIV.)

85 B.C. "In the consulship of Lucius Valerius and Gaius Marius a burning shield scattering sparks ran across the sky." (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book II, Chap. XXXIV.)

66 B.C. "In the consulship of Gnaeus Octavius and Gaius Suetonius a spark was seen to fall from a star and increase in size as it approached the earth and after becoming as large as the moon it diffused a sort of cloudy daylight and then returning to the sky changed into a torch. This is the only record of its occurrence. It was seen by the proconsul Silenus and his suite." (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book II, Chap. XXXV.)

42 B.C. "In Rome light shone so brightly at nightfall that people got up to begin work as though day had dawned. At Murtino three suns were seen about the third hour of the day, which presently drew together into a single orb." (Obsequens, Chap. CXXX.)

► His first choice places in 222 B.C. a prodigy of three moons happening during the consulship of "Gnaeus Domitius and Gaius Fannius." That consulship in fact happens in 122 B.C.

► Arpi is included in an entry dated 218 B.C. It actually happened in either 217 B.C. or 216 B.C. depending on if you prefer dating it via the solar eclipse visible from Italy on February 11, 216 B.C. in the same list of prodigies, or via the 217 B.C. consulship of Servilius mentioned a few lines earlier in the relevant text.

► Drake writes, "At Arpi a shield in the sky." The correct translation is shields plural.

► Drake places a prodigy of light at night at Ariminum in 213 B.C. It should have been 223 B.C.

► A prodigy in Praeneste is in the 218 B.C. entry and described by Drake as glowing lamps. It is more properly set in 217 B.C. or 216 B.C. and translated as a shower of red-hot stones

► The date of the Hadria prodigy of an altar in the sky is given as 214 B.C. by Drake. It was actually set in 213 B.C.

► At 175 B.C., Drake sets "Three suns shone at the same time. That night several stars glided across the sky at Lanuvium." Before Obsequens, Pliny speaks of three suns at the same time during the consulship of Sp. Postumius and L. Mucius, [174 B.C.].

► Livy Book 42, also earlier, actually reads, "At Lanuvium the sight of a great fleet had been witnessed in the heavens." The initial line in book 42 gives Lucius Postumius Albinus & Popillius Laenas as consuls bringing matters before the Senate, thus the proper setting was 173 B.C. Thus, too, the three suns and the heavenly fleet happen in different years.

► Drake's entry for 122 B.C. reads, "In Gaul three suns and three moons were seen." (Obsequens, Ch. 42) While Obsequens does indeed say that, he misses that Obsequens had misread Pliny who said there were only three moons, but they termed such prodigies "nocturnal suns."

► For 85 B.C., Drake writes, "In the consulship of Lucius Valerius and Gaius Marius a burning shield scattering sparks ran across the sky." (Pliny, *Natural History*, Book II, Chap. XXXIV) Chris Aubeck & Jacques Vallee in *Wonders in the Sky* can be credited for correctly

realizing these consuls served instead in 100 B.C.

► For 66 B.C., Drake writes, "In the consulship of Gnaeus Octavius and Gaius Suetonius..." The correct year was 76 B.C. when the consuls were Gnaeus Octavius and Gaius Scribonius Curio. There is no Suetonius.



► Drake speaks of a proconsul named Silenus. Translations of Pliny give you 'Licinius Syllanus' or 'Sillanus' with an 'a'. Silenus is actually the name of a sea-god who arose from some drops of blood of Uranus and was notorious for usually being drunk, but having a gift of prophecy in that condition.

► In the 42 B.C. entry he writes of a place named Murtino. Mutinensi, the term seen in the Latin original, is a province in Italy. Modena is the modern name of the capital in English. There are multiple acceptable renderings of the name, but Drake got it wrong.

Drake followed this piece with "UFOs in Ancient Times" Fate, volume 17, December 1964 and a book Gods & Spacemen (1964). While one might expect the 1964 book to incorporate his FSR research, in fact it does not. Only a couple of minor bits of Roman history are present. He wrote several other mass market paperbacks which rode the wave of popularity of Erich von Däniken's work. I have three of them and none recycled his FSR research. His 1976 work Gods and Spacemen in Greece and Rome: Ancient Astronauts and the Advancement of Human Civilization seems likely to have advanced the work based on snippets I've seen on the Amazon page selling it, but I have not acquired it. I cannot say definitively he made no modifications elsewhere, but, if so, I do not have firsthand acquaintance with it. No matter, we next move to a second work.

This second instance of Roman-ufo historiography is by Dr. Raymond Bernard.<sup>2</sup> You can find it in the 1969 Dell 'Library of Mystic Arts' paperback reprint of The Hollow Earth. After the chapter "Conclusion," a new chapter has been tacked onto this reprint (first version: 1964) bearing the title "UFOs or Flying Saucers in Ancient Times... Did Super Beings from Outer Space Ever Visit Earth? Classical Writers Reported So." Though he never mentions Drake's name, it is demonstrably based on his work. Nine of the 18 quotes assembled from classical writers come from Drake's select list of 10 cases. All Drake's errors associated with those nine are repeated by Bernard - the mis-datings, mis-spellings, and mis-translations, except for one correction. Bernard correctly says the Ariminium prodigy happened in 223 B.C., not, as Drake said, in 213 B.C. One entry is identical to the quote of Cicero that Drake had at the top of his FSR piece and Bernard dates to "B.C.?" A second Cicero quote copies from a line within the FSR article that discusses Gods appearing before man. Bernard also gives the same numbers as Drake for how many celestial phenomena had been found in the works of 5 classical writers.

What is new? Bernard adds a third Cicero quote, one talking of the Fauns, Castor & Pollux. He adds items about a great fissure in the sky seen at Falerii 217 B.C.; events in 163 B.C. at Capua, Formice, Cephalania, and Pisarum; events in 48 B.C. involving Caesar & Pompey. He also extends the list forward in time to items A.D. They involve a Josephus quote involving Chariots in the Sky seen 70 A.D. Can one ignore the possibility that the emerging popularity of von Däniken's Chariots of the Gods inspired this selection? Next, three stars seen near the Sun seen 193 A.D. from the front of the Senate house. Third and final, a 'Spirit' that led an ass up to the Capitol in 217 A.D. These new items bring with them more problems.

► Fauns, Castor & Pollux date to the Battle of Sagra which current scholarship leans to thinking happened c. 580-576 B.C., not 498 B.C. as Bernard did.

► It is okay to date the Falerii fissure in the sky to 217 B.C., but it is idiosyncratic to have it separate from the events at Arpi, Praeneste and Amiterno which were all grouped together in Livy. The reason seems to be that Drake disregarded the prodigy at Falerii in his listing of the events of 218 B.C. [actually 217 B.C. or 216 B.C.] but Bernard chose to think it is ufo-related. They should, in principle, all bear the same date, but he doesn't bother to make it consistent.

► In the events of 163 B.C. is mentioned there was a rain of earth and the arrangement of text implies it is at Cephalania. Is this a garbling of "At Gabiae it rained milk" which is part of the translation I found or has he inserted this from a different prodigy list, like "The Tusculans reported, that a shower of earth fell in their country" in Livy 41, 3 during the consulship Lucius Cornelius Scipio and Caius Laelius of 190 B.C.?

► The 48 B.C. item includes one from the prodigy list in Dio Cassius reading "in Syria two young men announced the result of the battle and vanished." That is accurate, but is it relevant to the fire that fell in Pompey's camp? Why is that more related to ufos than the other prodigies listed? It looks idiosyncratic.

► For 70 A.D. Bernard writes, "On the 21st of May a demonic phantom of incredible size..." More conventional translations give instead "there appeared a miraculous phenomenon, passing belief" (Thackeray of the Loeb Classical Library, 1961) or "certain prodigious and incredible phenomenon" (William Whiston, 1737) I regard Bernard's version as a mistranslation; charitably, it is idiosyncratic.

It is also odd that Bernard says nothing of the context of the 70 A.D. prodigy being soon after the de-

s.c. 498: Visitation  
"... Castor and Pollux were seen fighting in our army on horseback . . . Nor do we forget that when the Locrisians defeated the people of Crotona in a battle on the banks of the river Sagra, it was known the same day at the Olympian Games. The voices of the Fauns have been heard and deities have appeared in forms so visible that they have compelled everyone who is not senseless or hardened to inquiry to confess the presence of the Gods."  
—Cicero, Of the nature of the Gods, Book I, Ch. 2  
s.c. 325: Visitation  
"There in the stillness of the night both consuls are said to have been visited by the same apparition, a man of greater than human stature, and more majestic, who declared that the commander of one side and the army of the other must be offered up to the Manes and to Mother Earth."  
—Livy, History, Book VIII, Ch. 11  
s.c. 223: Bright Light, Three Moons  
"At Ariminum a bright light like the day blazed out at night; in many portions of Italy three moons became visible in the night time."  
—Dio Cassius, Roman History, Book I  
s.c. 222: Three Moons  
"Also three moons have appeared at once, for instance, in the consulship of Inevius Domitius and Gaius Fannius."  
—Pliny, Natural History, Book II, Ch. 32  
s.c. 218: The Sky Is Filled  
"In the district of Amiterno in many places were seen the appearance of men in white garments from far away. The orb of the sun grew smaller. At Praeneste glowing lumps from heaven. At Arpi a shield in the sky. The moon contended with the sun and during the night two moons were seen. Phantom ships appeared in the sky."  
—Livy, History, Books XXI-XXII  
s.c. 217: Fissure in the Sky  
"At Falerii the sky had seemed to rent as it were with a great fissure and through the opening a bright light had shone."  
—Livy, History, Book XXII, Ch. 1  
s.c. 214: Men and Altar  
"At Hadria an altar was seen in the sky and about it the forms of men in white clothes."  
—Julius Obsequens, Prodigiorum Libellus, Ch. 66  
s.c. 163: An Extra Sun  
"In the consulship of Tiberius Gracchus and Marcus Junius at Capua the sun was seen by night. At Formice two suns were seen by day. The sky was afire. In Cephalania a trumpet seemed to sound from the sky. There was a rain of earth. A windstorm demolished houses and laid crops flat in the field. By night an apparent sun shone at Vassurum."  
—Obsequens, Prodigiorum  
s.c. 122: Three Suns, Three Moons  
"In Gaul three suns and three moons were seen."  
—Obsequens, Prodigiorum, Ch. 114  
s.c. 91: Gold Fireball  
"Near Spoletium a gold-colored fireball rolled down to the ground, increased in size, seemed to move off the ground toward the east and was big enough to blot out the sun."  
—Obsequens, Prodigiorum, Ch. 114  
s.c. 85: Burning Shield, Sparks  
"In the consulship of Lucius Valerius and Caius Marcius a burning shield scattering sparks ran across the sky."  
—Pliny, Natural History, Book II, Ch. 34  
s.c. 66: From Spark to Torch  
"In the consulship of Gnaeus Octavius and Gaius Suetonius a spark was seen to fall from a star and increase in size as it approached the earth. After becoming as large as the moon it diffused a sort of cloudy daylight and then returning to the sky changed into a torch. This is the only record of its occurrence. It was seen by the praetor Silenus and his suite."  
—Pliny, Natural History, Book II, Ch. 35  
s.c. 48: Thunderbolt, Visitation  
"Thunderbolts had fallen upon Pompey's camp. A fire had appeared in the air over Caesar's camp and had fallen upon Pompey's . . . In Syria two young men announced the result of the battle (in Thessaly) and vanished."  
—Dio Cassius, Roman History, Book IV  
s.c. 42: Night Light, Three Suns  
"In Rome light shone so brightly at nightfall that people got up to begin work as though day had dawned. At Murtino three suns were seen about the third hour of the day, which presently drew together in a single orb."  
—Obsequens, Prodigiorum, Ch. 110  
s.c. 7: Suns, Moons, Globes  
"How often has our Senate enjoined the decemvirs to consult the books of the Sibyl! For instance, when two suns had been seen or when three moons had appeared and when flames of fire were noticed in the sky; or on that other occasion when the sun was beheld in the night, when noises were heard in the sky, and the heaven itself seemed to burst open, and strange globes were remarked in it."  
—Cicero, On Divination, Book I, Ch. 43  
s.c. 70: Chariots in the Sky  
"On the 21st of May a demonic phantom of incredible size . . . For before sunset there appeared in the air over the whole country chariots and armed troops coursing through the clouds and surrounding the cities."  
—Josephus, Jewish War, Book XXI  
s.c. 193: Three New Stars  
". . . three stars . . . suddenly came into view surrounding the sun, when Emperor Julius in our presence was offering the Sacrifice of Entrance in front of the Senate House. These stars were so very distinct that the soldiers kept continually looking at them and pointing them out to mother . . ."  
—Dio Cassius, Roman History, Book LXXIV  
s.c. 217: Visitation  
"In Rome, moreover, a 'Spirit' having the appearance of a man led an ass up to the Capitol and afterwards to the palace seeking its master as he claimed and stating that Antoninus was dead and Jupiter was now Emperor. Upon being arrested for this and sent by Maternianus to Antoninus he said, 'I go as you bid but I shall face not this emperor but another.' And when he reached Capua he vanished."  
—Dio Cassius, Roman History  
The above references are only a sampling of the evidence available. Consider just five writers: Julius Obsequens recorded 63 celestial phenomena; Livy, 30; Pliny, 26; Dio Cassius, 14; Cicero, 9.

struction of the Temple of Jerusalem, a major event in Jewish history.

► In the 217 B.C. apparitional prodigy, Bernard breaks off Dio Cassius before he adds that Antoninus was not dead as the 'Spirit' said, but that he soon would be and then replaced as emperor by Macrinus who was a "Moor by birth, from Caesarea, and the son of most obscure parents, so that he was very appropriately likened to the ass that was led up to the palace by the spirit; in particular, one of his ears had been bored in accordance with the custom followed by most of the Moors." Leaving that out deprives the story of its dramatic character as prophecy and merely seems silly and vulgar. Not too surprisingly, this last item quickly drops away, appearing on only one ufo chronology: <https://thefactisblog.wordpress.com/tag/sumerians/> - a strict copyist of Bernard's list.

**A**nother short list of Roman era ufos is compiled in UFO Trek (1976) by Warren Smith.<sup>3</sup> Its distinctive feature is that the quotes are all plucked from Harold Wilkins' *Flying Saucers on the Attack*, and adopts his mid-datings and idiosyncrasies.<sup>4</sup>

To the canon of errors, this list adds:

► Ariminum prodigy incorrectly dated to 222 B.C. It should be 223 B.C.

► Arpi, Capua, and ships over Italy prodigies misdated to 216 B.C.

► Idiosyncratic inclusion of a prodigy of sheep enveloped in flames yet unhamed. No obvious relevance to UFO phenomena.

► A new entry about "a weapon or missile rose with a great noise from the earth and soared into the sky" is wrongly set in 42 B.C. It should be 43 B.C. The translation's phrasing is different from others and the first account of it by Appian would not support this interpretation. This addition is unusually popular in later UFO chronologies.

► A prodigy of a light that made people wake for work too early is misdated to 41 B.C. The consuls prove it was 42 B.C. Drake got it right in his list.

Wilkins also made an error that did not appear in Smith's list:

- B.C. 170: "At Lanupium (on the Appian Way, 16 miles from Rome, a remarkable spectacle of a fleet of ships was seen in the air (classis magna species in coelo visae.)"<sup>5</sup>

It was picked up by Gordon Evans in 1968<sup>6</sup>, then Peter Brookesmith in 1995<sup>7</sup>, but most significantly by Rense.com in 1999 who rendered it in this form

- 170 BC:

From Conrad Wolfhart, Lycophenes (Medieval reporter/writer) "At Lanupium, a remarkable spectacle of a fleet of ships was seen in the air."<sup>8</sup>

The error is that Lanupium does not exist, but is a mis-spelling of Lanuvium. If you google "Lanupium" you will get 8 pages of results and every single result involves ufos. Nearly every instance had it in entries on ufo chronologies. Nobody outside of ufo culture ever uses the word Lanupium.<sup>9</sup>

Frank Edwards made an error concerning Alexander the Great being attacked by ufos which made it into more recent ufo chronologies.

Early in the new millennium, two more Roman era prodigies were added to ufo chronologies. Their errors are:

► An ungrammatical, unsourced misquoting of Cassius Dio's Roman History that was identified correctly as a comet, not 'comet-like' as the entry says. It is a description of Halley's comet whose orbit guarantees it was in the sky in 12 B.C. and was better documented in Chinese records.

► A flame-like body shaped like large wine-jar falling between two armies that is mis-dated to 73 B.C. It should be 74 B.C. Though unsourced in the entry, it is from Plutarch's *Lives*.

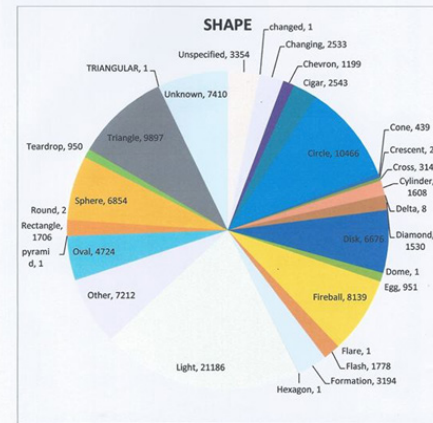
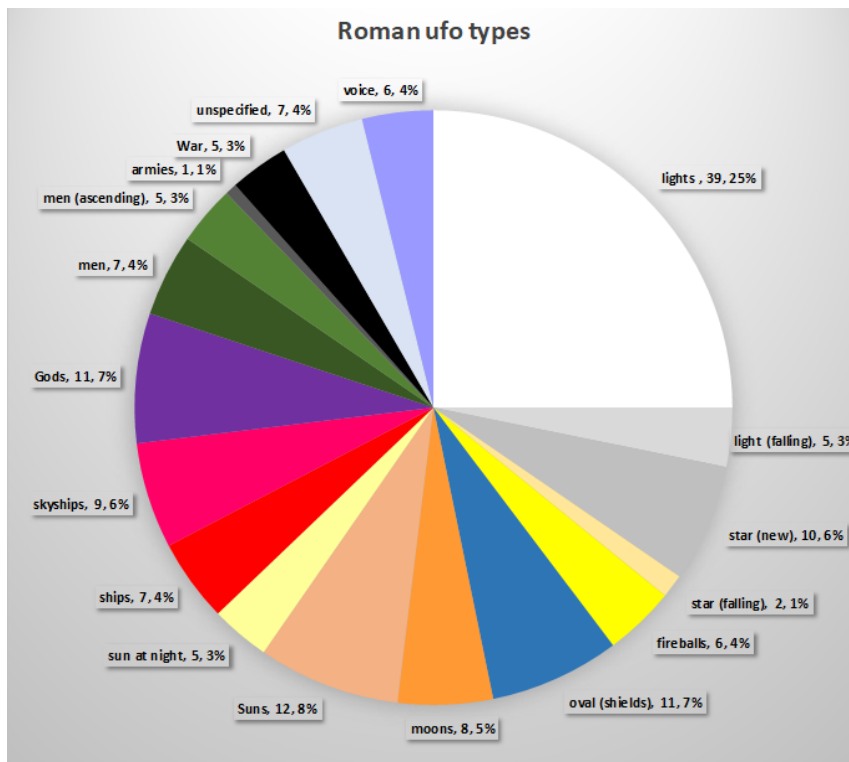
**I**tally this as 29 errors. Admittedly one could make the list longer or shorter by separating or adding items, but however you slice it, the subject has been rife with misinformation. These lists ultimately became a pool of contaminated knowledge that later writers and web ufo histories dipped into. Stephen Spignesi, as one example, in his *UFO Book of Lists* (2000) has a list of "15 UFO Sightings and Extraterrestrial Visitations before the Birth of Christ"<sup>10</sup> that is easily proven to be wholly taken from Raymond Bertrand's list in *The Hollow Earth* just from the many distinctive errors in it.

#### Notes and references

1. W.R. Drake, "UFOs over Ancient Rome, *Flying Saucer Review*, volume 9, #1 (January-February 1963), p. 11-13. Available WWW: <http://www.ignaciodarnaude.com/ufologia/FSR,1963,Jan-Feb,V%209,N%201.pdf>
2. Actually Walter Siegmeister, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter\\_Siegmeister](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Siegmeister)
3. Also a Hollow Earth devote, see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren\\_Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Smith) (author)
4. Harold T. Wilkins, *Flying Saucers on the Attack*, Ace Books / Citadel Press, 1967 edition of 1954, p. 164
5. The side-by-side comparisons are discussed here: Mrherr Zaar, "WARREN SMITH's ROMAN UFO LIST DERIVES FROM HAROLD

WILKINS," December 5, 2018: Available WWW: <https://www.facebook.com/la.wan.3538/posts/2207189419523310>

6. Gordon H. Evans, "UFOs in History and Myth," in *Science & Mechanics, The Official Guide to UFOs*, Ace 1968, p. 128
7. Peter Brookesmith *UFO: The Complete Sightings*, Barnes & Noble, 1995, pp. 15-16
8. "UFOs Through The Ages...A Timeline This Is No Contemporary Phenomena! 9-21-99 Available WWW: <https://rense.com/ufo4/historyofufo.htm>
9. Mrherr Zaar, "DOWN WITH LANUPIUM," November 13 at 9:08 AM Available WWW: <https://www.facebook.com/la.wan.3538/posts/2194014674174118>
10. Stephen Spignesi, *UFO Book of Lists*, Kensington Publishing, 2000, pp. 106-8.



This first Chart is a pie chart version of NUFORC's page listing all the shapes found in its database and the numbers in each category.

<http://www.nuforc.org/webreports/ndxshape.html>

There may be some pedagogical value in knowing how large the number of cases are that are incredibly vague - unspecified, unknown, changed, changing, light, flash, flare, formation, other. For me, I consider them a nuisance and I am going to toss them out because I want to know the ratios of those cases having shapes attributed to them. I give this chart just to be above board that this is what the original NUFORC data page for shapes looked like.

### Shapes of UFOs in NUFORC

See: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=1723904764518447&set=pcb.1723909834517940&type=3&theater>

I offer the observation that the pie charts show Roman era ufos have different distributions of descriptive terms and shapes than one will see in NUFORC database. For those who think the ufo phenomenon is the same in ancient times as it is in modern times, this suggests some parsing needs to be done about what is meant in saying there was a ufo phenomenon back in Roman times.



## MORE BLUE BOOK MOON IFDS

Herb Taylor has once again contacted me with some additional cases he found in the Blue Book files, where the moon was used as an explanation. As a result, I wanted to add to the lists I produced in SUNlite 10-5 and 10-6.

These are the additional cases mentioned by Herb in an e-mail in April 2019<sup>1</sup>:

Date	Location	Comment
5/4/1949	Limona, FL	Agreed
8/20/1949	Llano, TX	Agreed
5/31/1957	Terra Haute, IN	Agreed
7/26/1960	Monticello, IL	Agreed
6/16/1961	Dayton, OH	Agreed
7/12/1964	San Antonio, TX	Agreed
7/31/1965	Elmhurst, IL	Agreed
2/15-16/1966	Greenville, OH	Insufficient information/unreliable report. Witness did not know exact date and referenced it as being a certain week in February. She wrote her letter to the USAF on March 23rd. It could have been the moon if the date was a few days earlier than she remembered.
4/8/1966	Ellenville, NY	Agreed
7/30/1966	Coldwater, OH	Agreed
9/22-24/1966	Spring Valley, OH	Agreed
5/26/1967	Dayton, OH	Agreed
5/27/1967	Kirksville, MO	Agreed
11/5/1967	Farmersville, OH	Agreed
8/31/1968	Hamilton, OH	Agreed

### Notes and references

1. Taylor, Herb. E-mail to author. 4/13/2019