

and azimuth of the "object" and of Mars coincided! But, the photographs surely were not of Mars. Furthermore, the constable taking the pictures had indicated that his exposure meter read "9" when he was taking them. Of what then were they a photograph? Now here probably no amount of armchair detective work could have given the answer. An actual on-the-scene reconstruction of the event was necessary.

We borrowed the very same camera that had been used that evening, and returned to the exact spot from which the original shots had been taken. One of us then aimed the camera in precisely the same direction (determined by prismatic compass bearing) it had been aimed on the night in question. Imagine our surprise when we noted in the very upper corner of the viewfinder a bright street light just "getting into the act." And the exposure meter reading was 9.

When we had examined the original dozen negatives, kept at the County Constabulary Headquarters, we were surprised to find that the mysterious object had appeared on only four of them (not in sequence). This is easily explained by the fact that the constable who took the pictures had moved the camera, so that sometimes the street light was in the field of view, but most of the time it was not.

In short, a most honest mistake had been made. The constable, who admittedly knew nothing of photography but had been instructed "to set it at infinity, on automatic, and shoot," was obviously aiming at Mars, which was then the brightest it had been since 1924. We can attest that on August 16 it looked bright indeed and one unfamiliar with astronomy would surely not have taken this bright light as a "planet." Nothing showed up in the centre of the field at any time. This was to be expected. Even at its brightest Mars cannot be photographed by a short exposure with a hand-held camera. So nothing appeared in the centre of the field, but on some shots an out-of-focus image of a nearby street light did!

Thus we feel this little episode was a sobering experience for us as UFO investigators, and holds a moral for all of us. Whenever possible, get to the original spot of the sighting, and preferably at the exact time of day or night as well. It is surprising how often "re-enacting the crime" will offer a solution.

But not always. Both authors have investigated cases at the very location and have come up with no solution. In such cases, the validity of the UFO report is immeasurably strengthened—in short, we have a "true UFO"—it remains unidentified!

Mystery Object seen from French Observatory

Translation by Gordon Creighton from a draft forwarded by Aimé Michel. A similar account has appeared recently in *Lumières dans la Nuit* No. 115 (December 1971).

THE incident occurred on September 16, 1971, at 8.45 p.m., and the approximate duration of the sighting was 5 minutes.

It all started with a series of some fifteen telephone calls, very close together, to the Haute-Provence Observatory (St. Michel l'Observatoire) by people in Manosque and vicinity, one of the calls being from an engineer at the Atomic Centre at Cadarache. These callers reported a strange bright object in the sky, roughly in the direction of St. Michel, which lies to the north-west from Manosque. These calls were transferred by the operator at the Observatory to the call-box in the great cupola of the 1.93m. telescope. They were taken by the two night assistants at the cupola, M. Gabelou and M. Rambaud, and by two technical workers from the Meudon Observatory who had gone to do a job at St. Michel.

The cupola of the large telescope is surrounded by a circular terrace which goes right round it at the level of the laboratories on the second storey, just below the telescope. From there, one has a view of the surrounding

countryside over a very long distance. The individuals mentioned above go out on to this terrace and immediately see, towards the E-SE (over Valensole), at 20° above the horizon, two bright points of light as luminous as Mars, very close together and appearing to be linked together (making the same movements). Around them is a diffused yellowish oval-shaped halo, within which they move about.* The shape formed by the two points of light and the halo moves from left to right in a continuous movement that is quite slow, but faster than the movement of the *Echo* satellites. The apparent trajectory lies over the hill that skirts the river Durance between the peak known as Le Rocher de Volx (in the direction of Valensole) and Manosque (further to the right, hidden by the hill in question).

The object is slowly climbing as it moves towards the right, i.e., southwards. There is total silence. One of the witnesses, M. Gabelou, dashes into one of the labs to get the Huet 10 × 50 binoculars kept there for the use of the astronomers working in the cupola, and comes back immediately on to the terrace. The

object, now reduced to a single point of light, has moved towards the south, it passes beneath Mars around which it describes a right-angle, swinging away upwards and then coming back towards the left again. Then it gradually moves away towards the horizon in a north-easterly direction. Seen through the binoculars it appears like a small disc no larger than Mars, and preceded by a short diffuse luminous trail of a yellowish-orange colour something like that of a comet. The brightness decreases with the distance, without the light being extinguished in the way that the brightness of a satellite is extinguished when it enters the Earth's cone of shadow.

M. Boidin, a student from Paris who is doing a course at the Observatory of Haute-Provence, tried next day, but without success, to identify the parties who had made the phone calls. He also telephoned the radar station at Marignane, and the latter confirmed that, at the date and time in question, there was an object over the St. Michel region, the origin and nature of which they have been unable to identify. This object was moving more slowly than an aircraft, the round blips formed on the radar screen overlapping partly with each circular sweep and forming "knots".

The radar logging, and the form of the object's trajectory (a loop), rule right out any question of its having been an artificial satellite. A stratosphere sonde balloon is likewise ruled out. Apart from the fact that it has no light of its own (though it could perhaps have been illuminated at a high altitude by the setting Sun?), it would have been seen almost vertically overhead from both Manosque and the Observatory (located 12 kilometres, as the crow flies, from Manosque) and not low over the horizon from both places. The object was in fact flying at a height of several kilometres between St. Michel on the one hand and Valensole and Manosque on the other. This was corroborated by the horizontal plotting by the Marignane radar of the area over the St. Michel region, and by the measurements of the object's absolute speed on the radar screen: this absolute speed fits well with the apparent speed

observed at St. Michel if the object is taken to be at a distance of some few kilometres, but not if it is much further away.

There remains, finally, the hypothesis that it was a helicopter. But the silence was complete, and the presence of the diffuse luminous halo, which was clearly observed by the four witnesses—all of whom are experienced sky-watchers—on a clear night with no mist, also seems to rule this explanation right out.

Although, so far as the technicians who observed the phenomenon from the Haute-Provence Observatory are concerned, they have refrained from making any interpretation themselves, and have been content simply to report what they saw, it seems that this is a case of a UFO sighting. It would be interesting to make an investigation in the Manosque region with a view to securing other eye-witness accounts and establishing more precisely the trajectory of the object, its apparent diameter and its appearance. It is worth noting that, for an eye-witness with good sight, the disc of Mars (20in.) is just recognisable as a disc through binoculars giving an enlargement of 8 or 10, while the disc of Jupiter (40in.) shows up clearly. The luminous "point" observed through the binoculars thus measured a few tenths of seconds of arc at the most. This corresponds to a diameter of the order of 1 metre at a distance of 6 kilometres. But if we bear in mind the apparent size of the halo surrounding the object, or even merely the distance between the two luminous points which at the start of the sighting were visible to the naked eye as definitely separated, then it seems that the object could have been much larger, with a diameter of at least several metres.

Note

* The distance between the two points of light and the angular dimension of the halo were not stated clearly by the witnesses, but, from the sketches which they made, the halo must have been roughly the apparent size of the full Moon.

IMPORTANT NOTICE . . .

Rearrangement of publication times of

FSR CASE HISTORIES

In normal circumstances Supplement 10, the next issue of *FSR Case Histories*, would have followed the March/April 1972 issue of *Flying Saucer Review*. It has been decided, however, to delay publication of Supplement 10 until after the May/June 1972 issue of the Review. It is hoped that this rearrangement will enable us to ease the senior magazine back into its proper publication times, so repairing the ravages of a series of strikes plus other industrial action—not to mention staff mishaps—during an uneasy period of more than twelve months during which we have also had to carry out difficult reorganisations.

Readers, please note that you do not stand to lose anything: the numbered issues for which you have subscribed will continue in sequence, the sole difference being that No. 10, and all subsequent issues, will appear two months later than was originally planned. We assure readers that the reports and articles, already being assembled, will be as varied and interesting as ever.

And remember, we need more support, so . . .

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FSR CASE HISTORIES**

Landing Report from Delphos

Ted Phillips

Our contributor has been active in UFO investigation with the Mid-West UFO Network and with APRO, and also as a staff member of Skylook over the past six years. Some of the material in this report was submitted to and published in the APRO Bulletin¹ and in Skylook² magazine.

An illuminated object was observed very close to the ground at a farm near Delphos, Kansas, on November 2, 1971, at 19.00 C.S.T.

Delphos is located 11 miles north-east of Minneapolis, in Ottawa County, Kansas. The site of the observation was on the Durel Johnson farm, half a mile north and half a mile east of Delphos. The farm is located on a section of the state which consists of scattered tree lines and fields. There are no hills in the area.

The witnesses were Durel Johnson, aged 52, Erma Johnson, 49, and Ronald Johnson, 16.

Possible confirming witnesses were Elton Smith, School Principal, Delphos, and Lester Ernsberger of Minneapolis.

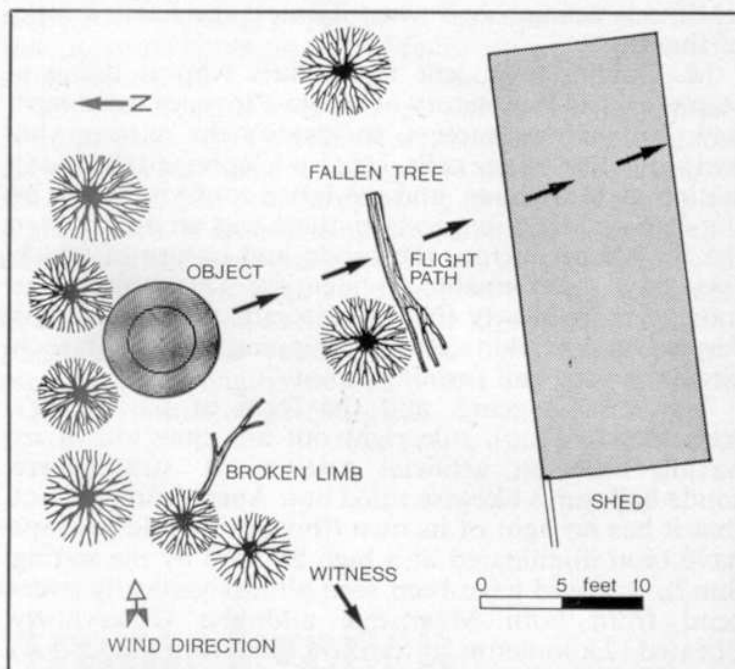
An investigation was conducted at the site on November 3, 1971, by Sheriff Ralph Enlow, Under-sheriff Harlan Enlow, and Kansas Highway Patrol Trooper Kenneth Yager. Further investigations at the site were made on December 4, 1971, and January 11, 1972, by the author.

The observation

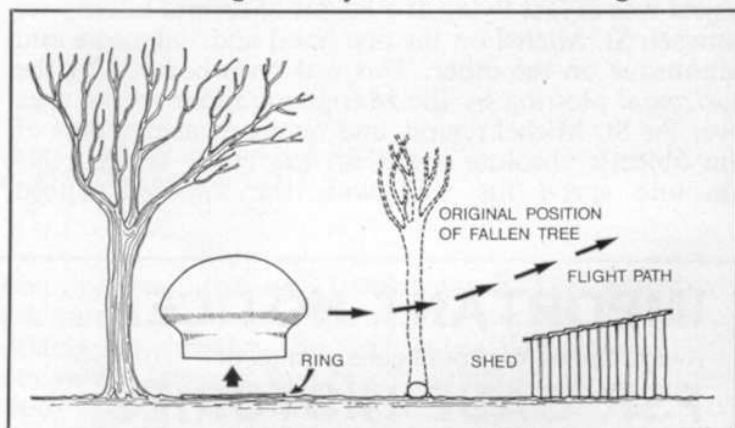
At approximately 7.00 p.m. C.S.T. on November 2, 1971, Ronald Johnson was tending the sheep, accompanied by his dog. Mrs. Johnson called from the back door of the Johnson house asking Ronald to come to supper: he replied that he would be through in a short time. After Mr. and Mrs. Johnson had finished their meal, Mrs. Johnson called the boy again, but this time he didn't reply. Mrs. Johnson stated that she didn't see anything of an unusual nature, such as a glow, and did not hear any sound.

Ronald stated that as he worked in the sheep pen and just after his mother called to him the first time—he heard a rumbling sound and the object was suddenly illuminated. Ronald and the dog did not notice the object prior to the sound. The object was illuminated from top to bottom by multi-coloured light. The illumination did not come from individual lights but rather it was a mass of varied colours over the entire surface. An actual metallic surface could not be seen, but the boy could make out a definite shape. The object appeared to be slightly domed at the top and base, with a slight bulge at the centre. There was a bright glow between the base and the ground. The object was hovering about 2ft. above the ground, and at no time did the witness see it touch the ground.

The witness was about 75ft. from the object and had a fairly clear view of it. Upon seeing the object he stood quite still, and noted that the dog was very quiet. Ronald stated that the colours were blue, red and orange and that the colours did not change at any time. The object had an estimated diameter of 9ft.



Plan showing the object and surrounding area



The object and surrounding area

and appeared to be about 10ft. high. He could not see any surface details because of the glow, which was quite bright, and the trees in the area were illuminated, as was the ground. The boy said that it hurt his eyes when he looked directly at the object, and for several days following the incident his eyes were sore, and he suffered from headaches.

The sheep were obviously disturbed by the presence of the object, or by the sound, as they were bellowing. Mr. Johnson stated that the sheep would jump from the pen each evening for a week after the incident.

¹ Bulletin of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization, 3910 East Kleindale Road, Tucson, Arizona 85712, U.S.A.

² Skylook, Box 129, Stover, Missouri, U.S.A.