

UFO INVESTIGATOR

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON
NICAP AERIAL PHENOMENA

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Maryland Reports Rash of UFO Sightings

A five-county area in central Maryland has been under close scrutiny by NICAP investigators recently, following a rash of UFO sightings during the last five months of 1971.

At least 12 separate sightings, many of them by multiple witnesses, occurred between Aug. 1 and Dec. 31. This is an unusually high number for the state, which is not normally an active source of UFO reports.

Of equal interest is the fact that most of them occurred within 30 miles of each other; three of these within five miles of each other. Here is a breakdown of some of the more interesting cases on a town-by-town basis:

WESTMINSTER

Report of an egg-shaped UFO with two rows of colored lights on its underside was received around 10:30 p.m., Aug. 1, by state police at Westminster, Maryland.

Charles P. Kenyon, 39, of New Windsor, Md., had driven his wife and their four children to a location outside Westminster to observe a violent thunder and lightning storm then in progress.

Kenyon and his wife observed the object for a total of 20 minutes as it maneuvered about the rural countryside. The outline of the object, including a pulsating amber light on top and a bubble-like protrusion at one end, was seen clearly, according to Kenyon, thanks to lightning flashes every few seconds.

At one point, the UFO passed within 3,000 feet of Kenyon's vehicle at an altitude of 200-300 feet. The object emitted for a few seconds a high whine, similar to an air conditioning unit, during one of its passes. Just before disappearing, the UFO was observed to turn on what appeared to be a white landing beacon to search the ground below.

The sighting, still unexplained, was investigated by NICAP's Capital Area Subcommittee, chaired by astronomer John Carlson.

FRIZZELLBURG

One week later, James Key, of Frizzellburg, Maryland (near Westminster), reported observing a bright, disc-shaped UFO at approximately 8:15 p.m. August 8.

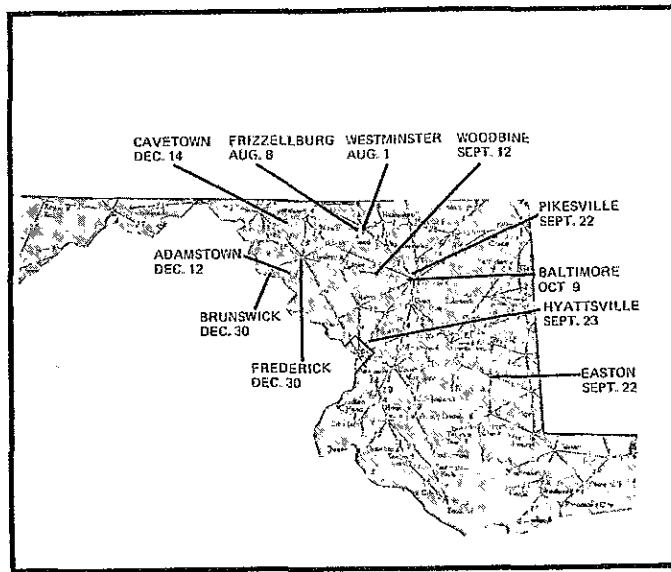
According to Key, at least 20 persons gathered for a family picnic at his home witnessed the UFO. The object, emitting "a lot of light," was observed for at least ten minutes by his guests as it traversed a path from north to south towards Frizzellburg, then west towards Thurmont, Maryland.

Key estimated the speed of the craft at about 200 miles per hour. The case is still under investigation.

WOODBINE

On Sept. 12 around 9 p.m. at least five witnesses in Woodbine, Md. (about 20 miles south of Westminster), reported observing a large, dark object with four lights moving slowly in the sky above this semi-rural area.

At least two of the witnesses reported a "humming" sound coming from the UFO and a beam of light that seemed to switch on and off. Investigation by NICAP headquarters



determined that the Goodyear blimp had been in the Woodbine area at the time of the sighting, en route from New Jersey to Washington, D.C.

PIKESVILLE-EASTON

Two UFO sightings were reportedly made Sept. 22 by Maryland state troopers located in two different sections of the state. Both cases are still under study, but it is known one of the sightings occurred early in the morning near Pikesville, Md., northwest of Baltimore.

The second sighting that day occurred around 8 p.m. when two state troopers and two game wardens observed what one of the wardens described as a buff or cream-colored light with a red light and a green light which rotated about it in the sky near Easton.

Another object of similar shape and size was soon spotted in the same vicinity. Both objects were in view for at least three hours. Officials at nearby Dover Air Force Base, informed of the sighting, reported they had picked up one unidentified object on radar.

HYATTSVILLE

An object described as a "saucer with three legs and windows" was sighted near Hyattsville, Md. (outside of Washington, D.C.), one evening in late September. This case has been investigated and closed. The object in question was identified as a single-engine advertising plane being used in that vicinity on the night in question.

BALTIMORE

A "cigar-shaped or possibly circular" object with 16 to 20 lights around its periphery was observed around 9 p.m. in the

(See Maryland Sightings, page 3)

A Well Known Writer Wonders Aloud

Are We Getting All The Facts About Mars?

by Wells Alan Webb

The piecemeal release of photos and other data from the Mariner 9 space probe has puzzled people who had hoped for quick answers to fundamental questions about the planet Mars. Some wonder if the full returns of the Mariners will ever reach the public. People ask, "Why hasn't the orbiting satellite shown the kind of details that telescope astronomers have been reporting for nearly a century? What has become of the work done by prominent observers whose maps of Mars show the surface to be covered with a network of lines and dark green, interconnecting bands?"

Echos of an old controversy are heard; this is the debate over the presence or absence of the famous Martian canals. The question is significant, not only to the historian of science, but to those who have analyzed the pattern made by the canals and reported the pattern to resemble a world-wide communication system rather than any known work of inorganic nature.

We can compare the return of significant data by Mariner probes with the rate of progress made in past years by telescope observers. The Italian astronomer Schiaparelli, who gave the dark lines their name, "canalli", regarded them as water channels. He had studied the planet over a decade before he announced their discovery in 1877. Later, Lowell, Slipher, Tombaugh, Trumpler and others studied the planet through several seasonal cycles, reporting that the canals are visible only during the Martian spring and summer, and are more prominent in the southern hemisphere than in the northern hemisphere of Mars. Observational results depend upon the turn of the seasons, and no sophisticated method can return full information unless it can stay on the job for long periods of time.

If a probe flies by Mars and sends pictures to Earth, or if it lingers in orbit about the planet but is productive for only a few weeks, what will it miss? The answer is that it may miss the canals entirely, for they are visible in their fully developed state for only a short period.

The sequence of canal development starts in the springtime when a polar cap is presented to the sun, and the diameter of the white cap starts to shrink. A dark ring then appears around the rim

Mr. Webb is a research chemist and aerospace engineer who has written extensively on Mars. His best known work, *Mars, the New Frontier*, published in 1956, deals with the Lowellian canal theory. He presently lives in California, where he works as a technical consultant to various industrial companies.



An unexpected feature on the Martian surface is this sinuous valley photographed by Mariner 9 from 1666 kilometers (1033 miles) during the spacecraft's 133rd revolution of the planet. The valley, some 400 kilometers (250 miles) long and 5 to 6 (3 to 3½ miles) wide in this photo resembles a giant version of an Earth "arroyo"—a watercut gully found frequently in the mountainous southwestern United States. Scientists believe, however, that not nearly enough water exists in the Martian atmosphere to allow formation of rivers. Mariner 9 infrared spectral data, as well as Earth-based instruments, show very little water on Mars at the present time. The Martian valleys also resemble sinuous rills on the Earth's moon believed to be associated with lava flows. However, no lunar rills display the branching tributaries seen in the Martian valleys.

of the polar cap. Next, canals grow out of this ring and lengthen until they cross the equator. By mid-summer, the intricate cross-connections of canals with oases (interconnecting points) appear. With oncoming fall and winter, dark green areas turn to gray or brown, and most of the canals disappear.

Some scientists have reasoned that the ring about the polar cap is moistened soil. The moisture comes from winds made humid while passing off the evap-

orating polar cap. Mariner results give support to this theory by revealing high humidity in portions of the Martian atmosphere. Telescope astronomers were surprised when a Mariner survey reported 90% carbon dioxide (much higher than previous estimates) in the atmosphere. It is clear that though the polar caps may be principally carbon dioxide in the solid state, nevertheless a substantial percentage of water crystals must also be present in the frosty cover.

When this layer of mixed composition is exposed to warmth by the sun's rays, a fractionation must occur in which carbon dioxide sublimates at a more rapid rate than water crystals, and the latter cannot enter the atmosphere until a higher temperature is reached. Over the lowlands, the total atmospheric pressure is well above the triple-point of water. This means that water as frost and as liquid can exist together on the Martian surface, in equilibrium with a humid atmosphere. The condensation and fall of water crystals (snow) can occur at night when the atmosphere is humid and the temperature is sharply reduced. In the daytime, when the ground warms, some of the frost sublimates, and a portion melts to liquid water that moistens the dry soil, darkening it. An astronomer who has watched the development of greenish color over dark areas, has reported evidence of C-H bonds, typical of light reflected by growing plants. Unfortunately, some of these observations are inconclusive and we must look to the Mariner satellites to clear up this uncertainty.

Thus a Mars lander might quickly determine the presence of plants and animals if it surveyed the landscape with the type of television cameras that have been used on the Moon. On the other hand, the lander might hit upon a barren area and report no life forms visible when such forms might be just over the horizon or otherwise out of range of the camera. To get a more certain assay of biological conditions on the surface of Mars, a bio-analyzer will be used on the first lander. This will operate on the assumption that if life is present in any form, it must surely exist on the surface as bacteria for which tests can be made by devices on the spacecraft.

Scientists do not encourage the hope that orbiting satellites or Mars landers will quickly confirm or refute observations and theories of Earth-based astronomers. Rather, the new probes will return new and novel information that will take long periods to digest. We have all seen newspaper photos of the Martian surface.

(See Mars Facts, page 4)

Maryland Sightings On Increase

(Continued from page 1)

sky west of Baltimore. The object appeared to be moving quite slow, "20 to 30 miles per hour," during the time of observation (*UFO Investigator*, November 1971). An advertising plane is the suspected cause of the report, but this has not been confirmed.

ADAMSTOWN

Three bright lights that appeared to hover for several minutes at a height of 1,000 feet were reportedly seen the evening of Dec. 2 by three 17-year-old youths near Adamstown, Md. See the *UFO Investigator*, Dec. 71, for further details.

CAVETOWN

Several residents of Cavetown, Md. (near Hagerstown), including a Maryland state trooper and a college professor, reported seeing a large bright light circling over Holiday Acres, a local subdivision, Dec. 14, around 11:45 p.m. The object has been reported by local residents on several occasions, and is usually seen around 11 p.m. The object appears to circle the area, changing speeds and sometimes hovering in one place.

No satisfactory explanation for the sightings has been found, despite interviews by NICAP investigators.

BRUNSWICK

A bright light that appeared to hover for several minutes above some power lines located a quarter-mile off the road was observed around 7 p.m., Dec. 30 near Brunswick, Md. The UFO, according to the witness, was bright enough to light up the surrounding area, but went out as an aircraft flew overhead.

A similar sighting, but lacking in detail, was reported the same evening by a husband and wife living outside of Brunswick.

FREDERICK

A large glowing object and eight smaller ones were spotted later that same evening (Dec. 30), near Frederick, Md. (about 15 miles east of Brunswick), by at least three witnesses. One of the witnesses, employed by a local radio station, was making a delivery for the station around 9:30 p.m. when she observed two red lights, at first thought to be those of an airplane. The lights suddenly seemed to fly apart, then approach each other, rising vertically at the last moment. At that point, according to the witness, a "large, brilliant, blue-white light" was observed (to the right of the moon's position) along with other smaller red lights maneuvering independently at "fantastic" speeds.

A truck driver, stopping to see if the

Ohio UFO Mystery Solved

Alliance, Ohio, a city that bills itself as "A Growing City on the Go," quickened its pace last November with a report of a UFO that allegedly crashed into and destroyed by fire a small wooden shed in the town.

Interest in the UFO case was heightened soon after with the discovery of a "mysterious" substance found in the smoldering remains of the shed.

NICAP, encouraged by numerous enquiries and newspaper headlines proclaiming "UFO Suspected as 'Culprit' in Shed Blaze Here," investigated the incident. NICAP member David B. Webb, formerly a resident of Alliance, returned to his home on a visit and submitted the following report:

Numerous citizens of Alliance, Ohio reported a "fiery object or objects" flash through the southern sky over Alliance during the evening of Nov. 4.

At least ten witnesses reported seeing the object, with seven of the ten placing the time at between 8:15 and 8:17 p.m. Two witnesses reported that the object appeared to crash within 100 yards of their location, near an abandoned storage shed.

At 8:59 p.m. the Alliance Fire Department received a report of a fire that had just broken out in the vicinity of the shed. The AFD arrived at 9:05 and quickly extinguished the fire.

Investigation of the smoldering remains turned up a strange substance later described as "a lump of grey dough." This prompted speculation that a UFO had crashed into the shed.

Although a definite cause for the fire was never determined, five youths were questioned by police later that evening after evidence was uncovered indicating they had been near the shed a short time prior to the fire. After questioning, the youths were released.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

One of the facts uncovered by Webb regarded the discrepancy in time between the sighting of the fiery object over Alliance and the subsequent shed fire.

witness (who had parked her car on the side of the road to observe the UFO) was in trouble, also observed the lights after they were pointed out by the woman.

The woman then drove down the road to a telephone booth, hoping to report what she had seen. When she arrived, two men were already there, trying to report the lights to the police. One man, after talking a few minutes, stormed out of the booth and said to the woman,

"They told me to take two aspirins and go home to bed."

A majority of witnesses to the object placed the time of their sighting at between 8:15 and 8:17 p.m., at least 40 minutes before the first fire alarm was logged.

In addition, notes Webb in his report, at least two reliable witnesses located south of the shed, indicated the object passed through the sky south of their location.

Although descriptions of the object suggest it could have been a fireball, Webb learned that a local high school rally, including a fireworks display, was conducted the night of the sighting within a quarter-mile of the shed. The rally began at approximately 8 p.m.

The "mysterious" substance, following an investigation by the AFD and the Babcock and Wilcox Research Center in Alliance, was identified as a magnesium-aluminum alloy. When fire officials later determined that a metal dolly had been stored in the shed prior to the fire, they concluded the "lump of grey dough" was in fact the remains of the dolly.

Summarizing the case, Webb concluded:

1. The cause of the fire is unknown. Arson, however, is a strong possibility.
2. No "mysterious" substance now exists.
3. The difference of at least 40 minutes between the sighting of the UFO and the subsequent fire at the shed indicates there is no likely correlation between the two events.
4. The UFO was probably a fireball, but might have been associated with the fireworks display.

Bulletin

As this issue went to press, NASA released the following findings from its Mariner 9 photo-reconnaissance mission of Mars, still in progress (see story, page 2):

- Comparative studies between Mariner 9 data and Earth-based observations indicate a "need to reinterpret the classic telescopic photographs of Mars."

- So-called "canals" of Mars "categorically do not exist." They are probably quasi-alignments of spotted features on Martian terrain.

- Possibility of life on Mars is "enormously improved" by discovery of water vapor and surface features that indicate water may have existed in liquid state.

- Mars is "dynamic, evolving planet," with dust storms, violent winds, volcanic piles, and areas of erosion.



MEMOS
FOR
MEMBERS

UFO INDICES AVAILABLE

NICAP's Connecticut Affiliate still has a small supply of indices available for the first three volumes of the *UFO Investigator*. To order them, write the Affiliate at 9 Hiram Lane, Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002, and enclose fifty cents. For information on back issues of the newsletter, see the June 1971 issue, page 4.

NICAP RECEIVES GIFT OF STOCK

For the first time in its history, NICAP has received a large donation in the form of stock certificates. Given by a NICAP member in Massachusetts, the securities are 90 shares of common stock in Chesebrough-Ponds, Inc., worth approximately \$5,000. Chesebrough-Ponds manufactures an extensive line of cosmetic and health products, including Ponds Beauty Cream. NICAP is exceedingly grateful for this donation and plans to hold it in reserve.

CORRECTION

In our August 1971 issue, we said the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) had published the first of a series of "UFO Encounters" in its July journal. We should have said its July magazine *Astronautics and Aeronautics*. Our apologies to those members who searched the AIAA journal in vain for the referenced article. The journal and magazine are two different publications.

YULETIDE THANKS

To all the thoughtful members who sent us Christmas cards this holiday, we offer our warmest appreciation and the wish that your new year will be the happiest yet. We received so many cards, we almost ran out of space to display them.

DONATIONS ARE DEDUCTIBLE

If you made a donation to NICAP in 1971, remember you can deduct it on your income return for that year. All donations, including tangible property of provable value, are deductible. Please note, however, that membership dues are not.

CALENDAR COMING UP

As we promised in the September issue, we are preparing a special calendar on UFOs for NICAP members. Our original intention was to make it part of the newsletter, starting with this issue. We now plan to make it a separate item, mailed with the newsletter beginning next month.

newsnotes

SPACE EAR TO SEEK ETI

In approximately 30 months, the yawning face of the radiotelescope near Arecibo, Puerto Rico, will look skyward for phenomena "we cannot even begin to predict," says Arecibo director Dr. Frank D. Drake. Currently undergoing extensive revamping to upgrade its monitoring capability, the telescope is a 1000-foot antenna stretched across a natural sinkhole in the humpback hills south of Arecibo. When the modifications are completed, the telescope will be able to reach the outer limits of the known universe with its sensing system. Projects scheduled for the device include mapping of Jupiter and Venus, and searching for organic molecules in intergalactic space.

The listening program will be part of an international effort to search for signs of extraterrestrial life (*UFO Investigator*, September 1971).

SAGA NOTES NICAP'S "ACCESS"

Saga magazine's "Science Scope" last month took note of NICAP's computer study, Project ACCESS (Automated Clearinghouse for Collection and Exchange of Sighting Statistics). The monthly column noted the possible resurgence of sightings in 1972, and said NICAP, in anticipation, is moving to "coordinate existing information" so that data can be "made available to interested parties."

AIAA RUNS SECOND "ENCOUNTER"

For the second time, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) has published a detailed account of a UFO sighting "to give...reader(s) a flavor of the observational...material which underlies the UFO controversy." Entitled "UFO Encounter II," the account appears in the September 1971 issue of the AIAA monthly magazine *Astronautics and Aeronautics*. The case selected is the bizarre series of incidents at Lakenheath and Bentwaters, England, on the night of August 13, 1956, involving radar, ground observer, and airborne contacts with unknown objects. The account was written by Dr. Gordon D. Thayer, former scientist with the Colorado Project, who calls the case "one of the strangest and most disturbing radar-visual UFO episodes on record." In introducing the report, the AIAA says, "We hope (the reader) will give it his independent assessment as engineer or scientist."

SAGAN-PAGE BOOK DUE THIS YEAR
The proceedings of the AAAS Sym-

posium on Unidentified Flying Objects, currently being put into book form by Cornell University Press (*UFO Investigator*, July 1971), are scheduled for publication late this year. Edited by Dr. Carl Sagan and Dr. Thornton Page, the book will include a special introduction plus the testimony of the 14 scientists who participated in the Symposium. The Symposium was held in December 1969 by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Entitled *The Physics and Psychology of UFOs*, the book was originally set for release this winter but has been held up by lengthy editorial preparation.

The Facts About Mars

(Continued from page 2)

A few square miles are in each photo. One photo reveals rills, another mountain tops with the mountain bases hidden in dust, another reveals a portion of an icecap, and another shows merely a dusty atmosphere that is interpreted as a dust storm. Before the whole picture can be grasped, these photos of tiny areas must be developed by computer analysis to bring out desired contrast conditions. After that, a multitude of such pictures must be assembled to construct a panorama that will show details extending over the broad surface. The process is rather like assembling a jigsaw puzzle.

We do not know what is in the minds of the scientists and administrators of the Mariner program. It may turn out that full information about the surface of Mars will be as difficult to come by as is full information on UFOs. This difficulty could be raised if important confirmation of the canal theory were at hand, and conservative administrators felt they should protect the public against the kind of excitement the Brookings Institution has warned against (see the June 1970 issue of the *UFO Investigator*).

For example, a fully developed network of canals having a pattern identical to a world-wide transportation system would surely be examined for military implications. Pentagon personnel might even be called in to supervise the release of such information, as NASA's Dr. Young suggested to NICAP last spring (*UFO Investigator*, May 1971). This is not the way science prefers to function, but it is a possibility the public must consider as our probes begin to penetrate the secrets of the red planet.