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WASHINGTON: 1976

ASTRONOMY

Leo and Virgo Herald Spring

Virgo, the virgin, Leo, the lion, and Bootes, the herdsman, rise on the eastern horizon in March while winter constellations vanish in the west, James Stokley reports.

➤ WITH THE ARRIVAL of March and the beginning of spring on March 20, the evening skies begin to assume the appearance characteristic of this season. Constellations that were so prominent in the south on winter evenings are now beginning to vanish in the west. And toward the east we see new ones appearing that tell us spring is nearly here.

On the accompanying maps you can see the way the constellations are arranged at about ten p.m. (your own kind of standard time) on March 1, nine o'clock at the middle of the month and eight at the end.

Shining brilliantly in the south is the brightest of the nighttime stars, Sirius, in Canis Major, the greater dog. Above is the lesser dog, Canis Minor, with Procyon. To the right (in the southwest) is Orion, the warrior, with two stars of the first magnitude. Above is Betelgeuse; below is Rigel. Between them is a row of three somewhat fainter stars that mark the warrior's belt. And still farther to the right, directly west as it is shown, is Taurus, the bull, with brilliant Aldebaran, distinctly ruddy in hue.

A little higher and farther right, shown on the map of the northern skies, is Auriga, the charioteer, in which stands bright Capella. And below this group is Perseus, the champion, location of the famous variable star called Algol. In a cycle of a little less than three days it drops from its normal brightness of second magnitude to third, as a dark body passes in front of the bright star and eclipses it.

Mars Visits the Twins

Above Orion is the figure of Gemini, the twins, with two well-known stars, Castor and Pollux. The latter is first magnitude, the former second. But there is another bright object in this constellation: the planet Mars. It is still of the first magnitude, but it has faded considerably since December, when it was more than five times as bright as it is now. The cause of this diminution in light is that it is now receding rapidly from the earth.

Over in the eastern sky three prominent constellations of spring evenings are now coming into view. The highest is Leo, the lion, with a smaller grouping of stars called the sickle. Regulus is the star at the end of the handle. Below Leo is Virgo, the virgin, which contains the star Spica. Because it is so low, and there is so much absorption of its light by the atmosphere, it looks fainter than normally, although it is of the first magnitude also. And to the left of Virgo is Bootes, the herdsman, with Arcturus as the brightest star.

One of the bears that Bootes is sup-

posed to be driving is represented by the constellation of Ursa Major, which means "great bear." This is higher and farther left. In it is the familiar great dipper, with the two stars in the bowl called the pointers. Following their direction downwards you come to the pole star, Polaris, which is in Ursa Minor, the other bear.

Earlier in the evening than the times for which our maps are prepared you can see another planet in the west, one which outshines any other. This is Venus, with a magnitude of minus 4.2, which is about 80 times as bright as Mars. Venus is so bright that it comes into view well ahead of other stars or planets. At the beginning of March it remains in the sky until after nine but on March 31 it sets about 8:00 p.m. By mid-April it will be gone entirely from the evening sky.

Jupiter and Saturn, two other planets, are both in the constellation of Capricornus, the sea-goat, and appear low in the east just before sunrise. Mercury will be farthest west of the sun on March 20, and may be seen near the eastern horizon as dawn is breaking.

March brings the second eclipse of the year, a partial lunar eclipse, which will be visible from many parts of the United States to those who get up early enough.

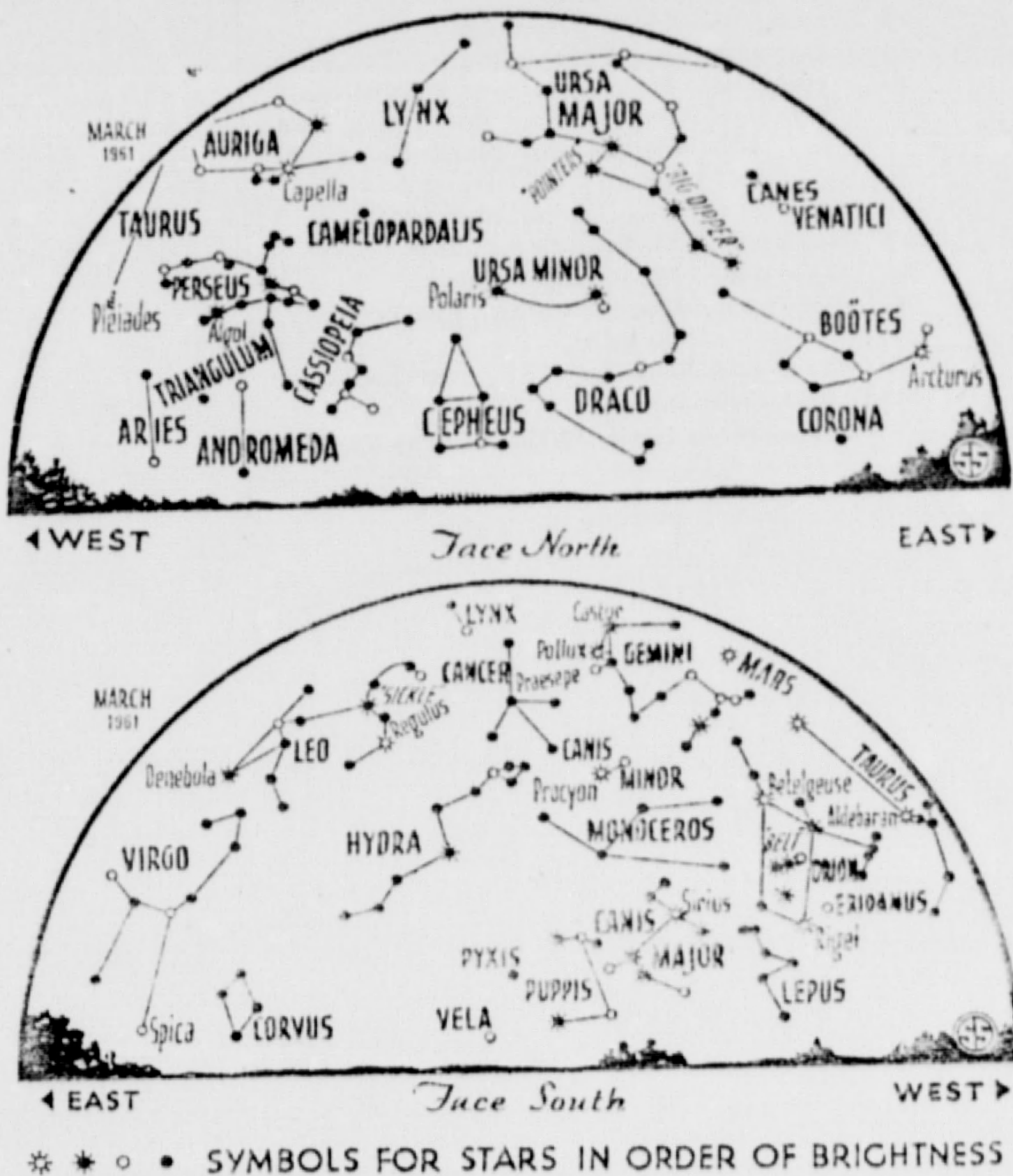
This eclipse of the moon occurs a little before sunrise. In the eastern part of the country, in fact, it happens as the sun is rising.

On Feb. 15 there was an eclipse of the sun when the moon came between the sun and earth. In places where the moon's shadow reached, the sun was totally eclipsed.

About two weeks later, March 2, the moon has made half of its monthly trip around the earth, and it enters into the earth's shadow, producing an eclipse of the moon. It will not be completely eclipsed; at the maximum, about 80% of the lunar diameter will be shaded. But this area will not be completely dark. It will shine with a dull, coppery-red glow, illuminated by light from the sun which the earth's atmosphere has bent around into its shadow. Such light is reddened because passage through the atmosphere absorbs much of its blue part, while that which is red gets through with less diminished intensity.

Lunar Eclipse Seen in U. S.

The eclipse is at its height at 8:29 a.m. EST (7:39 a.m. CST; 6:29 a.m. MST; and 5:29 a.m. PST). By then, in the eastern part of the country, the sun will have risen and the moon (in full phase, as it must always be when it is eclipsed) has set. Farther west, however, in the United States and Canada, the partially eclipsed moon will be visible low in the western sky,



about the time that the morning twilight begins in the east.

On Monday, March 20, at 3:32 p.m. EST (2:32 p.m. CST; 1:32 p.m. MST and 12:32 p.m. PST) the sun crosses the equator. Thus, on this day, it rises due east and sets due west. Then, neglecting some effects of the atmosphere that make it appear a little higher than it really is in the sky, it is above the horizon for 12 hours and below for 12 hours. Day and night are equal, so this is the equinox, which means "equal night."

For us who live in the Northern Hemisphere, this marks the beginning of spring, but in countries south of the equator it is the beginning of autumn. Their noonday sun was highest last December, when for us it was lowest and winter was starting. And next June 21 the solstice occurs, when the sun is highest for us, and summer will officially begin. But in the countries in the Southern Hemisphere it will be lowest, and winter will be starting. The seasons are reversed in the two hemispheres.

Celestial Time Table for March

March EST

- | | | |
|----|------------|---|
| 1 | 11:05 p.m. | Algol (variable star in Perseus) at minimum brightness |
| 2 | 8:35 a.m. | Full moon and partial eclipse of moon |
| 4 | 7:55 p.m. | Algol at minimum |
| 5 | | Venus at greatest brilliancy |
| 9 | 9:58 p.m. | Moon in last quarter |
| 12 | 3:00 p.m. | Moon passes Saturn |
| | 7:00 p.m. | Moon passes Jupiter |
| 14 | 1:00 p.m. | Moon nearest; distance 225,300 miles |
| 16 | 1:51 p.m. | New moon |
| 18 | 2:00 p.m. | Moon passes Venus |
| 19 | 4:01 a.m. | Algol at minimum |
| 20 | 3:00 p.m. | Mercury farthest west of sun |
| | 3:32 p.m. | Sun over equator; spring commences in Northern Hemisphere |
| 22 | 12:50 a.m. | Algol at minimum |
| 23 | 9:49 p.m. | Moon in first quarter |
| 24 | 1:00 p.m. | Moon passes Mars |
| 26 | 10:00 a.m. | Moon farthest, distance 251,600 miles |

Subtract one hour for CST, two hours for MST, and three hours for PST.

• Science News Letter, 79:122 February 25, 1961

NO CASE (INFORMATION ONLY)

SPRING, 1961

Millville, New Jersey

Sharon, Mass. 02067

August 8, 1965

Dear Dr. Hynek,

I read with interest the latest commentary on the controversial UFO, in this Sunday's Boston Globe. Now I've finally decided to tell about a certain UFO that I saw a long time ago. Mind you, now, I'm not trying to climb on the bandwagon. I couldn't care less if anyone attributes my report to the power of suggestion due to the article. I've kept it to myself because I don't consider myself the type to sound alarms, only to receive a pat on the shoulder, a reassurance that "everything's going to be alright", and a hidden snicker after my back is turned.

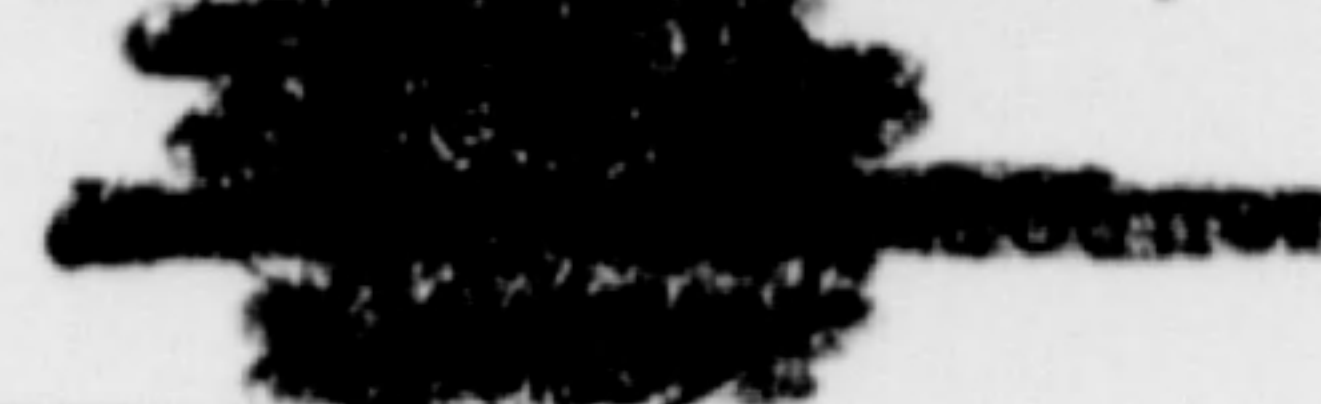
One night back in 1961, early Spring, I believe, I was engaged in the noble American tradition of "parking" with a girl. There had been several meteor that evening, so they were commonplace enough that I took only a glance at the ones I saw. (pardon the inferior typewriter) Then, along came "Big Daddy" meteor, or so I at first thought. However, it was too large to be a meteor, and moved far too slow. As nearly as I can recall, it was towards the East or possibly NE, at about a 60 degree angle above the horizon. Might mention that I was in Millville, N.J. at the time.

What caught my attention, and at the time it took an awful lot to distract me, was the way the thing moved. About like an airplane. First logical conclusion: airplanes have colored lights, and usually make noise., the object was noiseless, and, not to sound corny, glowed. It was much brighter than any star in the sky. Therefore, it wasn't either an airplane or a star. So as it moved slowly northward, I figured it to be a weather balloon reflecting the sun's light. However, balloons don't stand still, change direction, and have reverse gears, so to speak. Second logical conclusion: not a weather balloon.

Well, I finally pointed it out to the girl, to assure myself that it wasn't an illusion. She saw it with no trouble, and got quite scared. We watched together as the thing went through its antics. Here's what it did as nearly as I recall: it moved slowly northward for perhaps 30 seconds, then stopped. Then it darted towards the horizon, which would be eastward I guess. Such a rapid movement as this I've never seen. Almost too fast to see. It stopped abruptly, blasted northward again for quite a ways, and stopped again. And there it sat for over a minute. Bingo! It went into reverse, back over almost the same path it had come. Was something like when powerful searchlights light up a cloud at night. Except that I checked the area and the nearest light was some 30 miles away, and the sky was cloudless. "Thing" then darted around all over the place in little bursts of speed unbelievably rapid. Almost unbelievably rapid. At one point it came to a star, stopped, went right, straight, left, and straight again. So help me, it looked like the thing deliberately missed that star, which I realize is foolish. Was probably coincidence. Finally, after some five minutes of fooling around, it took off for greener pastures. From far to the south it moved out of sight to the north in about FIVE seconds. I timed it, I know it, I don't expect you to believe it, but it happened.

I have the "I'm from Missouri" outlook on things. I never believed in UFO reports. I do now, until someone can show me why I shouldn't. Hoping you don't think I'm nuts, but not caring much if you do,

Sincerely yours,



No Case (Information Only)

1 March 1961
Washington and
California

SIGHTING SUMMARY

MARCH 1961

1 N. E. Skagit Valley, ~~Washington~~, Wn., Burlington, Wn., 11:24 p.m.
Skyquake. (Mt. Vernon Skagit Valley Herald, 3/2); N. E. Skagit Valley,
Wn., ~~Washington~~, Wn., Burlington, Wn., 11:24 p.m. Huge ball of light seen
for few minutes headed toward the West; power flickered. (Mt. Vernon
Skagit Valley Herald, 3/2); Bellingham, Wn., Mt. Baker, Wn., 10:00 p.m.
Flare-like flash out of sky. (Mt. Vernon Skagit Valley Herald, 3/2);
Santa Cruz, Calif., 9:00 p.m. UFO, extremely bright. (Santa Cruz,
Calif., Sentinel News, 3/2).

(Do not use the above lines)

OFFICIAL MOONWATCH REPORT

E-W Object

(For confirmations, and for observations not reported previously)

OBJECT OBSERVED 1961 Delta one
(spell out Greek letter)

REGISTERED TEAM NAME Kansas City Missouri

TEAM NUMBER 036-039-095

In "Site Number" column below indicate the number of the site at which each observation was made.

DO NOT USE	Tele-graph		Site No.	Date (UT)	Time (UT)			R.A. or Az. (A)	Dec. or Alt. (A)	Dir. of Travel	Ang. Vel. Deg/Sec	Max. Mag. + or -	Var. in Seconds Max-Max	Instrument Weight
	Yes	No			H	M	S							
		✓	036	3 March	10	06	31.2	A 180.0	A 86.9	W - E	0.3 %	+4	steady	3 20x5in

EPOCH OF STAR CHARTS USED: Checked with SP chart - DB field at this location is confusing and could not.

REMARKS:

Full moon and slight haze made the fainter stars come and go

At 10h 04min 14sec a faint star like object came thru E-W $\approx 0.5^\circ$ north of center Alt. 87.4 angular velocity about same as a satellite - breeze from west so not wind blown,

Copy to ATIC

(Continue remarks on reverse side)

REGISTERED TEAM LEADER'S NAME

W. O. Clarke

DATE OF REPORT 3 March 61

Do not send observations made at a site for which no Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory site number is assigned.

No Case (Information Only)

4 March 1961
Idaho and
Utah

1 Logan, Utah, Montpelier, Idaho, Strevell, Idaho, McCannan, Idaho,
Grace, Idaho, Cub River, Idaho, Bear Lake Basin, Idaho, Brigham City,
Utah, 12:30 p.m. Skycuake. (Montpelier Idaho News Examiner, 3/9);
Logan, Utah, Montpelier, Idaho, Strevell, Idaho, McCannan, Idaho,
Grace, Idaho, Cub River, Idaho, Bear Lake Basin, Idaho, Brigham City,
Utah, 12:30 p.m. Ball of fire seen for few seconds moving to S.W.
Colors were; red, yellow, orange and blue. (Montpelier, Idaho News
Examiner, 3/9);

No Case (Information Only)

5 March 1961
London, England

5 . London, England, 4:00 a.m. Large & its object like meteor with shower of sparks. (New York Mirror, 3/5).

No Case (Information Only)

7 March 1961
Portland, Oregon
Sacramento, California

7 Portland, Oregon, 8:45 p.m. Ball of flame or orange glow seen for 10 minutes. (Medford Mail Tribune, 3/9); Sacramento, Calif., night. Fulsating light seen moving to the west. (Sacramento, Calif. Bee, 3/8).

No Case (Information Only)

8 March 1961
Henderson, Kentucky
Eureka, California

8 Henderson, Ky., 1:30 p.m. Object size of baseball appeared to fall and glowed like an Xmas tree ornament. (Henderson, Ky. Gleaner & Journal, 3/10); Henderson, Ky., 2:30 p.m. Huge ball of fire trailing smoke seen moving to East. (Henderson, Ky. Gleaner & Journal, 3/9); Eureka, Calif., 7:35 p.m. Bright light seen for 20 minutes traveling S.E. to N., then switched course to N. to S.W. (Eureka, Calif. Humboldt Standard, 3/9).

No Case (Information Only)

9 March 1961
Perry, Iowa
Glendale, Oregon

9 Perry, Iowa, 7:00 p.m. Yellow ball of fire seen for few minutes moving to N.W. (Perry, Iowa Chief, 3/11); Glendale, Oregon, 7:30 p.m. Bright UFO with 4 white lights seen for two hours. Hovered for one hour. (GrantsPass, Oregon Courier, 3/10).

No Case (Information Only)

10 March 1961
Walnut Creek, California

10 Walnut Creek, Calif., 12:42 a.m. Light which changed colors was seen moving to N.E. (Oakland, Calif. Tribune, 3/10).

No Case (Information Only)

12 March 1961
Lewiston, Idaho

12: Lewiston, Idaho, Night. Round, greenish blue object seen for three seconds moving to West. (Lewiston, Idaho Tribune, 3/19).

No Case (Information Only)

13 March 1961
San Diego, California

13 San Diego, Calif., 9:45 p.m. Light seen from 8 to 10 minutes, moved slowly and changed direction. (San Diego, Calif. Tribune, 3/14).

14 March 1961
San Diego, California

* * * * *

2 PILOTS HERE SPOT MYSTERY SKY LIGHT by John Bunker, Evening Tribune Military Writer. - Two Navy pilots today reported seeing a strange, flying object in San Diego skies. Lt. Bill Friel and Ens. Jim Jacanin of North Island's All Weather Fighter Squadron 3 spotted the object about 9:45 last night. The Air Force radar station on Mt. Laguna said it did not pick up an unidentified object. The station tracks all aircraft approaching the San Diego area. "We were just going home from a routine alert when I saw this unusual light in the sky," said Friel. "We were three blocks from our house at 311 1st St. When we got there, the light was still visible. At first I thought it might be a satellite, but it wasn't moving as a satellite would. We then got binoculars and watched it. At first it was almost due east." Said Jacanin: "It seemed to be moving east to west. Then it made a 90 degree turn toward the north. A minute or so later, it turned another 90 degrees and went back east." The fliers said the object was visible for 8 or 10 minutes. "What intrigued us was the light from the object," said Friel. "It wasn't the kind of light you see from a reciprocating engine exhaust at night or from a jet afterburner. . . ." (San Diego, Calif. Tribune, 3/14/61)

15 - 31 MARCH 1961 SIGHTINGS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>EVALUATION</u>
15	Chelveston, England	[REDACTED]	Insufficient Data
15	Misawa AB, Japan	Military	Astro (METEOR)
15	37.35N 09.14W (Atlantic)	Military	Insufficient Data
16	41.27N 05.22W (Mediterranean Sea)	Military	Astro (METEOR)
17	Minden, Nevada	[REDACTED]	Insufficient Data
20	36.17N 125.47W (Pacific)	Military	Astro (METEOR)
20	Roswell, New Mexico	[REDACTED]	Insufficient Data
20-25	Frankfurt, Germany	[REDACTED]	Insufficient Data
21	54.22N 179.00E (Pacific)	Military	Astro (METEOR)
21	60 Mi E Springfield, Missouri	Military	Astro (METEOR)
23029	Pierce, Florida & Vicinity	Multi/Radar	Aircraft (LIGHTS)
24-25	Rebun Island, Japan (missing)	Civilian (Japanese)	Insufficient Data
25	Gulkana, Alaska	[REDACTED]	Insufficient Data
28	Misawa AB, Japan	Military	Insufficient Data
28	Mellette, South Dakota	[REDACTED]	Other (UNRELIABLE REPORT)
29	23.36N 75.43W (Atlantic)	Civil Airlines	Insufficient Data
30	Akron, Ohio	Multi	Insufficient Data
31	California/Pacific	Military	Satellite (D/K 61 EPSI 2)

ADDITIONAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS (NOT CASES)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>EVALUATION</u>
16	Weir, Australia	Newsclipping	
17	Witt, Illinois	Newsclipping	
18	Los Angeles, California	Newsclipping	
29	Hanford, California (NICAP)	[REDACTED] (Ltr)	
31	Japan (PHOTO)	[REDACTED] (Ltr)	