

PROJECT 10073 RECORD

1. DATE - TIME GROUP 12 November 1954 12/2000Z	2. LOCATION Louisville, Kentucky
3. SOURCE Civilian & Military	10. CONCLUSION WAS BALLOON
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 1	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 3 Hours	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS Obj round. Was gleaming white at first, turned yellow, the red, then faded Investigation reveals object to be exp. balloon. Released by the General Mills Corporation.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground Visual	
7. COURSE	
8. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ☐ Yes ☒ No	

1 December 1954

FINAL EVALUATION

On 18 November 1954, T/Sgt. Drepperd called Lt Comdr Ross, Office of Naval Research, relative to the UFO's observed over the Kentucky Tennessee area. Comdr Ross stated he wasn't sure if the UFO's could have been the Navy's research balloons. He informed Sgt Drepperd he would check and call him back.

On 22 Nov 54, T/Sgt Drepperd received a call from Mr. M.W. Keith ONR Resident Representative at the University of Minnesota. Mr. Keith stated that on 12 & 13 Nov 54, two (2) balloons were launched from the University of Minnesota. The payloads came down; one (1) over Danville, Kentucky, the other over Carlisle, Kentucky. Mr. Keith further stated that he believed the UFO's in question could very possibly have been these balloons.

Due to all available information from observers, which basically compares to those descriptive characteristics of a balloon in flight, and since there were two (2) research balloons in the same area at the time of the sightings, the UFO's observed were high altitude research balloons.

CASE HISTORY AND EVALUATION 12 Nov 54, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

Background:

15 Nov 54: Major C. Williams, Ft. Knox, Kentucky, called 1st Lt. Athens of Flt 3-B, 4602nd AISS to report an UFO observed over Louisville on 12 Nov 54. Refer to Attachment #1.

13 & 15 Nov 54: Two newspaper articles were extracted from Dayton newspapers relative to the same UFO sighting over Louisville. Refer to Attachment #2.

17 Nov 54: Mr. ~~██████████~~, Physicist with the Oak Ridge National Laboratories, attending a conference with AMC officials at WPAFB, visited ATIAE-5 relative to a UFO observed by him over Knoxville, Tenn. Mr. ~~██████████~~ was not sure of the date and stated the UFO was observed on either the 14th or 15th of Nov 54. The UFO was described by Mr. ~~██████████~~ as being transparent, round and hovered at a very high altitude. He stated he saw what appeared exhausts from 2 jet a/c pass the object, one in front of it and one behind it. Mr. ~~██████████~~ further stated that he and his associates had always had an unofficial interest in UFO's and had in the past, been able to satisfactorily identify most of the UFO reported by the newspapers. However, in this particular instance, he was startled by the size of the UFO which he could see extremely well, but was unable to see the jets that passed by it. He saw only the jet exhausts. He realized that the object could have been, and probably was a balloon of some sort, but desired the official evaluation if possible.

ATIC ACTION: T/Sgt Drepperd, who interviewed Mr. [REDACTED], told him that from all indications the object he saw was the same one or one similar observed over Louisville, Ken., a few days earlier. Also, preliminary investigation suggested that the object was probably an experimental balloon released by the General Mills Corporation in Minneapolis, Minn. Sgt. Drepperd informed Mr. Green that when positive identification is made of the object, that he, Mr. Green, will be notified per his personal request.

The identity of the ADC Unit in Knoxville was established as the 460th FIS of McGHEE-Tuson Airport. If there were jet a/c in the air near the object, as stated by Mr. Green, they were more likely assigned to this unit. A wire of inquiry dated 18 Nov 54 was forwarded to the Intelligence Officer of this unit relative to the sighting.

Refer to Attachment #3.

6 Nov 54: On this date, 3 civilians observed a UFO over the vicinity of Brandenburg, Kentucky. 1st Lt. Athens, Flt 3-B, 4602nd AISS interrogated the observers on 11 Nov 54.

Refer to Attachment #4.

ATIC EVALUATION: Preliminary investigation suggests objects observed in all of the cases above to be balloons. Quite possibly it was the same experimental balloon released by the General Mills Corporation. General Mills is presently under contract with the Air Force and Navy for experimentation research program of the upper atmosphere.

A. W. Drepperd
T/Sgt ATIAE-5

DISPOSITION FORM

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION (If any)

FILE NO.

SUBJECT Record of Telephone Conversation

TO ATIAE

FROM Officer in Charge
Flight 3-B, 4602d AISS

DATE 16 November 1954 COMMENT NO. 1

Lt Athens

1. On 15 November 1954 a telephone conversation between 1/Lt Athens, Flight 3-B, 4602d Air Intelligence Service Squadron and Major C. Williams, AF representative, The Armored School, Ft. Knox, Kentucky took place. The following is a general account of the discussion which ensued.

a. Major Williams stated he had been approached by a Mr. George Hart, a reporter on the Louisville Courier Journal. Mr. Hart was soliciting information regarding an observation of an Unidentified Flying Object made over the city of Louisville, Kentucky on Friday 12 November 1954. Major Williams stated that he had informed Mr. Hart, on direct query by that individual, that the object in question had positively been identified as a high-altitude weather balloon. No further queries were made by Mr. Hart regarding the aforementioned.

b. The purpose of Major Williams' call to Flight 3-B was to obtain information regarding the AF policy on the release of information to news media regarding UFOB's and what his action should be should similar occasions arise in the future.

Lt Athens informed Major Williams that in those cases where such sighting have been positively identified as known objects, as was the case in question, then it was within Major Williams authority to release such information to any of the news media which may be making inquiries. Major Williams was also informed that only in those cases where such sightings were not identified he was instructed not to release any information, but to inform the individuals making queries that such releases would come from AF sources authorized to give such information. AFR 200-2 was brought to the attention of Major Williams. Aforementioned AFR governs the release of UFOB information as well as affixing responsibility for the investigation thereof.

c. The above situation is in general the discussion as occurred in phone conversation between the individuals stated in par. 1.

the chance of *Jon T. Matsuo* *for use in*
JON T. MATSUO
CAPT., USAF
OIC, FLT 3-B

ATTACHMENT #1

ROUTING

JOINT MESSAGEFORM

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER NO.

MULTIPLE 3 ADS.83C/m
18/11/7

FROM: (Originator)

COMDR ATIC

SPACE ABOVE FOR COMMUNICATIONS CENTER ONLY

DATE-TIME GROUP

181900Z NOV 54

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

UNCLASSIFIED

PRECEDENCE
FOR:

ACTION

ROUTINE

INFORMATION

ROUTINE

TO:

460th FIS MCGHEE-TUSON AIRPORT
KNOXVILLE, TENN JES EW☐ BOOK MESSAGE☐ ORIGINAL MESSAGE☒ MULTIPLE ADDRESS

CRYPTOPRECAUTION

☐ YES☐ NO

REFERS TO MESSAGE:

IDENTIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION

INFO:

D/I HQ USAF WASH D C JEP HQ

COMDR ADC ENT AFB, COLO. JEDEN

FOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

ATIC advised of unidentified flying object reported over Knoxville during past week. Exact date unknown. Request info as to possible intercept of object by your a/c and results of intercept. Refer to AFR 200-2, dated 12 August 1954.

COORDINATION:

ATIAE5

T/Sgt. R. W. McDuffee

DATE 18 Nov 54

for Capt. C. A. Hardin

ATIAE

Lt. Col. H. G. Johnston

DATE 18 Nov 54

ATIA

James C. Marshall HGL

DATE 18 Nov 54

ATT

Col. R. W. McDuffee

DATE

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

10073
ELECTRONICS BRANCH

Office of Record

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES

DRAFTER'S NAME (and signature, when required)

R. W. McDuffee

Sgt. Drepperd/re

RELEASING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE

R. W. McDuffee

SYMBOL

ATIAE5

TELEPHONE

69216

OFFICIAL TITLE

CWO, USAF

ASST. ADJ.

DD FORM 173
1 OCT 49REPLACES NME FORM 173, 1 MAY 49,
WHICH MAY BE USED.

16-58923-4 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

ATIAE5 OFFICIAL FILE

3 December 1954

Mr. [REDACTED]
Oak Ridge National Laboratories
MOAMA, Post Office Box [REDACTED]
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]:

In reference to your personal request made to me during your recent visit, may I say that our original suspicions regarding the unidentified flying object in question have now been confirmed.

The object which you observed over Knoxville was one of two high altitude plastic experimental balloons released on the 12th and 13th of November 1954 from the University of Minnesota.

The U. S. Office of Naval Research and the University of Minnesota are presently engaged in an atmospheric experimentation research program and as a result, launch special types of balloons which are considerably larger than the average weather balloon.

Thank you for your interest in the unidentified flying object program and please feel free to contact us for any assistance you may require in the future.

Sincerely,

ALBERT W. DREPPERD -
T/Sgt USAF
ATIAE-5

Handwritten:
The above
sent. [initials]

Handwritten:
How do you
know?
ATIAE-5

DAILY NEWS-DAYTON

Shiny Object At Louisville Unidentified

13 NOV 54

LOUISVILLE, Ky., Nov. 13.—(AP)—Despite efforts of the Air Force and speculation by curious onlookers, that shiny object over Louisville was recorded officially today as "unidentified."

Seemingly motionless at an estimated altitude of 80,000 feet a few degrees northwest from downtown Louisville, the silvery object caught the stares of thousands of persons yesterday from about 3 p. m. to 6 p. m.

A jet fighter plane from Wright-Patterson Air Force base, Dayton, cruised the sky for a closeup, but the pilot said he failed to sight the object after climbing to about 40,000 feet.

The object was a gleaming white at first, slowly turned yellow, finally red, and then faded into the dusk.

Reminiscent of the "flying saucer" days, newspapers and radio stations here were swamped with telephone calls while the "thing" hovered cryptically above.

Charles Strull, veteran member of the Louisville Astronomical society, said "It's not a celestial body" because its color changed as the sun went down.

Meteorologist O. K. Anderson said: "From our observation it certainly didn't seem to be a balloon—it showed so little movement."

Wright-Patterson Air Force base spokesmen said Saturday that investigation of the "unidentified object" was a classified project and refused to confirm or deny the report about the fighter plane from the base here.

13 Nov 54

DAYTON NEWS

Mysterious Object Could Have Been Plastic Balloon

MINNEAPOLIS, Nov. 15—(AP)

—A General Mills, Inc., research laboratory spokesman said today that an object sighted over Louisville, Ky., last Friday possibly was a large plastic balloon released near Minneapolis a day earlier.

The Minneapolis milling firm's scientific laboratory manufactures the white plastic balloons and sends them aloft in co-operation with the office of naval research, which is conducting cosmic ray and other upper atmospheric studies. Hundreds of the balloons have been launched.

The balloon released last Thursday measured 90 feet in diameter and is 100 feet long. Its cargo of instruments was released by parachute over southern Minnesota the same day and was recovered near Austin, Minn.

No reports on finding the balloon had been received up to noon today. A mechanical device releases the cargo when the balloon reaches a prescribed altitude, usually in the stratosphere.

A jet fighter plane from Wright-Patterson Air Force base, Dayton, was sent to Louisville Friday in an attempt to identify the object, but the pilot failed to sight it after reaching about 40,000 feet. The white object was estimated at an altitude of 80,000 feet.

After dropping its instrument cargo, a balloon usually rises rapidly and bursts.

15 NOV 54

DAYTON JOURNAL

Jet Pilots Solve Mystery of 'Thing'

Flying saucer experts admit "something's up," David Dickey writes. Page C-1.

The sky yesterday afternoon produced a "mystery" which excited people in Knoxville, out in the county, in Barbourville, Ky. and even as far away as Louisville, till the Air Force apparently solved it.

It was described by Knoxville viewers as an almost rectangular object, white, with irregular sides. "Looked like it was right over Standard Knitting Mills," said L. O. Graves, 1903 Jefferson Avenue, who looked at the "thing" with two neighbors.

Fliers in two jet planes saw the object and flew to investigate.

Game Fans See Object

"It was a balloon," said Lt. Melvin Bowers and Lt. Mark Studder, after they landed back at McGhee Tyson Air Base.

"We flew at about 36,000 feet and got under it. It was still some distance above us. Probably sent up by some distant weather bureau and drifted in here on an upper air current."

Knoxville Weather Bureau reported it sent up a weather balloon yesterday morning, but it burst. No other was sent up yesterday by the local station.

Hundreds of fans at the Tennessee-Florida football game saw the object northeast of Shields-Watkins Stadium. Also observed was a moving vapor trail, apparently from one of jet interceptors.

Mrs. George A. Caldwell, of near Strawberry Plains, said she saw the object about 4:15 p. m. "It looked real big," she said.

Looked 'Lighted Up'

Another observer reported at 5:45 p. m. that the object was visible between Fountain City and Hall's, and looked "lighted up." At a great height it was probable that a balloon could have reflected light from the setting sun, although sunset was officially at 5:30 p. m. at ground level.

At Tazewell, Claiborne County Sheriff Dan Chumley said he watched the object, which appeared like "a real bright light bulb, larger than my two fists."

He said that after dark it proved to be a red star. "I never would have believed it," he said.

Sightings were reported as far east of Knoxville as Newport.

"I saw something that looked like a neon light," said Jefferson County Sheriff John Goforth, Dandridge. "I watched it with my field glasses till night came, and it looked like a glass ball through the glasses."

Kingsport Highway Patrol said it received no calls about the "saucer," but observed a very bright star in the east.

'Traveling Slowly South'

J. S. Warren, News-Sentinel correspondent in Barbourville, reported a "bright, shiny object" appeared high over that city about 1:30. It was traveling very slowly south toward Knoxville.

In Louisville, Associated Press reported, "a shiny object, recorded officially as unidentified, caught the stares of thousands" late Friday afternoon. Motorists in two Central Kentucky counties reported seeing an object like a meteor glowing green or blue Friday night.

FROM: THE KNOXVILLE NEWS-SENTINEL, 11/14/54