Fall 1948

MCIAKS/GWT/amw

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MCIAKS

Mr. [redacted]
Vineyard Haven, Mass.

Dear Mr. [redacted]

Receipt of your letter dated 6 May 1949, is acknowledged.

Your action in reporting this matter to the proper authorities is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

W. R. CLINGERMAN
Colonel, USAF
Chief, Analysis Division
Intelligence Department

VAN RYPER

VINEYARD HAVEN, MASS.

6 May 1949

Technical Intelligence Division,
Air Materiel Command,
Wright-Patterson Field,
Dayton, Ohio.

Gentlemen - This is a report of an observation made at Vineyard Haven, Island of Martha's Vineyard, before dawn on a day last Fall. I did not make a note of the date but it co-incided closely with the arrival of a squadron of jet planes at Otis Air Base, Camp Edwards, Cape Cod.

The observation was made from a large second floor window facing northeast toward the Cape about 8 miles distant. The weather was stormy.

I went into the room with the northeast window without turning on the light as I wanted to look out over the harbor to see how the storm was developing.

Beyond the window, seemingly over the Cape, I saw in the sky chains of luminous discs moving in swift evolutions.

The individual discs in the chains had the appearance of being about the size of the head of a safety match, and the chains about the length of a match-stick.

In color the chains were faint shades of blue, lavender, pink and green.

My first reaction was of incredulity. I turned away from the window, went to a dark corner of the room to make sure my eyes weren't playing tricks on me, then returned to the window.

The display was continuing. The chains soared, dipped, and swerved. Each chain was rigidly straight-lined, there was no whip-lashing or bending. I estimated there were about a dozen of them but did not attempt a count because the movement was so rapid and intricate. In general the pattern was concentric, but some chains rose outwardly in fountain-like arcs and swept down again into the pattern.

Opposite the window was a divan. I sat down, lighted a cigarette, and watched the aerial manouverings. The chains

swept up, glided and dived, interweaving as they traced their their paths. Movement was co-ordinated and there was no feeling that the chains would collide.

The chains did not have the appearance of strung beads, but gave the impression that the discs over-lapped slightly, like fish scales, as if the discs were set obliquely to the axis. It was this positioning which produced the effect of the elements of the chains being discs with the flat surface presented to the observer rather than spheres.

I thought at first that what I was seeing had something to do with the jet planes which I knew were scheduled to arrive. Against this was the fact that the storm was blowing so hard that it was impossible flying weather for pre-jet planes. Also the movement of the chains was so swift and involved and concentrated that I couldn't imagine planes going through such manouvers.

I thought of exhaust gases or tracer-flares, but the chains appeared to be self-propelled and guided. They were luminous and with a faint halation, but there were no comet-tails or streams or swishes of light.

Attempting to find a relative descriptive of what I was seeing, I thought of the back-ground patterns of Disney's "Fantasia".

I remembered, too, Fourth of July fire-works. The trajectories of the chains were like the bursts from "flower-pots" and the chains themselves reminded me of star-chains from exploded rockets, but with two essential points of difference:

(1) They appeared to be propelled, not floating.
(2) In general they were horizontal, sometimes up-tilted, but never vertical.

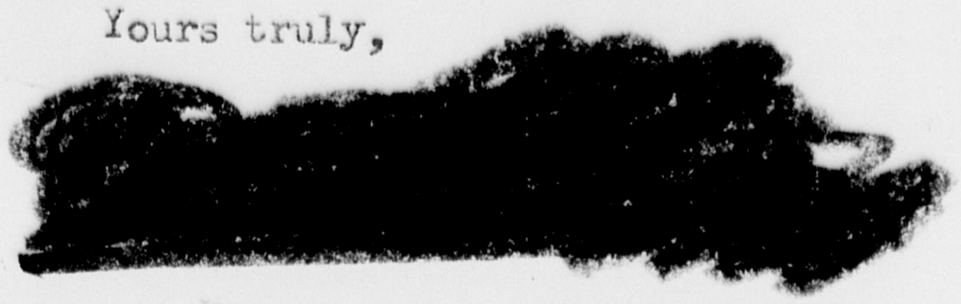
I judged the chains dipped to not less than 3000 feet above the Cape and rose to several times that height.

As daybreak began the display diminished. There were fewer and fewer chains and finally none. I had been watching for from five to ten minutes.

That morning when the crew came to work at the shop, I said nothing, for I felt that others must have seen the occurence and there would be reports of it. There were none, either then or subsequently. In mid-morning I told my wife what I had seen, and we agreed to say nothing, believing there would be other accounts. There have been none.

I am not disc-minded, and I suppose I was more than half persuaded of the probabilty that what I had seen was the result of some Air Force experiment. I made almost no mention of the circumstance except telling Mrs. [redacted] and two nights later her father and mother. In the intervening months the incident was virtually forgotten until the re-newed publicity given the subject of discs last week.

One statement I believe should be added is that, having often seen the Northern Lights, the display that I witnessed had nothing to do with that phenomenon unless in a black storm it was trying out a new performance.

I hope this information may be of use to you.

Yours truly,