

very high security but with an entirely different mission from that at White Sands Missile Range and Holloman and Kirtland AAF none very far away.

The Menzel Story

Doctor Menzel was a Harvard Professor of astrophysics, a well known astronomer, who was an expert on eclipses, for example. He led a number of eclipse expeditions around the world including one in the Soviet Union in 1936. His first quite negative book on UFOs was published in 1953 and he published two more after that. He proclaimed that he could explain every sighting. I had read his first book during my initial review of interesting flying saucer books in the late 1950s and was astonished at how, in order to make explanations fit, he had to adjust the data. If one changes all the witnesses' testimony, then anyone can explain a sighting. I was terribly disappointed in his work. He seemed to take every public opportunity to take pot shots at UFOs. All sightings had explanations!! I had only one encounter with Dr. Menzel, directly. I was giving a lecture at Harvard University, sponsored by an engineering alumni group, and called him earlier that day to invite him to the lecture just so nobody would think I was trying to avoid him. I had no idea how much publicity had been done by the sponsoring group. His response rather startled me. He said, "Oh, I know who you are" when I gave him my name.

"Oh, you read my paper next to yours in the Congressional Hearings Document of 1968?"

"No, I've seen letters and memos about you."

I still don't know what that statement meant. He went on to say "You can't be a scientist and believe in UFOs." At this point I laughed at such a strange remark. He got angry and started to rant and rave. I said "Look, Dr. Menzel, I just called out of politeness to invite you to my talk. I didn't call to argue with you."

"Okay. Of course I won't be there" he said.

So I told the story that night. It was my one encounter with the man. I had been aware that he had an enormous correspondence about UFOs which is at the American Philosophical Society Library in Philadelphia, which I had visited. He gave testimony at the 1968 Congressional hearings, in writing, as I had. He was also a participant in a 1969 UFO Conference in Boston, sponsored by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Somebody else read his paper, but he was there. He was a favorite target of Dr. James E. MacDonald, one of the world's premier ufologists, prior to his untimely death. Jim dissected Menzel's explanations, (Jim's specialty was upper atmosphere physics) and it was clear Menzel had gotten away with "scientific murder," so to speak, in trying to supposedly use science to explain cases. Brad Sparks, a young UFO researcher in California also demonstrated the lack of scientific integrity in Menzel's UFO investigations.

In any event, it was difficult to understand how an astronomer at Harvard, a total debunker, could be part of a committee that included such outstanding people, all with high level security