

forgetting the subjectivity of the data at the time that conclusions are drawn from the analysis. It must be emphasized, again and again, that any conclusions contained in this report are based NOT on facts, but on what many observers thought and estimated the true facts to be.

Altogether, the data for this study consisted of approximately 4,000 reports of sightings of unidentified aerial objects. The majority were received through military channels or in the form of observer-completed questionnaires; a few were accepted in the form of direct letters from unquestionably reliable sources. Sightings made between June, 1947, and December, 1952, were considered for this study. Sightings alleged to have occurred prior to 1947 were not considered, since they were not reported to official sources until after public interest in "flying saucers" had been stimulated by the popular press.

REDUCTION OF DATA TO MECHANIZED COMPUTATION FORM

As received by the Air Technical Intelligence Center, the sighting reports were not in a form suitable for even a quasi-scientific study. A preliminary review of the data indicated the need for standardized interrogation procedures and supplemental forms for the reduction of currently held and subsequently acquired data to a form amenable to scientific appraisal.

The plan for reduction of the data to usable form consisted of a program of development comprising four major steps: (1) a systematic listing of the factors necessary to evaluate the observer and his report, and to identify the unknown object observed; (2) a standard scheme for the transfer of data to a mechanized computation system; (3) an orderly means of relating the original data to all subsequent forms; and (4) a consistent procedure for the identification of the phenomenon described by the original data.

Questionnaire

The first reports received by A11C varied widely in completeness and quality. Air Force Letter 200-5(2) and Air Force Form 112(1) were attempts to fix responsibility for and improve the quality of the reports of sightings. To coordinate past efforts and to provide standardization for the

(1) A modified Air Force Form 112 lists pertinent questions to be answered in regard to an unidentified-object sighting.

(2) Air Force Letter 200-5 places responsibility with the Air Force for the investigation, reporting, and analysis of unidentified aerial objects. This letter is dated 29 April 1952.

future, it was imperative to develop a questionnaire form listing the factors necessary for evaluation of the observer and his report, and identification of the unknown objects. In addition, it was decided that such a questionnaire should be designed to serve as an interrogator's guide, and as a form for the observer himself to complete when personal interrogation was not possible or practicable.

Ideally, a questionnaire for the purposes required should contain questions pertaining to all technical details considered to be essential for the statistical approach, and should serve to obtain a maximum of information from the average individual who had made a sighting in the past or would be likely to be reporting sightings in the future. Besides these discrete facts, an integrated written description of a sighting would be required, thus enabling the reported facts of the sighting to be corroborated. Also, a narrative description might allow subtle questions to be answered concerning the observer's ability, such as indirect questions that would reveal his reasoning ability, suggestibility, and general mental attitude. As a whole, then, the information contained in a questionnaire should make possible the classification and evaluation of the sighting, the rating of the observer, the probability of accuracy of reported facts, and the identification of what was reported by the observer as unidentified.

During the course of this project, three questionnaire forms were developed, each intended to be an improved revision of the one preceding. The improvements were suggested and confirmed by members of the panel of consultants connected with this project.

The original form was evolved by the panel of consultants as their first work on this project. It was intended to allow the start of the reduction of reports to discrete data, and was immediately subjected to extensive review and revision by the panel. The revised (second) form was subjected to a trial test before adoption. ATIC sent a copy to observers reporting sightings, with the request that the form be completed and returned. Of the first 300 questionnaires returned during July and August, 1952, 168 were analyzed by a consulting psychologist. On the basis of this analysis, plus the experience gained in working with past reports, the final form of the questionnaire - the U. S. Air Force Technical Information Sheet - was evolved. Copies of the three forms of the questionnaire, in the order of their development, are shown as Exhibits B1, B2, and B3 in Appendix B.

In order to implement the transcription of data from past sighting reports, each succeeding form was put to use as soon as it was developed and approved. Accordingly, experience was obtained with each form in relation to past data, an important factor in the improvement of the quality and completeness of the later reports included in this study.