

# UFO INVESTIGATOR

NATIONAL INVESTIGATIONS COMMITTEE ON  
AERIAL PHENOMENA

**NICAP**

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## WAVE OF REPORTS HITS GEORGIA

### Sightings Mushroom Throughout South

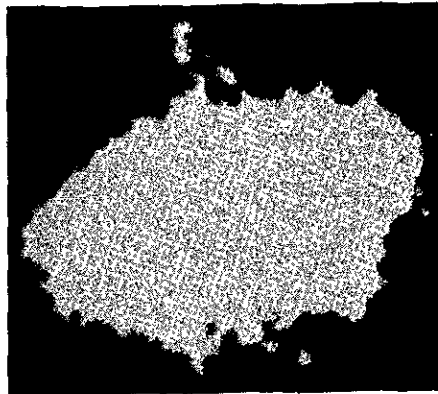
Like a summer storm that strikes without warning, reports of UFOs broke across the state of Georgia last month in a chain reaction that swept through dozens of towns and cities and spilled over into neighboring states.

The first reports were logged by police in Terrell County, northwest of Albany, just before midnight on August 30. Within hours, switchboards throughout southern and central Georgia were ringing with calls from citizens who had spotted the multicolored lights in the night sky and were hoping local authorities could provide an explanation. As the news spread on police and citizen-band radios, newsmen, community officials, and law enforcement personnel hurried to the sites of the reported observations and in many instances were able to see the lights for themselves.

Before the flap had run its course, two news photographers in southwestern Georgia were able to take pictures of the lights, while a TV camera crew from Atlanta obtained approximately 150 feet of movie film near Manchester showing an illuminated source that changed colors. NICAP has tentatively identified one of the still pictures as a bright star, but work continues on the other two cases (see stories in this issue).

Although none of the reports involved clearly defined, structured objects, some witnesses said the glowing balls of light passed at close range and displayed spectacular maneuvers.

One dramatic encounter occurred outside Savannah at Hunter Army Airfield during the early morning hours of Sept. 8. Two military policemen, patrolling the perimeter of the base, saw a shadowy object with flashing lights moving rapidly in the distance. At first, according to news accounts, the object remained at its remote location and exhibited brilliant changes in color—predominantly blue, white, and amber. Suddenly, the object moved toward the men and appeared to dive down to tree-top level. As the object passed overhead, the frightened men drove off the road into a ditch. When

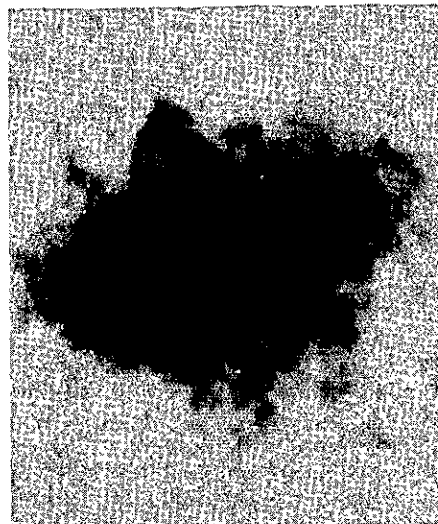


### TV Crew Captures Strange Image

A three-man news team from an Atlanta television station observed and photographed a bright object in the eastern sky early September 9. The object was described by one of the men as shaped like a cigar, with shadow patterns discernible over its surface when the object flashed different colors.

Approximately 150 feet of 16mm color film were taken of the UFO by cameraman Daniel Keever, who set up his equipment outside the State Patrol office at Manchester, Ga., at 4:30 a.m. EDT. He and the news team were visiting the station

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they got out to free the car, they noticed the object had assumed a stationary position in the sky an estimated 200 yards away. After about 15 minutes, the MPs got the patrol car back on the road and returned to headquarters—the UFO still in sight behind them. The Army prevented newsmen from talking with the witnesses until after an official "debriefing" had been conducted.

The wave of sightings brought widespread reaction from national and local news media, and flooded many southern newspapers with front-page stories. On Friday, August 31, many of the major papers in the state ran articles or news dispatches, including the *Savannah Morning News*, which hit the streets just hours after the first rash of reports had ended. At the same time, both major wire services, AP and UPI, were transmitting reports to papers and broadcast stations throughout the country.

Reports began to reach NICAP as early as 10 a.m. Friday morning when newscasters in several southern cities phoned in to ask whether NICAP planned an investigation. By the following week, when it was apparent the observations were continuing over a broad swath through the state, newspapers as far as California and Connecticut began to cover the story, sometimes running several articles over a three- or four-day period. By happenstance, NBC-TV broadcast a rerun of its popular special on "Ancient Astronauts" Thursday night, Sept. 6, which added further impact to the general air of interest centering on the Georgia flurry.

Virtually all accounts agree that the spate of sightings began near the town of Dawson, in Terrell County, late on August 30. According to published sources, a small group of government workers was driving into town on U.S. 118 when they spotted two bright aerial objects. They reported the objects to local police, who in turn observed colored lights in the sky that did not appear to be stars, aircraft, or other familiar objects. At 12:40 a.m., August 31, the Dawson police telephoned the State Patrol at Albany, 20 miles to the southeast, and requested that

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## Georgia Wave

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the Naval Air Station at Albany be alerted. Within a few hours, reports began to come in from other small towns around Albany, and word spread on the police network that something unusual seemed to be developing over a rapidly expanding area of a dozen counties or more.

Most of the reports described vividly colored lights at high altitudes, many stationary, some moving slowly, some performing erratic gyrations. One news reporter, who arrived at an observation point outside Albany shortly after 1 a.m., described what she saw as "neon signs gone mad." She said they flashed in the sky, changed colors, made sudden movements, and eventually disappeared in a northern direction. She watched the lights for almost two hours. They totaled three in number, one larger than the others.

The Naval Air Station at Albany made an unsuccessful effort to observe the lights and track them on radar. State police also tried to track the lights by using a portable radar unit, but no targets could be acquired. The NAS advised Albany police that all aircraft at the Navy facility had landed by 10:45 p.m. Thursday evening, and no flights were conducted before 8:30 a.m. the following morning. Most of the sightings during the morning of the 31st ceased by sunrise.

There were conflicting reports concerning official reaction to the outbreak of observations. The *Jacksonville Journal* quoted a spokesman for Warner Robins AFB, south of Macon, as saying no aircraft were scrambled to search for the UFOs because "we didn't have any planes to send." This raised the question of whether a scramble would have been ordered if planes had been available. The same paper, however, quoted the information officer at Warner Robins as saying the Air Force no longer investigates UFOs. Contrasting this statement, the *Albany Herald* reported that a spokesman at Warner Robins indicated an official probe would be undertaken. The *Herald* also quoted a NAS spokesman who said the Navy "is concerned about this and will look into it." Later accounts emphatically denied any official interest. On Sept. 4, the *Macon Telegraph* quoted a Warner Robins information officer as saying, "I seriously doubt there will be an investigation."

After the initial outbreak, sightings flared again on the evening of August 31 and continued over the three-day Labor Day weekend. One report from Macon on Friday night said a local fire station sent a truck to chase a blinking light seen over the city. The chase was abandoned on Interstate 75 outside Macon. During the same period, according to the paper, astronomers at a local museum scanned the sky for unusual phenomena but failed

to observe the mysterious lights.

According to a UPI release on Sept. 4, an unidentified man came into police headquarters at Athens on Monday night, the 3rd, claiming an object with "one bright light and four flashing lights" had passed low in front of him as he was driving into the city. The man, clearly frightened, said the object got within an estimated 15 feet of the ground before turning upward and moving away.

Earlier that same day near Manchester, according to an AP dispatch, two state troopers watched a lighted object for two hours. It was primarily white with one blue light on each side. The troopers said the object was difficult to make out and gave off occasional flashes of light that seemed to illuminate the entire sky. They also said the object moved with abrupt turns.

The first two weeks in September brought sporadic reporting throughout Georgia, with continued sightings by policemen and civilians. Sightings were also reported in parts of Tennessee, Alabama, and Florida. During the second week, Georgia Governor James Carter was quoted as saying he had made a sighting with a group of friends in Leary, Ga. The incident occurred, however, three years ago, not during the September flap, according to news accounts.

Explanations for the sightings were slow in developing, primarily because the reports described such a wide variety of phenomena over a broad region. On Sept. 5, an astronomer at Atlanta's Fernbank Science Center speculated the lights could be satellites or space debris re-entering the Earth's atmosphere. Other scientists at Fernbank suggested different possibilities, including reflections off high-altitude cloud layers and "electrical phenomena." Partial support for this latter view was the presence of thunderstorms that moved through Georgia during late August and again in the second week of September.

NICAP's Regional Investigator in Savannah, Dr. Julius Benton, an astronomer at Armstrong State College, concurred in part with some of these suggestions. "There's no doubt," he said, "that some of the reports I've investigated can be explained as misinterpretation of stars and bright planets." He estimated that perhaps as many as 50 per cent of the reports he examined could be accounted for in this way. Others, however, do not seem to fit this explanation, he noted.

By the third week in September, the sightings had largely diminished, although reports from nearby states continued to come in. NICAP Regional Investigator Harry Lederman, based in Atlanta, reported press interest was running high, with wide coverage on radio and television. Lederman said he expected to file reports with NICAP throughout the remainder of the month.

## Georgia Sightings Reported Coast-To-Coast

In a display of interest reminiscent of the 1960s, news media throughout the United States carried front-page stories on UFOs following the rash of reports in Georgia and surrounding states last month. During the first week of September, NICAP was contacted by media in many parts of the East Coast, including Toronto, Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. Interviews were done with Westinghouse Broadcasting, Canadian Broadcasting, and multiple radio and TV stations. Television appearances were made by NICAP staff members in Atlanta and Philadelphia. News reporters called from Atlanta, St. Petersburg, Charlotte, N.C., and Columbus, Ga. By the end of the month, news stories from all across the country had been received from NICAP members, and more were arriving daily. The following is a sample of the newspapers that ran articles, in alphabetical order:

*Albany Herald* (Ga.)  
*Arkansas Gazette*  
*Atlanta Constitution*  
*Atlanta Journal*  
*Baltimore News-American*  
*Buffalo (N.Y.) Evening News*  
*Chattanooga News-Free Press*  
*Cleveland Press*  
*Columbia (S.C.) State*  
*Columbus (Ohio) Citizen-Journal*  
*Columbus Evening Dispatch* (Ohio)  
*Columbus (Ga.) Ledger*  
*Dayton (Ohio) Daily News*  
*Dayton (Ohio) Journal Herald*  
*Detroit Free Press*  
*Detroit News*  
*Honolulu Adviser*  
*Houston Chronicle*  
*Houston Post*  
*Jacksonville (Fla.) Florida Times-Union*  
*Jacksonville Journal* (Fla.)  
*Kalamazoo Gazette*  
*Lehigh (Pa.) Times News*  
*Macon Telegraph*  
*Manchester Union Leader* (N.H.)  
*Meridian Star* (Miss.)  
*Miami Herald* (Fla.)  
*Minneapolis Tribune*  
*New Castle (Del.) News*  
*Newsday* (N.Y.)  
*Norwich (Conn.) Bulletin*  
*Pomona (Calif.) Progress-Bulletin*  
*San Francisco Chronicle*  
*Savannah Morning News*  
*Tampa Tribune*  
*Troy (Ohio) Daily News*  
*Washington Post*  
*Washington Star-News* (D.C.)

## 'Golden Egg' Remains Unexplained

Scientists are still puzzling over a farmer's claim he saw a bright golden object the size of an egg fall in his field near Orchard Hill, Georgia, in a cloud of smoke. Although no pieces of the alleged object have been found, a soil chemist visited the field within hours after the purported impact and discovered a burned area about a foot in diameter that was still hot.

According to the chemist, his tests of the soil disclosed high concentrations of copper and chromium but no proof an object had actually landed. Elements commonly found in burning devices and fuels were not present in the samples he tested, the scientist said.

The witness reported the incident happened on Monday afternoon, Sept. 10, just 25 yards from his home. He said the object seemed to float down from the sky with a spinning motion and later take off. He told newsmen he believed the object was "brimstone from heaven."

The chemist, Dr. Oscar Anderson of the University of Georgia's Agricultural Experimental Station at Griffin, learned about the report after the witness notified a local radio station. When Anderson arrived at the farm a few hours later, he found the soil at the site was hot to the touch, and a small area of vegetation was charred. He did not uncover any evidence of a hoax, although he said he could not rule the possibility out.

Anderson was later quoted as saying the object could have been a meteorite or piece of space junk that disintegrated upon impact and heated the soil. Scientists contacted by NICAP indicated this is not a strong possibility since it is not certain a small meteorite or piece of debris would produce the amount of heat reported at the site. Also, copper and chromium are not elements commonly associated with meteorites, although they could be present in a satellite fragment or other man-made material.

On Sept. 14, another farmer in the Griffin area reported seeing a golden object "as big as your head" drifting downward and disappearing near the ground. The farmer said he shot at the object with a rifle but was not certain he hit it. NICAP has not yet investigated this report.

### Cylinder Identified

A "glowing green object" reportedly found near Manchester, Ga., during a flood of UFO sightings in early September has been recovered by police and identified as a common automobile flare.

## Mystery Light Evaluated As Star



A bright, pulsating light source photographed over Mitchell County, Georgia, on August 31 has been tentatively identified as a star, possibly Sirius. The picture was taken before dawn outside the town of Pelham by a 19-year-old college student, William Burson, who works part-time for his father's newspaper, *The Camilla Enterprise*, as a photographer. Burson and a friend stationed themselves on a country roadside after seeing what they thought was one of the UFOs being reported elsewhere in southern Georgia that same night. The picture is one of several time-exposures by the

two men. Although Burson reported the picture was taken facing due south for a period close to one hour, NICAP photo-interpreters believe the camera was more likely facing east and exposure time was 10 minutes or less. The star trails in the picture are broken because Burson put his hand over the lens whenever a car passed his location. The odd "hook" at the top of the brightest star trail (the "UFO") is due to camera movement.

The next day, a few miles from where Burson took his pictures, another local newsman made an unusual photograph, which NICAP is investigating. The picture was taken by Chester A. Tatum, who publishes his own weekly newspaper, the *Sowega Free Press*, in Camilla. The picture was taken through a telescope, which Tatum set up in his back yard after hearing about UFOs on the 11 o'clock TV news, Sept. 1. He used a Polaroid camera mounted on a tripod and took a time-exposure of approximately 10 seconds. He did not see any object at the time he made the photograph, although he said there was a bright flash of light somewhere in the sky just before he closed the shutter. The picture shows a white image, essentially rectangular, with a faint trail. Tatum has agreed to supply NICAP with a print for analysis.

### TV Crew (Continued from page 1)

to interview people who had reported UFOs. While this was in progress, someone noticed two "small orbs of light" that appeared much brighter than surrounding stars. One of the lights dimmed and seemed to move away, while the other became brighter and displayed varying colors.

Keever photographed the second object for a period of approximately 90 seconds, then waited 30 minutes and made another brief exposure. He used a 120mm zoom lens focused on infinity.

The picture on page 1 shows one frame, greatly enlarged, of the image Keever obtained. Nothing else is visible in the film, including the stars. The portion of the film loaned to NICAP was examined under a microscope and reproduced on 35mm color transparencies. The above image was printed on high-contrast paper (no shades of gray) and has been magnified approximately 2000 times from the original film.

Also shown is a reverse print of the

same image, which reveals greater detail at the edge of the object, including a triangular-shaped prominence on the upper side. Some of the background detail in the reverse print is grain in the film.

The witnesses reported the UFO remained stationary in the sky and did not move with the stars during the two-hour period it was in view. NICAP plans to subject the film to microdensitometer analysis in an effort to detect the stars. If it can be confirmed that the UFO remained in a fixed position relative to the Earth, the film's scientific value will be significantly enhanced. Several bright stars were visible in the eastern sky, but according to Keever, he was able to identify these and distinguish them from the light he photographed. He tried to include one of the stars in his field of view, but it does not appear in the film.

Keever works for WAGA-TV, Channel 5 in Atlanta. He and other members of the team were interviewed by NICAP Regional Investigator Harry Lederman and NICAP president John Acuff. The film has been sold to CBS News.

## FEEDBACK / Readers write

Dear Editor:

I have read with interest in the *Investigator* the Aurora, Texas story. If the sketch in the June issue bears any resemblance to the actual vehicle, then it is obvious that it was not a spaceship. My guess is that if the incident really occurred, what was involved was a more or less homebuilt powered balloon. Ballooning was well developed in the 1890s and gas engines were available. Somebody on a ranch must have constructed an "airship" and it crashed for some reason in Aurora. Since it was probably filled with hydrogen it would have burned very completely. The secrecy could be explained by somebody not wanting to be exposed to ridicule or a variety of other reasons.

Samuel Freeman  
Ringoes, New Jersey

Dear Editor:

I believe I can explain the Lake Ontario sightings mentioned in the July *Investigator*. The curvature of the earth can be apparently altered by atmospheric effects. On rare occasions a large lake can seem concave, with objects normally beyond the range of vision becoming visible. This situation exists when the air is much warmer than the water—a condition most often experienced in the spring. In such cases the air is abnormally cooled near the water and thus abnormally dense and more refractive than usual. Such relatively rare increases in refractiveness of the atmosphere produce the extended horizon effect described on May 8 over Lake Ontario. The Rochester weather office confirmed that conditions were suitable for the required effect. After talking to people who saw the "lights" I believe the above explanation fits the observations.

Terence Dickinson, Assistant Director  
Strasburgh Planetarium  
Rochester, New York

Dear Editor:

All UFO sightings report on movements in the earth's magnetic and gravitational fields, as well as visual, aural, and electrical phenomena occurring somewhere within the electromagnetic spectrum. These are physical phenomena, subject to confirmation in the laboratory. To aid us in our understanding of the UFO phenomenon we should go into the laboratory and try to duplicate a particular observed phenomenon. For an example, numerous reports state that when an automobile is closely approached by a UFO, the engine, lights, radio, etc. go dead but return to normal operation upon the passing of the UFO. Can we discover a way to duplicate this phenomenon in a laboratory? By use of

models? How much energy does it take? At what distance is a particular method effective? To conserve energy does it have to be beamed toward the automobile? What radio frequencies are used? Is the method effective on both DC and AC ignition and electrical systems? Other similar questions can be asked. Once one way has been found, other ways will suggest themselves. Between laboratory experiments and their associated theories and calculations, new insights will be gained into natural phenomena, our understanding of Nature's Laws will improve, and who knows, perhaps new and practical applications will be found for the newly discovered principles.

J. Stuart Franklin  
Hendersonville, N.C.

Dear Editor:

A letter in the May *Investigator* appears to require comment. Its writer, Mr. George F. Forbes, offers an explanation involving permeability to account for failures in electrical systems as reported for many years in cases relating to UFOs.

It seems to me that a much simpler explanation may be found in the behavior of magnetic circuits under conditions of saturation—in the case of UFOs, we might say supersaturation. If the degree of saturation is great enough, there is no change in flux density, and hence, no voltage induced in the load circuit, whether we are considering a transformer, its special form, the spark coil or a generator. This not only explains ignition failure but also explains the fact that, in a few cases, diesel-powered vehicles have continued to operate while a non-diesel motor nearby failed because the diesel, after attaining normal operating temperature, does not use electrical ignition.

Consider now the dimming out of auto headlights; many more cases have been reported in which the lights dimmed out rather than failing suddenly as would be called for by relay drop-out. In most—if not all—of these cases, it was reported that the motor died and then the lights dimmed, either to a very dull glow or out altogether. However, with a dead motor (and generator) the lights are still connected to a charged battery. This calls for its own explanation and it has nothing to do with permeability.

A magnetic field strong enough to saturate all magnetic circuits in an automobile in spite of the partial shielding of the body metal is also strong enough to produce predictably deleterious effects on the normal operation of a storage battery although it seems likely that such effects would not occur with the abruptness of a switching operation. Current from the battery is available because of the transport of electrical charges—ions and electrons—and in the presence of a sufficiently strong magnetic field these will not arrive at the output

electrodes (cathode and anode) in anything like normal numbers.

Although a "dry" battery is not really bone dry, the transport path through a relatively thin electrolytic film is extremely short and it is difficult to see how a magnetic field of almost any conceivable strength could divert the electric charges in such a device. However, for an explanation of the failure of battery operated radio equipment, we need only consider the active circuit elements in such equipment. In the presence of an extremely powerful magnetic field, the electrons streaming from the cathode of a vacuum tube would reach the anode—if they ever did get there—by a path never contemplated by the tube designer and the device would accordingly suffer extreme degradation of its normal characteristics; in short, it would neither amplify nor oscillate. Similarly, the current carriers of semiconductor devices (holes and electrons) would suffer entrapment or diversion. However, other things being equal—strength of magnetic field, degree of shielding, etc.—it would appear that the "all solid state" set would have some advantage over the tube set because the transit path for the charges is very much shorter in the transistor than in the vacuum tube. Also (and for the same reason) the dry cell would afford some advantage over the storage battery.

As a final item, mention may be made of the cases in France years ago, involving the audible vibration of metallic road signs. In these cases, either the field was alternating or it had a very strong superimposed alternating component. The difference is inconsequential since an alternating field would produce all the effects previously discussed if the frequency were low, as it would be to make the sign vibrate audibly. The sign, incidentally, does not necessarily need to be of iron sheet; if of aluminum, for example, the induced eddy currents would set up the necessary opposing magnetic field.

Herbert F. Starke  
Melbourne Fla

## Q/A

Q. Is NICAP going to publish an article on the Bermuda Triangle?

Frank Chapman  
Indianapolis, Indiana,

A. NICAP expects to publish a detailed article on the Bermuda Triangle in the July-September 1973 issue of *UFO Quarterly Review*, which is scheduled for publication in October. The article will discuss one of the most famous mysteries associated with the Triangle: the disappearance of five Avenger torpedo planes on December 5, 1945. NICAP members may subscribe to the *Quarterly* by sending \$5 with their name, address, and NICAP registration number to NICAP.