

THE UTAH UFO DISPLAY

A Scientist Brings Reason and Logic to
Over 400 UFO Sightings in Utah's
Uintah Basin



FRANK B. SALISBURY, PhD

In collaboration with and based upon the files of Joseph Junior Hicks

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Bonneville
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PART 1

The Uintah
Basin
UFO Display

1

Junior's Files

The Reports

The Uintah¹ (you-**in**-taw) Basin sightings turned out to be better than most UFO hunters' dreams. I had seen a small article or two in the Salt Lake City papers and heard a couple of announcements on the radio, indicating that something interesting for the UFO business was going on near Vernal, Utah, the largest town in the Uintah Basin. But such stories were common in 1965–66. Then, as noted in the Prologue, one evening in October 1966 I gave a talk about the possibilities of life on Mars to the Association of Utah Science Teachers. I also tossed in a few comments about UFOs. Following the talk, a man came up and introduced himself as Joseph Junior Hicks, a junior high school science teacher from Roosevelt, Utah, right in the heart of the Uintah Basin. Many people were asking questions, so there wasn't time to say much, but he told me of some exciting sightings in Roosevelt and Vernal. I wrote down Junior's name and decided that this might be the opportunity for which I had been waiting.

How badly I wanted to head for Roosevelt and Vernal to personally interview some of those witnesses! In January of 1967, when "The Scientist and the UFO" appeared in *BioScience*, publisher Devin Garrity asked if I would enlarge it into a book. I remembered the brief stories from Junior Hicks,

so I asked Mr. Garrity if he could finance an excursion to the Uintah Basin. He did, but it was over a year before I made the trip.

As it turned out, many good sightings occurred in that year. Junior Hicks was still collecting data regarding sightings until the time I arrived on June 13, 1968—and in 2010 he still is!

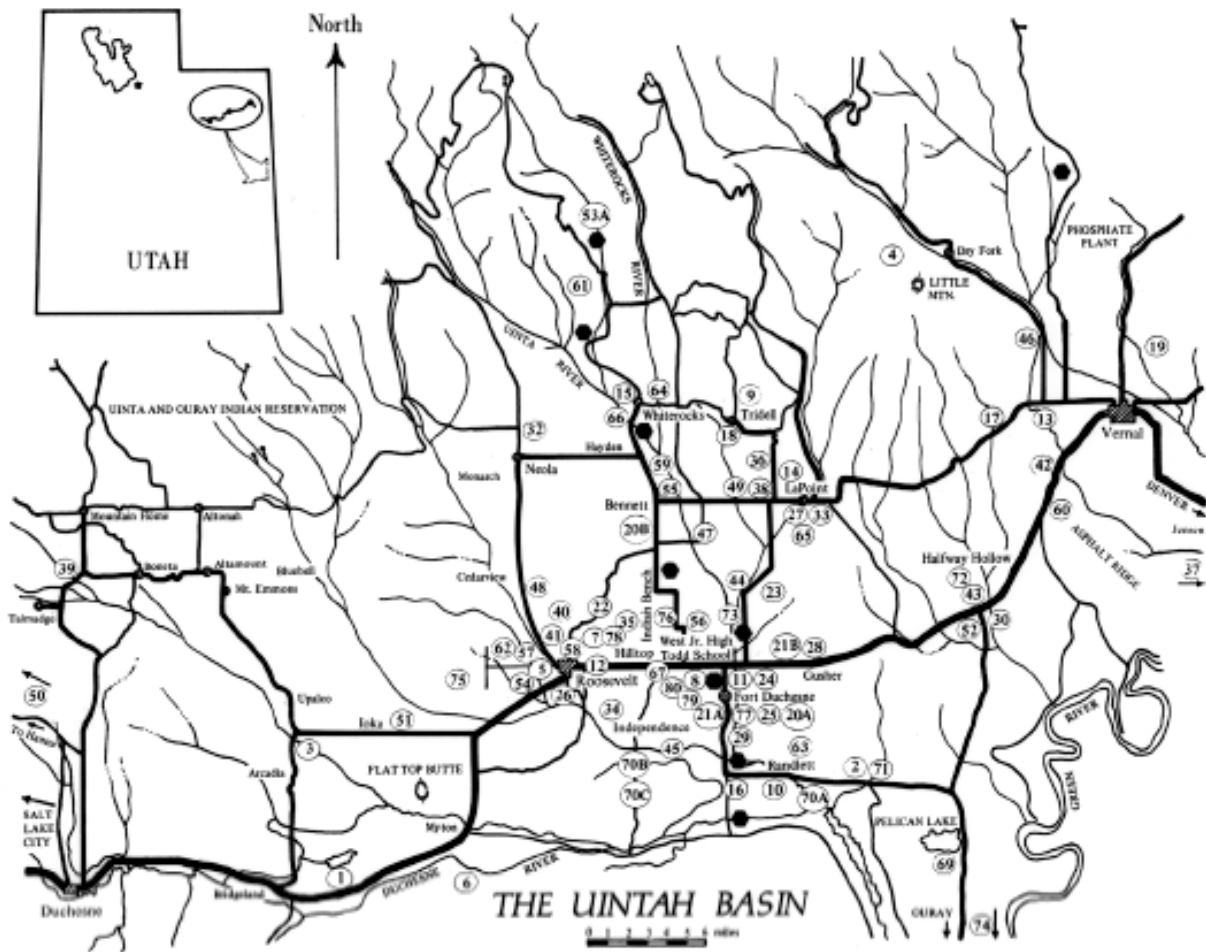


Fig. 1-1 Map of the Uintah Basin showing highways, principle towns, streams, and location of the Basin in the state of Utah. The heavy line running from Duchesne to Vernal represents Highway 40, an important highway between Salt Lake City and Denver, Colorado. Numbers in circles represent the sightings of [Table 1](#) (Appendix). Locations are reasonably accurate, except for those clustered around Roosevelt and Fort Duchesne, where accurate locations would have required much overlapping. Sightings 31 and 68 could not be located accurately from the descriptions of the witnesses and hence were left out. Sightings 70D and 70E took

place at West Junior High School. Black hexagons represent the positions of witnesses to Sighting 53.

I spent the first Sunday afternoon looking over Junior's files. Here was a microcosm of UFO activity, representing nearly everything I had read, and providing so many sightings that one could begin to think in statistical terms. Before we examine some of these sightings, however, let's diverge for a few paragraphs and examine the Uintah Basin itself.

The Uintah Basin

The Basin is located in eastern Utah at the north end of the Colorado Plateau Province ([Fig. 1-1](#)). The Basin is about 75 miles long, measured along an east-west line. It is a high (5,000 to 6,000 foot elevation), dry desert that gets quite cold in winter. On the north are the Uinta Mountains, the only major chain of mountains in North America running east and west. This is wild country, with many peaks above 13,000 feet, and part of the region designated as a national primitive area. Most of the Uintas are penetrated only by dirt roads or trails. The south border of the Basin is the Tavaputs Plateau, also desert country, and there are mountains to the west and the east, forming the huge Basin. The Green River flows through the southeast corner of the region, cutting Desolation Canyon through the Tavaputs Plateau, but the Basin itself is primarily formed by the Duchesne (pronounced dew-**shay**-ne) River and its tributaries (especially the Uintah River), which flow southward, draining the Uinta Mountains, and then eastward through the Basin and into the Green River. Highway 40 runs east and west, roughly parallel to the Duchesne River. Coming from Salt Lake City, the first town is Duchesne, with a population listed at 770 in 1960 (2000 pop: 1,407). Driving another thirty miles east leads one to Roosevelt (1960 pop. 1,812; 2000: 4,299) in the middle of the Basin, and another thirty miles on east takes one to Vernal (1960 pop. 3,655; 2000: 7,714).

This is a spectacular land. In the summer heat, the desert badlands shimmer in red, yellow, orange, and gray hues, while the Uinta Mountains

share some of the most sublime alpine splendor to be found on the North American continent.

The Indians were there first, the Utes and the Ourays, and remained the sole possessors (on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, which occupies nearly all of the Basin) until about 1900 when the center of the reservation, primarily along Highway 40, was opened to white settlement. Several towns were founded, but most remain small villages, sometimes with only ten or twenty people. Most of the Caucasians are Mormons (members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) who came in from other parts of Utah when the area was opened. Several other religions are represented, however, and their small churches and missions to the Indians are an important part of the local culture. The Mormon Church, as in the rest of Utah, with its intricate organization of stakes (comparable to dioceses) and wards, provides the guiding motivation for the majority of people in the area.

Most of the agricultural income is from livestock (cattle and sheep), but Uintah Basin honey is known throughout the Intermountain West for its high quality. Oil and gas wells have been developed, and this is becoming a major industry. The Uinta Mountains also provide timber and some mining. Dinosaur National Monument on the eastern border of Utah brings in many tourists. Yet, in spite of the influx of oil drillers and tourists, the Uintah Basin was and to an extent still is one of the most rural, isolated frontiers left in the United States.

The people remain rural in their outlook and as conservative and down-to-earth as New Hampshire Republicans. Native Americans are omnipresent in the Basin, and many of them have broken away from the dire poverty, alcoholism, and other problems still faced by others. A few have intermarried with Caucasians and live in the towns and villages as stalwart members of the community. Because many Native American children were in Junior's classes, he has made friendships with them and their parents—and some have had interesting UFO experiences.

So this is the land where the UFOs cavorted, and here are the people who watched and watched some more and wondered.

Joseph Junior Hicks' Files and Our Interviews

Junior Hicks' laboratory classroom in a then-new modern-style building was a model for such facilities. He was and is an enthusiastic person ([Fig. 1-2](#)) and an excellent teacher. For decades he has been moonlighting as an electrical contractor and electrical inspector for the town of Roosevelt. Active in the Mormon Church, he has been in constant contact with the students, farmers, and townspeople of the central Uintah Basin. Early in 1966 he gained a reputation as the local UFO authority, often speaking before local groups. As a result, people brought him their reports. Though far too busy to spend many hours searching out cases, if an interesting report turned up, he drove out to interview the witness(es). He always requested drawings from them, and several of these are shown in [Figure 1-3](#).



Fig. 1-2 (A) *Frank B. Salisbury (left) and Joseph Junior Hicks (right), taken in 1973. (B)* *The same, taken in 2009, illustrating the aging process!*

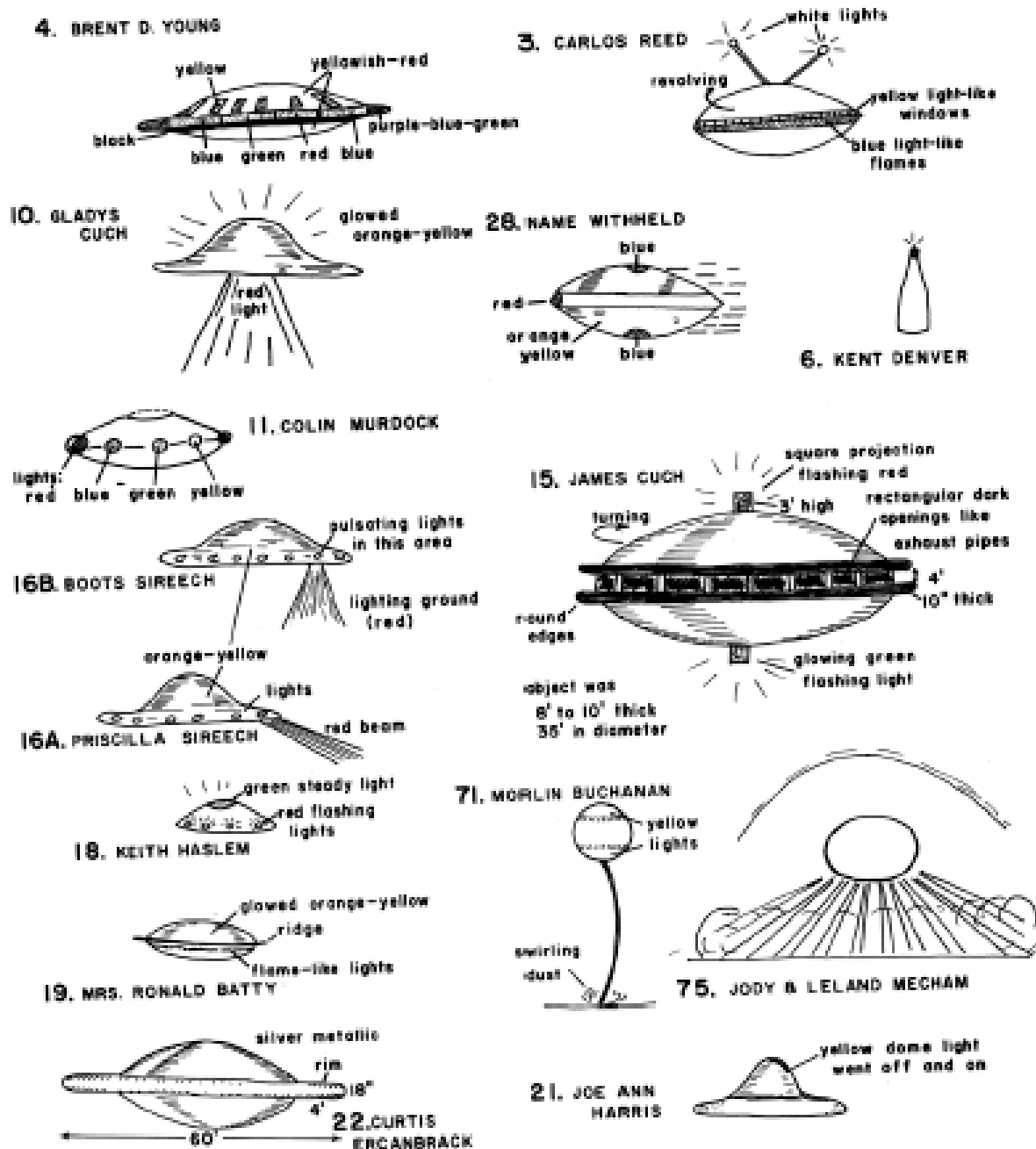


Fig. 1-3 *Fifteen UFO drawings as depicted by witnesses. The originals were done with colored pencils on the bottoms of their reports. These were laid out, overlapping each other, so that they appeared as shown. A photograph was taken, and then a tracing from the photograph. Numbers refer to sightings in [Table 1](#). (Numbers 71*

and 75 were drawn by me from my memory of the drawings on the reports, since these sightings occurred after the photo was taken.)

About three out of four cases, he estimates, appear to be satellites, stars, or perhaps some other natural phenomenon. Yet the number of unexplainable sightings he has accumulated is truly fantastic. In 1968, I first condensed his file into [Table 1](#) (Appendix) so that we could number the sightings and look for correlations in sizes, shapes, sounds, and so forth. In addition, I picked up a few sightings on my own. Junior located all of the sightings in the table on a map (see [Fig. 1-1](#)). From about 400 sightings Junior had encountered by about 1973, we finished up with a total of 80 unexplained sightings and about 260 witnesses. Few of the witnesses are duplicated, and considering that the area covered by nearly all of the sightings (eliminating Duchesne and Vernal) contained only about 4,000 people, this was a rather phenomenal number. Since 1973, Junior has accumulated about 400 more sightings, and in 2009 we interviewed witnesses relating to eight of these. Interestingly enough, most of the sightings after 1973 are similar to the ones in [Table 1](#), Junior tells me. However, some of the eight interviews that we conducted concerned rather unusual cases, which Junior chose because they *were* unusual.

Judging by the interviews we've had, the number of good cases in Junior's file could easily be doubled. Nearly everyone knew of someone else with a good story, or had another good story himself. A conservative estimate would indicate that 10 percent of the population of the Uintah Basin had experienced excellent sightings by 1973. A door-to-door survey might have been in order, but that would have been beyond our time and resources.

In the 1960s and 1970s, although I had to pass up many excellent witnesses, I recorded about twenty interviews on tape. As [Table 1](#) indicates, the intense wave of sightings in the Uintah Basin occurred in late 1966 through 1967, but sporadic sightings occurred both before and after that—as they have done and still do all over the world. [Table 1](#) does not include sightings since 1973.

Clearly, the primary data upon which UFO investigations must be based consists of witness accounts. Yes, there are photos, markings on the ground, and other tangible evidence, but such could virtually always be fraudulent.

And any witness report could be a misinterpretation of what actually happened—or an out-and-out made-up story! Sadly for science, there is no way to go back in time to see what the witness(es) really experienced.

So the interviews (witness accounts) take on a high level of importance. It is the accounts taken as a body, supporting each other in a certain sense, that have convinced me that there is really something going on that is beyond our present understanding of how our universe works. Thus, the interviews were included in the main text of the first edition of this book.

But for this edition, space was limited, and I have new accounts and new ideas to present. Furthermore, as J. Allen Hynek said in his foreword to the first edition, it can be a bit mind-boggling, even tedious, to read case after case in a very long chapter.

What to do? Our compromise has been to only summarize and quote from the accounts in this chapter. Depending upon your level of interest, I encourage you to read some or all of the interviews, which I would be happy to email to you. (Please see my website for more details www.casefordivinedesign.com.)

When you do read them, you'll see that many details in the interviews could represent distortions in the telling, exaggerations, interpretations, and other pitfalls. That's the name of the game. Nobody's memory or ability to put memories into language is perfect. Yet I am convinced that the Uintah Basin witness stories, including many that we have insufficient space to report here, as well as many others from around the world, provide a basis for concluding that there is indeed a real and important UFO phenomenon to consider. Read the interviews and see what you think.

The Uintah Basin Sightings

1. Some Sightings around Duchesne

My opportunity to find sightings on my own, independently of Junior's files, was realized as soon as I first entered the Basin on my way to visit Junior. I was stopped for speeding in Duchesne! To dispel the sick feeling that was

working its way into the pit of my stomach, I tried to strike up a friendly conversation with Officer Bradford Baum. Sure enough, he had a couple of friends who had sightings to tell about. (Incidentally, the people of the Uintah Basin didn't bother to report their sightings to the authorities. Except for my Duchesne accounts, people reported to Junior Hicks, so sheriffs, town policemen, or other officials didn't know any more stories than did other citizens of the community.)

I returned Tuesday morning and hunted up Kay Stratton, the Justice of the Peace, who was also a local barber. After waiting for his customers to disperse, I paid my fine and then asked him about the UFO. Sure enough, he had a reasonably good story to tell. One evening between ten and eleven in early summer of 1967, during hot, dry weather, he and his wife had seen a red ball "as big as a car" sitting on the crest of a hill near a large TV transmitting antenna south of town. After they had watched a while, the object had gone straight up or toward the south until it was out of sight. He told me it was "as bright as a fire or a neon sign."

Justice of the Peace Stratton in turn referred me to Officer Bernard Hadden, a deputy sheriff, who told me his story in the Courthouse. In the fall of 1966 he had seen a brilliant light in the heavens up at an angle of about forty-five degrees. He watched with binoculars. Although he got the impression of considerable size, it did not exhibit a distinct shape—"more of a glow, you might say." Appearing a mile or so away, it was interesting because of its maneuvers, seeming to come toward him, change direction, disappear, come back into sight, and finally go on a straight line from east to west. "It didn't seem to have any response to gravity at all." This account is quite typical of a "distant-light" sighting—and less impressive than many of the sightings we will discuss in this book.

To illustrate the point about distant lights, here is another example: In the fall of 1967, probably September or October, Mr. Douglas Horrocks and his wife, using binoculars, had watched a brilliant light (like a mercury vapor lamp) hovering to the west over a reservoir near Duchesne. They thought that the object was about three hundred feet above the dam. It was quite stationary, but after five or ten minutes, it had disappeared. The Horrocks were excited about their sighting, but at that time, Venus was the evening star, right in the

west. Their description matches Venus perfectly. A moving cloud cover would account for the sudden “disappearance” after ten minutes. Or the planet might have set below the western horizon (just as the earth’s rotation causes the sun to set).

The County Attorney had overheard our conversations about UFOs, and he gave me the name of Dean Powell, a man who had had an excellent sighting.

Dean Powell’s Silver Craft. Mr. Powell’s story turned out to be one of the best of the lot. The planet Venus just won’t do for this one. Mr. Powell delivered mail from the main post office in Duchesne to several outlying points in the Basin. He was in his sixties (though he looked younger; [Fig. 1-4](#)) and was clearly a good, solid citizen. He wouldn’t tell his story until I had identified myself, which is definitely a point in his favor.

Dean Powell was delivering mail to a tiny post office in Hanna, on the North Fork of the Duchesne River. It was June, probably 1966, about 10:15 in the morning. He was leaning on his truck, waiting for the postmistress, Mrs. Cristal Hackett, when he noticed a silver craft hovering in front of a nearby hill across the river. It was perfectly silent. He called Mrs Hackett, and she came out and saw the object but immediately ran to get her children so they could see it. When she returned, the object had moved to the north. Powell could still see it, but he was not sure that the others saw it. He was adamant that it “was [not] a flying saucer... but a real flying craft... that they’re keeping a secret in this country.”



Fig. 1-4 (A) *The view from the Hanna Post Office (white spot shows UFO location, as indicated on the photograph by Mr. Powell); (B) Dean Powell standing at the back of his mail truck; and (C) a drawing of the object seen by Mr. Powell. (Photographs taken in 1968.)*

I checked with Mrs. Hackett, and she confirmed her part of the story in detail, expressing regret that she had not observed the object more carefully before running to get her children. (There are many other important details in the full text of the interview.)

2. The Early Sightings

Sightings 1 and 2 in [Table 1](#) (Appendix), are very interesting but a bit older and atypical of the remaining sightings. Data for all of the other sightings were collected shortly after the time that they occurred, but these two came to the attention of Junior Hicks after the wave of sightings began in the fall of 1966.

Sighting 2 is particularly fascinating because of the mention of a face in a window. No other account in [Table 1](#) mentions occupants of any kind, although there were several opportunities to see inside (such as with reports of windows). By now (2010), Junior does have some additional accounts that include occupants.

Kent Denver's Rocket/Bowling Pin. Sighting 6 describes an object with a very unique shape, exhibiting a rather interesting motion as well. The witness was Kent Denver ([Fig. 1-5](#)).

On August 9, 1965, about midnight, he was driving in the desert with his fiancée (now his wife) and her little brother. Coming around a turn, they saw a very large object that looked like a bowling pin but with windows all around the top. As their headlights swung toward it, it lifted up with a red flame out the bottom—but the flame was there only when the object was hovering. It would go out, and the object would move upwards, hovering again when the flame appeared. It finally shot upwards.



Fig. 1-5 *Kent Denver (1968).*

3. Autumn, 1966

The sightings during September, October, and November (there were none during December) account for thirty-three of the eighty sightings in [Table 1](#). And some of them are packed with interest and drama. Sighting 10 is important because the object was seen at close range by a number of witnesses. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to talk to this family. The sighting is also special because of the presence of a "red beam." This beam was a sort of pencil of light that came slowly out of the craft, probing around in various directions but ending in midair. Only if it touched the ground did the ground light up. To me such a beam of light is so utterly beyond comprehension that it is very tempting to try to forget the whole thing as a bad dream of the witness. Yet, beginning with this sighting, the beam shows up in Junior's file on several occasions, and so I suppose it must be reckoned with. I wonder if it is some kind of confined plasma rather than a beam of light?

The Massey/Batty Landed Oval Machine in Vernal. The Massey sighting (#13) was an excellent one by virtually any criteria. It was the only one of those discussed in this chapter that received any publicity. A TV crew went to Vernal to interview the witnesses and look for flying saucers themselves. Although they didn't see any, the local joke is that while they were in the lobby of one of the Vernal hotels, a number of witnesses had a rather spectacular sighting northeast of town.

Both Valda Massey and his wife, Donna, were schoolteachers in Vernal. As Donna finished canning tomato juice around eleven-thirty on September 7, 1966, she went to talk to her husband who had just gone to bed. On the way she noticed an odd red light in the west. On the way back, she went into the utility room for a better look. The light was moving slowly (perhaps five miles per hour) just above the treetops about a mile away. It was in front of a range of low hills. Soon it became evident that she was watching a large machine, "as big as a house." She noticed the strange red beam, this time going out in a horizontal direction. The machine was a "round, oval shape, then there was a yellow light that had tinges of blues and greens and what-not in it." The yellow light also acted like the red beam. The machine landed on a knoll about a mile from the Massey's home. "It just came down real soft and just sat there." Garth Batty, a close friend and a local Mormon bishop, arrived in time to watch the object, which remained on the knoll for about an hour. They finally left the house and began to drive toward the object, at which time it moved vertically so rapidly that it "just vanished." About three nights later the machine appeared again, following the same pattern of cruising above the treetops and landing on the knoll. This time the dome light was much brighter, dimming after a few moments to its previous intensity. Bishop Batty had observed the machine through binoculars on the first occasion, but for some reason he had not handed these to the other witnesses. On the second occasion, the object stayed around until everyone finally went to bed. No one saw it leave that time. A few nights after the second visit, a "great, big, huge yellow light" was seen. "It looked like you could take your arm and gather it all in. You could just hold it right in your hands. It didn't shoot out any rays from it, and it was a different type of light from what our lights are." Donna Massey, who gives the above descriptions, ran inside to call Bishop Batty again, but while she was

gone, the object left at a high rate of speed. Valda Massey and his daughter were watching. "It was clear over Jensen [fourteen miles away], and the light went out, and the next time they picked it up, it was over Red Wash." There was no sound such as rushing air, even though the light was seen at fairly close range, perhaps only a few hundred feet away, over some trees on the Massey's farm. Several witnesses reported a similar object on the same night (e.g., Clyde Wilkins and others).

The "machine" seen on the first two occasions provided the most interesting details. Donna Massey seemed to think that she could see shadowy figures moving around inside of the windows, but she didn't look through the binoculars. She assumed that Bishop Batty had seen the figures clearly, but in my interview with him, he said that he did not.

Bishop Batty seemed to think that the second sighting was "more vivid" than the first one. He was referring to the intensity of the lights, although the details seen in the first sighting exceeded those seen in the second.

Following the first and second Massey sightings, someone with a Geiger counter was called to check for radioactivity. None was found, nor were any other markings or physical evidence of any kind. During that winter the Masseys and many others in Vernal often observed lights in the sky, maneuvering and traveling at speeds atypical of satellites or airplanes. The Masseys were impressed that these seemed to converge and cross over at a point on "Ute Hill." Donna Massey also had considered that the landings occurred near a spot where a number of beehives were located, and she thought that perhaps the hives had something to do with the landings. Of course, this is the purest of speculation, as she well knows, but it is quite typical of the reactions of the witnesses. After seeing something so very strange, they can't help but attempt to reconcile or explain it through rational means. Dean Powell's emphasis on government machines is an excellent and typical case in point.

Daytime, Double Convex Prototype: This sighting (#15) included some of the best detail in Junior's file, and so we hoped to talk with the witness, James Cuch. He was a young Native American lad who was a student of Junior's at the time of the sighting. We called on him at his home in White Rocks. Unfortunately, we probably approached him too abruptly. A moment

or two after arriving, we simply asked him to tell his story, and his reply was that he had forgotten. He never did tell the story, but after a little conversation with him and with his parents, we were able to confirm certain details recorded in Junior's file. At 2:00 pm on September 15, 1966, he had seen a large (fifty to sixty feet in diameter) silvery, metallic object hovering some five feet off the ground in a clearing in the woods only a few hundred feet behind his house. He had approached within a hundred feet, at which time the object began to rise vertically, spinning slowly and then more rapidly as it rose. James is an excellent artist, and his close observation furnished a fine drawing ([Fig. 1-3](#)) from which Junior built one of two models ([Fig. 1-6](#)). The double-convex model was one that was described by several witnesses as well as James Cuch. James was able to describe a row of "windows" going around the center of the object, as were a few but not all of the other witnesses.



Fig. 1-6 *UFO models made by Junior Hicks. The one on the left is referred to in [Table 1](#) as convex planar; the one on the right as double convex. The model automobile is approximately the same scale as the objects, based on accounts of the witnesses.*

Bigger than the House it Hovered Over. The event of September 20, 1966 (#16), was spectacular. We interviewed Priscilla Sireech, a young Native American girl in high school, but other participants were not available,

although Junior had interviewed them earlier. The children were home at Randlett watching TV in the living room. At about eight-thirty, the room began to light up with a red color, “so bright you could see each other’s faces, and the lights were all turned off.” They ran outside in time to see a large object, flat on the bottom with a dome on top, (Junior’s convex planar model in [Fig. 1-6](#)) hovering over the house, almost appearing to balance on top of the house. It was twice as large as the small home. They heard a humming noise, and lights around the bottom edge of the object were blinking on and off, giving a predominantly red impression, but also appearing at times to be green and yellow. “It was too bright. Every time you look at it, it kind of hurts your eyes.” No occupants were seen inside the dome. The object moved east from the house rather rapidly for about a quarter of a mile and then came back over the house, finally disappearing over the horizon in the southwest. The “red beam” that only illuminates things that it touches was described. Other witnesses besides the children had also seen the object, but from a distance.

Sighting 19 is interesting in several respects, particularly because the cows were bellowing outside. Such responses in animals have occurred in many sightings all over the world, although this seems to be the only early instance in the Uintah Basin (but see [Chapter 8](#)).

Red Ball on Agency Hill. The sightings of September 28, 1966 are among the most interesting of those in Junior’s file. Four groups of witnesses came to our attention, and if a search could have been made within a few days after the sightings, more witnesses probably could have been found. The sightings took place east of Roosevelt around Ft. Duchesne. In our records they begin about 9:00 pm with another report (#20A) from Kent Denver (see [Fig. 1-5](#)):



Fig. 1-7 *Verl and Leah Haslem with their son Alan (1968).*

Denver was riding bicycles with Chuck Thompson, a buddy from Ft. Duchesne, and his sister Kay. (Charles Thompson was a Native American student of mine at Utah State University, where I had already heard a UFO story from him.) The UFO they saw was a “ball of fire,” but the fire would disappear, and then they could see a double-convex shape. They watched it for perhaps half an hour.

The Haslems’ Meteor in Reverse. The next three groups of witnesses apparently all saw something within a few minutes. Probably Verl Haslem and his wife and son ([Fig. 1-7](#)) were the first of the three groups, and it seems probable that the object they saw, which could conceivably have been the one seen by Kent Denver, was not the one seen by the other two groups of witnesses (#20B). The time of Verl Haslem’s sighting coincides almost exactly with that of Joe Ann Harris (10:15 pm), yet their accounts of what happened suggest that they were not watching the same object. Their descriptions of the object also differ.

Verl Haslem was an assistant bank manager in Roosevelt with a small farm a few miles east of town. He and his wife proved to be intelligent and very thoughtful witnesses who were deeply impressed by their experience with a UFO. They were coming home from a bank party with one son, Dan, asleep on the back seat but another son, Alan, awake and watching. As they came up over a hill, there was a bright orange light hovering over their home and rhythmically changing in intensity. They had a strange feeling and were a little worried about their house. Verl floored the gas pedal, but as they got within perhaps a quarter of a mile of their place, the object moved quickly to the south. As their truck slid to a stop by their home, they jumped out, and the light went out. "But it didn't go off just like shutting off a light in your room; this bright light went from bright orange to a yellow to a blue to a gray and nothing left." Then, "the light came on again in the opposite fashion, from a gray to a blue to this bright orange. Just as we jumped out of the car, it went up in the sky. It looked like a meteor in reverse. It left a trail far behind it, and it was a very clear night." Leah Haslem thought that they were making contact with their conversation. When they first saw them, Verl said, "'Look. There's a flying saucer.' And the light went out, immediately.' " All of this speculation is quite typical of Uintah Basin sightings.

Contrary to Dean Powell's interpretation, the Haslems had no doubt that "it was something beyond anything ever produced by men on this planet. That was entirely some type of extraterrestrial machine, the way it went upward and out of sight. Oh, you just could hardly believe it. When it first started, it didn't just slowly start; it seemed instantly to be going. Not with a jerk but almost without a jerk.... In just a second or two it was out of sight."

Terror: Attack on the Road to Randlett. The high point of the evening of September 18, 1966, was the sighting of Joe Ann Harris (later Joe Ann Lube) and her companions (#21A). Joe Ann ([Fig. 1-8](#)) and her husband were living in an apartment attached to a small Latter-Day Saint (Mormon) chapel in Randlett, a Native American town about fifteen miles southeast of Ft. Duchesne. Joe Ann had driven some Native American girls to Roosevelt and was taking them home. As they rounded a turn south of Fort Duchesne, they saw a big bright light just below a ridge at about treetop level. It started moving toward them. As it got closer, they could see that there was a large

dome, which was flashing a yellow color. When the light was on, the object was stationary; it would go out, and when it came back on, the object was much closer. When the light was out, they could see a flat bottom that extended out on either side (see convex planar model in [Fig. 1-6](#)). Joe Ann thought it was a big bomber or something about to crash into them—or an Air Force experiment! She even half expected to see Air Force boys in the dome, grinning at the trick they were playing on her. It approached very closely, and she and the Native American girls, as well as a large Native American woman in the front seat, were terrified. At its closest approach, within 30 to 50 feet, Joe Ann estimated, it filled the windshield of the car. “It was as big as the chapel in Randlett.” The girls were trying to get on the floor in the back seat, and the woman was trying to get on the floor in the front. Joe Ann had stopped the car and was trying to back down the highway when a car came around the bend behind her. As she looked back to the front, the object was gone. She followed the car that came from behind, but the driver, Gail Wilkins, had not seen the object. Apparently, it disappeared while Joe Ann had her head turned to the rear. The next day, another woman who had been with the girls in Roosevelt contacted Joe Ann. Shortly after she and Joe Ann had parted, she apparently saw the same object.



Fig. 1-8 (A) Joe Ann Harris and (B) the location of her sighting. *The UFO first appeared as a flashing light to the right of the picture just below the crest of the butte. At its closest approach, it nearly filled the windshield of their automobile.*

Estel's Meteor in Reverse on the Road to Vernal. A few days after talking to Joe Ann, Junior and I drove over to Vernal to talk to Estel Manwaring (later Mrs. Harry Dee Kidd). She is a schoolteacher there and proved to be an exceptionally coherent witness. After requesting my credentials and asking what I was up to, she told us her story (#21B).

Estel and Joe Ann were working together in a Native American mission. They had taken the Native American girls to Roosevelt to play in a ball game. One girl lived in Vernal, so Estel offered to take her home, and they continued east on Highway 40 after Joe Ann turned south at Fort Duchesne, toward Randlett. As Estel came up on a hill east of Fort Duchesne, the girl who was with her noticed a yellow light just above the trees to the south. There was a large house along the otherwise deserted highway, and Estel pulled into the driveway to get a better look at the object. She said, "When I pulled out from the trees, then apparently, it was watching me as we were watching it, and it went up very rapidly, straight up. I never heard any sound at all." While they were driving and before its departure, it looked about the size of "a small house," but with a dome that was lit up and flashing on and off. There were extremely bright lights around the bottom, as in Junior's planar convex model ([Fig. 1-6](#)). But the lights were so bright that it was difficult to make out the shape of the bottom. As in so many Uintah Basin sightings, the lights were pulsating in brightness and changing colors. At first the object was cruising along at the same speed as the car, which Estel had slowed for a better look. Judging by a row of trees on the other side of a field, it might have been about 400 feet away. The departure was spectacular: "And when it went up, it went up so fast that our heads just moved back on our necks! Now, my windshield slopes up (I have a Pontiac), and it just went so fast that I could hardly follow it, and the lights changed underneath it with a glowing. It looked like a glowing, burning thing as it went up, sort of a bluish-reddish color." As other witnesses, Estel compared the color with the end of a welding torch—"a different colored light; it wasn't like a car light or a light in a house."

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