

PROJECT 10073 RECORD CARD

1. DATE 12 Oct 61		2. LOCATION Ferndale, Michigan		12. CONCLUSIONS ☐ Was Balloon ☐ Probably Balloon ☐ Possibly Balloon ☐ Was Aircraft ☐ Probably Aircraft ☐ Possibly Aircraft ☐ Was Astronomical ☐ Probably Astronomical ☐ Possibly Astronomical	
3. DATE-TIME GROUP Local 1802 GMT 122202Z		4. TYPE OF OBSERVATION ☒ Ground-Visual ☐ Ground-Radar ☐ Air-Visual ☐ Air-Intercept Radar		☒ Other Condensation trail ☐ Insufficient Data for Evaluation ☐ Unknown	
5. PHOTOS ☐ Yes ☒ No		6. SOURCE Civilian			
7. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION 28 min		8. NUMBER OF OBJECTS 2		9. COURSE Varied	
10. BRIEF SUMMARY OF SIGHTING Objt of sighting is probably a non-persistent condensation trail. Witness reports that objt appeared to make turns and moved as a unit. The motion of this condensation trail is an illusion, in the instance of non-persistent trails the a/c is generating at the one end and the trail is disappating at the other, this gives the illusion of motion in the direction in which the a/c is moving. The red color reported by witness is due to trails being illuminated by rays of setting sun. Dimensions arrived at by witness are not al all out of bounds for a condensation trail. Length of time that these contrails exist depends upon factors such as moisture content and temperature of air. Length of trail depends upon maxime above factors as well as speed of a/c. There is no evidence availabæe which would indicate that objt of sighting was not a non-persistent condensation trail.			11. COMMENTS		

Copy to Wright-Patterson Air Research
Dayton Ohio

TD-E

Oct. 13, 1961

Life and Time Inc.
Letters to the editor

Gentlemen:

I am writing as a citizen interested in a matter that seems to be of great public importance; namely the identity of mysterious flying objects that have been reported in all times and places for the past fifteen or so years. The objects of which I am writing were seen by my wife and myself last night from 6:02 P.M. until about 6:30. I am a Detroit school teacher, and my wife a librarian in ~~the~~, not people prone to hysteria. I am enclosing the clipping from the Detroit News of this date, purporting to explain the phenomenon which had inspired nearly three hundred calls to the News by citizens who were startled by the object. The facts as I shall relate them prove definitely that the theory of contrail could not possibly explain the phenomenon. I am interested in the real nature of the sighting. I wonder if there is a definite policy of hush stemming from the Government, or just what is the lack of follow through in a field that seems so full of significance.

We saw at 6:02 an object that seemed like a flaming tube in the sky at an elevation of some 20 degrees, at a direction some 15 degrees south of a due west looking along Nine Mile Road in Ferndale. I drove home for camera and field glasses, then drove for some three miles west along Nine Mile road, but could not seem to approach any closer to the object. At that time, was farther to the northwest another similar object. Both were incredibly bright, which was notable, for anything like a plane in the sky would be less bright than the setting sun and thus appear black against it. As I drove west I saw the nearer object slowly turn until its end was toward me. It had the form then of a circle about one quarter of the length. In size it remained about the length of fingers held a quarter inch apart at arm's length. By this time the ~~thing~~ had passed from south of the Nine Mile Road to a position about fifteen degrees to the north. It had turned quite red in the haze of the setting sun, but still shone through the haze like a long streak of red. The other object had disappeared somehow to the north, and the larger and closer now disappeared in the distance without my being able to get a picture of it.

I called the Detroit News and was told that there had been some 250 calls during the past half hour. The speaker gave the explanation that appeared in the paper. I pointed out that a contrail would not exist, progress, turn side to end and back again, and disappear still bright through the haze into the distance. Later he told my sister-in-law, ~~that~~ that calls had come in from a distance from Mount Clemens, to Rochester (Michigan) to south Detroit, and that they had watched the phenomenon from the windows of the News.

I talked with my sister-in-law and found that she had watched the thing from near the Penobscot Building in downtown Detroit, some 12 miles to the south. As she looked west on Fort Street it appeared about 15 degrees to her right, about the same distance as it had been to my left as I first sighted it. An application of trigonometry with these angles and the 12 miles between sighting would place a line of convergence at somewhere between thirty and sixty miles. A ratio of a measurement with the fingers of the apparent size of the object as held and measured at arm's length would give a ratio of one fourth inch to two feet between eyes and finger tips. This ratio projected to the distance would make the object of a size somewhere between .3 and .6 miles in length, with a



thickness of some quarter of that incredible length. As I talked in my school today with the librarian, Miss [REDACTED] she told me that at almost the same time last night she had seen the same phenomenon from a place in Canada some thirty miles south and west of Detroit.

The contrail idea is preposterous for a number of reasons. In the first place, the contrail would not be an isolated, short flaming streak. It would not change color with the distance and haze effect, and certainly could not sustain a brightness that would shine red with distance. It would not turn and resume original position. It could not travel what would seem to be a long distance in a rapid time. For a contrail to travel would imply a high wind force which would quickly dissipate the contrail cloud. A contrail would not exist as two short bars of light, which these certainly were- short, that is, as they seemed to appear in the sky without any guess as to height or distance.

I am certainly not writing this with any idea as to notoriety or claim to fame or payment, but from interest. Since a mysterious sighting of two strange luminiscent objects in the summer of 1960, concerning which I was interviewed by an officer from Selfridge Field, I have been interested in the matter of unexplained flying objects. That is why I tried to observe these as closely as I could. I hope that Time can shed some more light on the matter. I believe that it was in 1953 that Life ran a most provocative study on so-called UFO's seen chiefly in the West. At that time any reporting of unknown flying objects was accompanied by a tongue-in-cheek skepticism, as if any writer were unwilling to appear gullible, and hoped to disassociate himself from any stigma that would come to a person who fell for a hoax. I am quite willing to affirm this in any way you might request. It is no hoax, but perhaps something quite significant.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Ferdale
Mich

ELD
1300121 00 22
RECEIVED

UFO ANALYSIS SHEET

12

Location FERNDALE, MICHIGAN

Date (Local) 12 OCT 61

Hour (Local) 1802

Hour (Z Time Group) 12/2202

Satellite: (Det 5 ATIC, Ext 3279)

Astronomical Phenomena (Meteor, Comet, Planet, etc)

Radar Analysis (AFCIN-4E1) N/A

Natural Phenomena (Ball Lightning, etc)

Aircraft, Balloons, Airships, etc

Other NON-PERSISTENT CONDENSATION TRAIL.

Evaluation of Source Reliability PROBABLY GOOD.

Analysis and Conclusions:

THE OBJECT OF THIS SIGHTING IS PROBABLY A NON-PERSISTENT CONDENSATION TRAIL. THE WITNESS REPORTS THAT THE OBJECT APPEARED TO MAKE TURNS AND MOVED AS A UNIT. THE MOTION OF THIS CONDENSATION TRAIL IS AN ILLUSION, IN THE INSTANCE OF NON-PERSISTENT TRAILS THE AIRCRAFT IS GENERATING AT THE ONE END AND THE TRAIL IS DISAPPEARING AT THE OTHER. THIS GIVES THE ILLUSION OF MOTION IN THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THE AIRCRAFT IS MOVING. THE RED COLOR REPORTED BY THE WITNESS IS

DUE TO THE TRAILS BEING ILLUMINATED
BY THE RAYS OF THE SETTING SUN.

THE DIMENSIONS ARRIVED AT BY THE
WITNESS ARE NOT AT ALL OUT OF
BOUNDS FOR A CONDENSATION TRAIL.

THE LENGTH OF TIME THAT THESE
CONTRAILS EXIST DEPENDS UPON
FACTORS SUCH AS THE MOISTURE
CONTENT AND TEMPERATURE OF

THE AIR. THE LENGTH OF THE
TRAIL DEPENDS UPON THE ABOVE
FACTORS AS WELL AS THE SPEED

OF THE AIRCRAFT. THERE IS NO
EVIDENCE AVAILABLE WHICH WOULD

INDICATE THAT THE OBJECT OF THIS
SIGHTING WAS NOT A NON-PERSISTENT
CONDENSATION TRAIL.

Finch

15