

PROJECT 10073 RECORD

1. DATE - TIME GROUP 12 May 49 12/1415Z	LOCATION Holloman AFB, New Mexico
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION Astro (STARS/PLANETS)
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS Two	Disappeared behind clouds.
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 4 minutes	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Observer sighted an object that was white with a greenish tinge. It was shaped like a fuzzy star. The object appeared in the East. It was stationary. The observer was Dr Menzel of Harvard. He believed it to be some sort of astronomical phenomena.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Visual	
7. COURSE Stationary	
8. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ☐ Yes ☒ No	

UNCLASSIFIED

W
S
P
I

I wear glasses, bifocals, I turned and shifted my head to make sure that the phenomenon was real. I lowered the window another turn or two. The patches remained. I was still unaware that the phenomenon was exceptional until the southern object suddenly disappeared. I then asked the driver to stop the car, but the northern object vanished at that moment. The northern one had been slightly brighter. At maximum brilliance the patches must have been of zero to first stellar magnitude. The color was white possibly with a greenish tinge. They endured for about 4 minutes, during which time the car, travelling at 50 miles per hour, covered at least 3 miles. During that period, I am sure that the direction of the object did not change by more than 2° . I would prefer to say that the change was not more than 1° . With a base line of 3 miles, this latter figure indicates that the objects were at least 180 miles away, that their separation in space was at least 9 miles and that the diameter was about $3/4$ of a mile.

There is a bare possibility that the patches were clouds, but the behaviour was unusual, to say the least. The whole phenomenon is puzzling. It may have some simple explanation, but there seems to be no completely satisfactory theory available. I report the event for future records.

Harvard Observatory
Cambridge 38, Mass.

C
O
P
Y

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

INCIDENT NO. 359

1. Date of Observation 12 May 1949 Date of Interview _____
2. Exact Time (local) 0915-0930
3. Place of Observation Holloman AF Base, N.M.
4. Position of observer Ground in auto
5. What attracted attention to object While watching moon
6. Number of objects 2
7. Apparent size 1/4 Dia. of moon estimate 3/4 mile
8. Color of object White with greenish tinge
9. Shape Like Fuzzy star
10. Altitude 3-4° above Horizon
11. Direction from observer East
12. Distance from observer 180 miles away
13. Direction of flight of object(s)
14. Time in sight 4 minutes
15. Speed
16. Sound and odor
17. Trail
18. Luminosity 0 1st Stellar Magnitude
19. Projections
20. Maneuvers
21. Manner of disappearance
22. Effect on Clouds
23. Additional information concerning object
24. Weather Conditions Full moon sky bright

(over)

*Astro (Stars/Planets)
disappeared behind clouds*

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE
ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO

DHM/jcl

16 May 1949

REPORT OF AN UNUSUAL (?) NATURAL (?) PHENOMENON

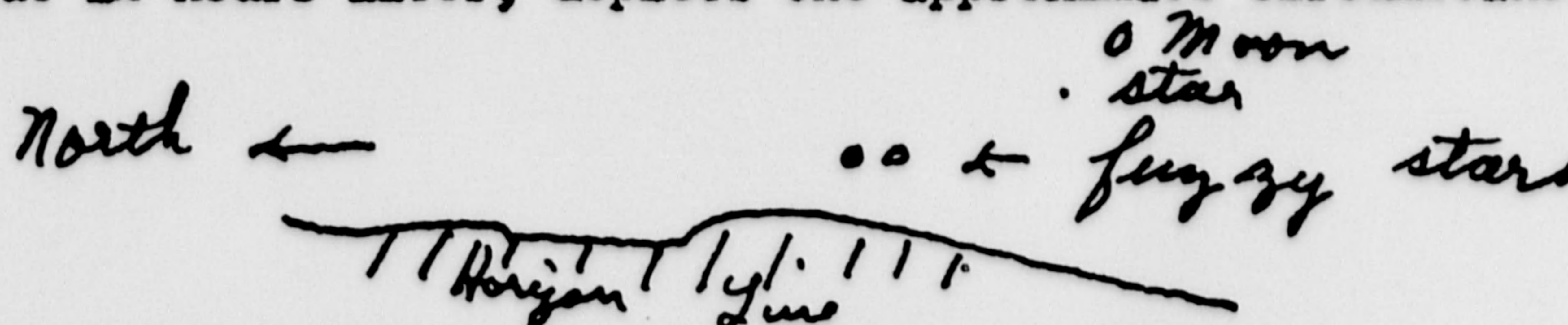
TO: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

On the night of May 12, 1949, while enroute from Holloman Air Force Base to Alamogordo, New Mexico, in a two-door sedan, I noted an atmospheric or celestial (?) phenomenon that I have been unable to explain. I am still not entirely convinced that what I saw may not have been an optical illusion of an unusual character.

Shortly after leaving Holloman Base, I looked out toward the Sacramento Range, to the East. The time was about 9:30, possibly as early as 9:15. I was watching the moon rise. At the moment, the moon had an altitude of perhaps 15° - 18° above the top of the Sacramento ridge. The moon was nearly full and the sky was bright. I was interested, therefore, to see a bright star, perhaps 60° - 80° East from the moon. I wondered what the star was. When the sky is so bright that the fainter stars do not show, I find it hard to locate the constellations. The star had a faint reddish color.

As I watched for a minute or two, I became conscious of another star considerably nearer the horizon. The star had a fuzzy appearance, caused, I thought, by low-level atmospheric haze. As I watched I noted, within half a minute, a second star about three degrees to the South of the first. I think the Northernmost star appeared first, but am not completely sure.

My first impression was that the stars were Castor and Pollux, of Gemini. Both increased in brightness rather slowly, which was not surprising for a pair of stars rising. I watched for perhaps another minute and suddenly became conscious of the fact that the stars couldn't have been Castor and Pollux, because Gemini is in the West rather than the East. Furthermore, the size of the fuzzy images bothered me. They were, as far as I could tell, very nearly identical in diameter, which was about one-fourth the diameter of the full moon. The following picture, drawn from memory about 12 hours later, depicts the approximate circumstances:



The fuzzy stars were three or four degrees above the horizon as defined by the mountain range.

UNCLASSIFIED
DOWNGRADED AT 2 YEAR INTERVALS
DECLASSIFIED AFTER 12 YEARS
DOD DIR 520910

UNCLASSIFIED

Page 2

Incident 359

Name and address of observer: ~~Donald H. Murray~~ Harvard Observatory,
Cambridge, Mass.

Occupation and hobbies:

Comments of Interrogator relative to intelligence and character of observer(s):

NARRATIVE SUMMARY:

UNCLASSIFIED

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
HOLLOMAN AIR FORCE BASE
ALAMOGORDO, NEW MEXICO

UNCLASSIFIED

DHL/jcl

16 May 1949

REPORT OF AN UNUSUAL (?) NATURAL (?) PHENOMENON

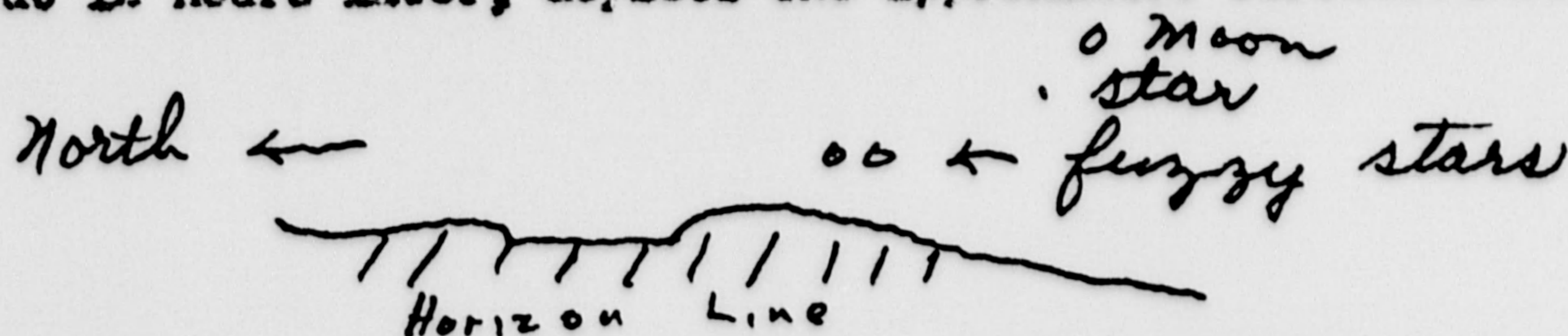
TO: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

On the night of May 12, 1949, while enroute from Holloman Air Force Base to Alamogordo, New Mexico, in a two-door sedan, I noted an atmospheric or celestial (?) phenomenon that I have been unable to explain. I am still not entirely convinced that what I saw may not have been an optical illusion of an unusual character.

Shortly after leaving Holloman Base, I looked out toward the Sacramento Range, to the East. The time was about 9:30, possibly as early as 9:15. I was watching the moon rise. At the moment, the moon had an altitude of perhaps 15° - 18° above the top of the Sacramento ridge. The moon was nearly full and the sky was bright. I was interested, therefore, to see a bright star, perhaps 60° - 80° East from the moon. I wondered what the star was. When the sky is so bright that the fainter stars do not show, I find it hard to locate the constellations. The star had a faint reddish color.

As I watched for a minute or two, I became conscious of another star considerably nearer the horizon. The star had a fuzzy appearance, caused, I thought, by low-level atmospheric haze. As I watched I noted, within half a minute, a second star about three degrees to the South of the first. I think the Northernmost star appeared first, but am not completely sure.

My first impression was that the stars were Castor and Pollux, of Gemini. Both increased in brightness rather slowly, which was not surprising for a pair of stars rising. I watched for perhaps another minute and suddenly became conscious of the fact that the stars couldn't have been Castor and Pollux, because Gemini is in the West rather than the East. Furthermore, the size of the fuzzy images bothered me. They were, as far as I could tell, very nearly identical in diameter, which was about one-fourth the diameter of the full moon. The following picture, drawn from memory about 12 hours later, depicts the approximate circumstances:



The fuzzy stars were three or four degrees above the horizon as defined by the mountain range.

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
UNCLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

I wear glasses, bifocals, I turned and shifted my head to make sure that the phenomenon was real. I lowered the window another turn or two. The patches remained. I was still unaware that the phenomenon was exceptional until the southern object suddenly disappeared. I then asked the driver to stop the car, but the northern object vanished at that moment. The northern one had been slightly brighter. At maximum brilliance the patches must have been of zero to first stellar magnitude. The color was white possibly with a greenish tinge. They endured for about 4 minutes, during which time the car, travelling at 50 miles per hour, covered at least 3 miles. During that period, I am sure that the direction of the object did not change by more than 2° . I would prefer to say that the change was not more than 1° . With a base line of 3 miles, this latter figure indicates that the objects were at least 180 miles away, that their separation in space was at least 9 miles and that the diameter was about $3/4$ of a mile.

There is a bare possibility that the patches were clouds, but the behaviour was unusual, to say the least. The whole phenomenon is puzzling. It may have some simple explanation, but there seems to be no completely satisfactory theory available. I report the event for future records.

~~SECRET~~
Harvard Observatory
Cambridge 38, Mass.

C
O
P
Y

UNCLASSIFIED
~~SECRET~~