

(written to him at 10510 86th Ave., Edmonton, Alta., T63 2M6). There are literally thousands of such letters, coming from people like Howard Nelson, who waited 63 years to find someone who would listen to his story about the "elongated object that appeared twice as long and high as a modern Boeing 747 jet," which he saw on a June morning in 1912, when just a 5-year-old boy on a Saskatchewan farm.

Musgrave has also uncovered what may be the earliest sighting of an unidentified flying object over North America. An 18th-century diary belonging to one Simeon Perkins contains an entry dated October 12, 1796, which tells of a strange story from the Bay of Fundy that "ships have been seen in the air." Two men and a girl observed "15 ships and a man forward with his hand stretched out." He's discovered that Canada was subject to the same waves of sightings that have made certain years stand out as times of peak UFO activity in the rest of the world (1896 being a particularly big year for us, as well as 1947 and 1952). He has come across stories such as the tale of the tugboat *Gulf Master*, a fairly new ship in apparent good condition, which vanished without a trace with five crewmen aboard on January 11, 1967, near a place (Parksville, B.C.) where loggers had

repeatedly seen UFO activity. No explanation for the disappearance has ever been offered.

There are also stories from farmers who have found circular depressions in their fields after sighting what they believed were flying saucers, from puzzled old people who have always wondered what it was they saw 40, 50 or even 60 years ago, even from police officers who have seen strange events on late-night patrols. There is no one type that reports to him, no typical UFO observer that Musgrave has found. All they have in common is their seriousness and their desire to know what it was they saw.

"I'm convinced it's the first time in the world a grant has been given to an individual to do such a study," Musgrave says. "I'm not researching to prove the phenomenon exists. I'm investigating to find out what they are. And I'm also doing a service: people now have someone they can tell their stories to."

It's unlikely Musgrave will ever get all the stories. A Gallup poll, taken in August of 1974, estimated that one in every 10 Canadian adults actually claims to have seen a UFO; that means there are probably 1 million Canadian adult witnesses around at any given time. The poll further estimated that 53 per cent of

all adults believe UFOs are real. It has been estimated by the experts — even, surprisingly, by those employed by the U.S. government to "explain away" the phenomenon — that approximately one of every five sightings cannot be explained easily by swamp gas, weather balloons, the planet Venus, shooting stars, satellites or even hoaxes. And as these are the ones Musgrave most wants to uncover, that still leaves roughly 200,000 adult Canadians out there who have seen something totally inexplicable, and whose main hope to understanding is what people like John Musgrave may some day find out.

53 per cent of us believe UFOs are real; some 200,000 Canadians may have sighted one

"Even if the phenomena were nothing but hallucinations," he says, "they are still hallucinations that are scaring a lot of people, making them lose sleep, get ulcers, live in total fear. Just having someone who will listen

seriously is good from a mental health aspect — just that should make my whole grant worthwhile. That's one thing that keeps me going. Just talking and helping people who say they've been badly scared."

Such a man is Ed Rutledge of Grande Prairie, Alta., who saw the story about Musgrave's grant in the local paper and immediately mailed a tape recording to the researcher. "I went to John with my story because I figured he might be my only hope," says Rutledge. "I couldn't get a real honest-to-God answer any place else and I wanted someone who could just explain, basically, what in the hell I saw. And after talking with him I'm satisfied that I did see something, a UFO if you like, but what they are I still can't say."

Rutledge had only one witness — his son Scott, 17 — to the sighting he had September 14, 1974. They'd gone out bear hunting about 100 miles south of their home, taking several hours to cover the rough bush roads. Getting to their camp site late in the evening, they bedded down sometime around 9:30. Sometime after 10 o'clock an incredibly white, bright sphere descended and hovered over the nearby lake, veering up toward their lone campsite as they watched. When the sphere came closer they both panicked and took

Win this Great Green Valley or

