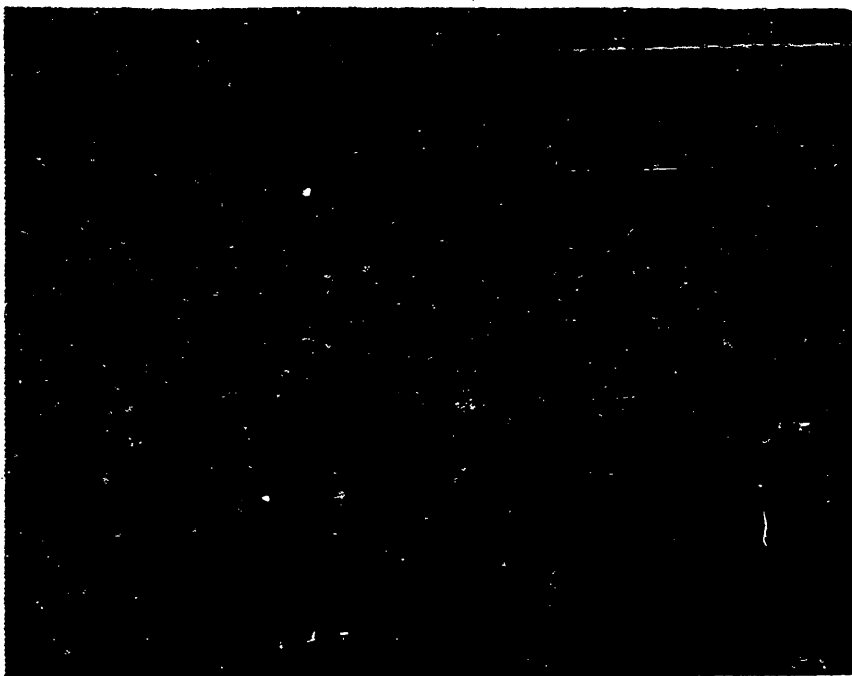


# FLYING SAUCERS VISIT THE U. S.



**A VAGUE WHITE DOT**, enlarged 20 times from the original, made Nation-wide front pages as the week's most spectacular news-photo. Though blurred and hazy, it was billed as the first photograph of a flying disc.

## The Flying Saucers

Kenneth Arnold nursed his little plane down for a landing on the windy Pendleton Air Field. The square-jawed, 32-year-old flying businessman from Boise, Idaho, hopped out and tramped into the airport building. He was slightly bug-eyed.

Kenneth Arnold told a weird story to newspapermen, who were on hand to cover a Chamber of Commerce affair. It went like this:

Arnold, a forest fire service pilot who sells fire extinguishers on the side, had been cruising over Washington's Cascade mountains on the hunt for a missing Marine Corps plane. About 3 p.m. he spotted on the horizon what he

first thought was a flight of geese. Arnold changed his mind when the objects, flying at approximately 10,000 feet, passed to the east of his plane.

There were nine of them. They were flat as saucers, shiny as mirrors, big as DC-4 passenger planes, Arnold reported. They came over the mountains with a peculiar weaving motion "like the tail of a kite," and when the leading object dipped so did the others. They were traveling at least 1200 miles per hour.

"You probably think I'm nuts," Kenneth Arnold mumbled to the reporters. "It seems impossible, but there it is."

That was on Wednesday, June 25, 1947—the day the wind whipped up sand dunes at the Pendleton, Ore., airfield; the day a fire extinguisher salesman from Idaho told a fascinating tale and whipped up one of the screwiest phenomena in American history.

The phenomenon, at first, developed slowly. The day after Kenneth Arnold's story hit the front pages Mrs. Elina Shingler, a housewife in Bremerton, Wash., reported that she too had seen strange platter-like objects hurtling through the sky at tremendous speed ("there was just a flash and then they were gone").

In Oklahoma City another flying businessman named Byron Savage told reporters: "About five or six weeks ago, as near as my wife and I can remember, we were standing in our front yard about dusk, when a flat, disc-like thing came across the city from just a little east of south and was gone in about four or five seconds. The machine—or whatever it was—was a silvery color, very big, and was moving at a terrific rate of speed. It made no noise."

In Joliet, Ill., 60-year-old Charles Kastl, an engineer for the Elgin, Joliet and Eastern Railroad, claimed to have seen nine flat, circular objects zipping through the sky while he was walking to work. They were, he said, going faster "than any plane I ever saw," and when the leading disc flipped so did the others. They were going southward.

Then the pace picked up. Two Vancouver, B. C., citizens told of seeing "a silvery object without wings or tail" flying over their city. Mrs. E. G. Peterson of Seattle reported that she and her son had spotted some "flying saucers"—as they were beginning to be called—going eastward, seemingly "fluttering in the wind."

W. I. Davenport, a carpenter in Kansas City, said he, too, saw nine of them while he was working on a roof. At Cedar City, Utah, three airport employees mentioned some "silver streaks" high in the sky and going eastward at an incredible speed. In San Leandro, Calif., Frank M. King, a former chief flight purser for a trans-Pacific air line, reported seeing a flat, disc-shaped object that whistled overhead at about 4000 feet. He was playing volleyball in



**BUSINESSMAN KENNETH ARNOLD** of Boise, Idaho, who sells fire extinguishers, was the first to report discs. He added: "You probably think I'm nuts."



**AIR LINE CAPTAIN E. J. Smith**, piloting a United plane over Oregon, radioed in a report on seeing discs.

his backyard at the time ("it was frightening"). Seven persons in Moscow, Idaho, spoke of a "flat, shiny disc" that oscillated across a clear sunny sky—"and we weren't drunk or crazy."

By the fourth day, "flying saucer" reports had come in from nine States—mainly in the West—and Kenneth Arnold, who had started it all, was going quietly crazy. A preacher had phoned him from Texas to say that he was getting his flock "ready for the end of this world." A woman, spotting Arnold in a restaurant, had rushed out screaming: "There's the man who saw the men from Mars."

As the Nation moved into its long Fourth of July week end, "flying saucer" stories popped like Chinese firecrackers. A United Air Lines pilot, flying over Oregon, radioed that he had sighted some, that they were truly flat and were big as airplanes. In Portland, police confirmed seeing some "up by the sun, going east," and Sheriff's deputies reported almost simultaneously about "20 in a line going like hell to the west."

Some 60 picnickers at Twin Falls, Idaho, swore they saw three groups of flying saucers over a park. A doctor at a Pennsylvania mental hospital observed one with "luminous halo." Those seen at Clifton, Colo., left vapor trails. Another spotted from San Jose circled over the mountain, dipped several times and headed seaward.

No two reports were alike. The mysterious objects were "seen" whisking in from every point of the compass, at altitudes from 100 to 10,000 feet, at speeds from 250 to 1200 MPH, sometimes with a whistling or whooshing sound and sometimes noiselessly, their colors varying from silver to red, their sizes ranging from tennis balls to five-room houses. Only two elements seemed to remain constant: The flying saucers were always flat and always round.

But were they real? Americans who claimed to have seen the celestial discs were ready to swear to their authenticity on a stack of Bibles. As the phenomenon



**POLICEMAN Fred Schlauch** of Elizabeth, N. J., looked up after changing a tire just in time to see some discs go by.

grew and discs were reported from 40 States, however, credible explanations were ticked off, one by one, among authoritative circles.

The Navy denied the mystery discs could be its new jet-propelled XF5U-1, called the "Flying Flapjack," for the only XF5U-1 in existence was stationed in Connecticut. The Army denied having any jet planes or guided missiles that could go 1200 MPH and doubted whether any had been developed abroad. Meteorologists denied they could be flying chunks from a shattered meteor since such objects would tend to drop earthward and would be easily found. Nuclear scientists denied atomic research could have anything to do with the "flying saucers." The White House gravely denied the President had ordered an investigation of the flying discs.

There remained the fantasies. In San Diego, for instance, Occultist Mead Layne claimed the discs were actually etheric bodies from another world ("they come with good intent . . . they have some idea of experimenting with earth life"). And in San Francisco, 61-year-old Occultist Ole J. Sneider wrote in to The Chronicle:

"The flying discs are oblate spheroid 'space' ships, from the older planets and other solar systems . . . My advice is that physical man set up no belligerence, for a small concentration of these discs could clean the surface of our planet completely in a matter of less than 24 hours . . . I discovered this by teleportation visits hither and yon in and beyond our galaxy."

Interviewed later, Occultist Sneider (a retired cost accountant and university graduate) said he had just taken a trip "into outer space" to find out more about the discs. "They knew what I was after. They appeared in a blinding flash of light. And the answer was in two words: 'Information refused.'"

The historical precedence for such scientifically unexplained objects in the sky is strong. In the books of Charles Fort, a New



**COAST GUARDSMAN Frank Ryman** of Seattle snapped the famed photo (left). A dot showed up on a sky-photo he took. Ryman thought it was a flying saucer.



**ACCOUNTANT Ole Sneider** of San Francisco, a college graduate, advised men not to resist the "space ships."

Yorker, who made a business of trying to embarrass dogmatic scientists, innumerable instances are recorded of mysterious "discs" and "bodies" being seen by solid citizens in many parts of the world. Examples:

- "A most extraordinary and singular event—a disc in the sky from which projected an orange-colored body that looked like an elongated flatfish"—was seen on an August day in 1894 over North Wales by an Admiral Omanney, who reported his vision to Nature magazine.

- "Discs about the size of the moon" from projected hook-like forms were spotted over India in 1838 and recorded with diagrams by a man named G. Pettit.

- "A large, luminous body, almost stationary for a time, shaped like a square table" was observed near Niagara Falls in 1833 and later reported by the American Journal of Science.

- "Something like a giant trumpet, suspended vertical, oscillating gently, visible for five or six minutes," was reported by some Mexicans near Oaxaca in 1874.

More recently, in 1946, residents in Norway and Sweden and Finland were terrified by strange "balls of fire" and other luminous objects that flashed across the Scandinavian skies and then disappeared. Some were identified as meteors, but most remained unexplained.

The flying saucers were bewilderingly plentiful. Yet, despite their apparent quantity, the mystery discs had yet to be observed and reported by a trained, authoritative source—although observatories from California to Cambridge were on the watch and Army planes patrolled the air.

Furthermore, no disc had actually been found anywhere in the U. S. or Canada (despite \$3000 worth of pledged rewards). Mrs. Walter Johnson of St. Maries, Idaho, swore eight of them, "resembling washtubs," had plummeted into a forest near her town, but a full-fledged search turned up nothing. A Wisconsin priest reported one had "exploded" in his

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