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UFO (?)

Acting Carbondale Chief of Police Francis X. Dottle holds electric railroad lantern for newsmen Monday afternoon. Lantern was brought to surface from silt pond near Russell Park. The pond was the reported landing site for a UFO

spotted Saturday night. Dottle proclaimed the finding of the lantern as the end of city police department investigation into the UFO. See stories this page and other photos on page 11. (NEWS photo by Ros-AL)

Carbondale gains attention with UFO sighting Saturday

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For almost two days the City of Carbondale was probably the biggest city in the country, perhaps the western hemisphere.

The reason: the sighting of an unidentified flying object by three city youngsters and a glowing object later spotted by others and city police.

The result: two days of crowds at the Russell Park area and the discovery of a lantern-type flashlight.

The two-day long U.F.O. incident began Saturday night around 7 p.m. when three teenage boys heard a noise in the sky. The boys, Bill Lloyd, brother John, and Robert Gillette, then noticed a red ball coming from over Salem Mountain.

It reportedly then hovered over the DeVuedis Breaker pond and then plunged

into the pond.

About 9 p.m. Carbondale Police investigated the incident after several telephone calls. Arriving at the scene, Patrolman John Barbaro and Joseph Jacobina observed a glowing object in the water about 20 feet from the shoreline.

Francis X. Dottle, acting police chief in the absence of Chief Paul L. Kelly, was then contacted and 12 regular and special city policemen, along with police from Foll, Greentield, and Forest City were soon on the site.

The light continued to glow from within the depths of the pond. In an effort to find the cause of the glow, the Mitchell Hose Co. was called in an attempt to net the object

An object was netted and was being brought to the surface when the net went limp and the object fell to the bottom. The light then went out and it was thought that silt from the bottom had covered it.

VIGIL

A vigil was then started which lasted from early Sunday morning through to Monday afternoon when at about 2:35 p.m. the lantern was brought to the surface.

Maintaining the vigil were police, and members of Carbondale and Scranton units of the Civil Air Patrol.

On Sunday the area took on a country-fair setting as hundreds of curious people flocked to the pond site until 2:40 p.m. when police roped off the area.

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The crowds continued their watch nearby, some from the tops of culm banks near the breaker.

Monday morning several unidentified flying objects experts were on the scene trying to assess the situation. All of the experts were civilians since the Air Force no longer investigates U.F.O. sightings.

When the NEWS spoke with Robert D. Barry, director of the 20th Century U.F.O. Bureau Monday morning, he said, "I don't think it's a hoax." He added that there were sightings Thursday and Friday elsewhere in Pennsylvania.

At that time, he also noted that both NORAD and NASA had talked with the Carbondale police and that they reported that they knew of no satellites or other

airborne objects which were missing.

Another expert on unidentified flying objects, Matthew J. Graeber, of the U.F.O. Research Investigation Center, Philadelphia, told the NEWS that there was a heavy wave of UFO sightings in 1973.

There were also a wave of reportings earlier this year, he said, with "some real puzzlers."

At the time the NEWS spoke with Graeber, the feeling was high that there was, indeed, something in the pond. If the UFO had been found, it would have been the first ever, Graeber said. The Air Force would have been called in, he said, if anything were found.

PUMPING

Following the arrival of Barry, Graeber and Douglas Dain of the UFO Network regional office in New York City, fire company pumpers were called in to begin pumping water from the pond.

A backhoe was also brought in to dig a ditch at the lower end of the pond in an effort to drain it.

The first two pumpers on the scene, the Cottage Hose Co. and Mayfield Hose, began pumping water, but stopped shortly thereafter when it was found the water was just seeking its way back into the lower end of the pond.

Other fire companies from up and down the valley then began arriving until there was almost a dozen fire company pumpers at the scene.

While the back hoe worked, reporters from many points in the middle eastern states flocked to the sight. Film crews interviewed the UFO experts and city officials as well as the observers of the UFO.

For the early part of Monday afternoon, things were at a standstill as everyone waited for the waters to recede.

Then at 2:15 p.m., a boat with Jim Muir, Jerome Gillott Jr., Graeber, and Patrolman Mark Trella aboard, was launched into the water. A geiger counter was used to determine if the water were "too hot" to enter. Finding the water safe enough, the boat was rowed back into shore.

It was at 2:30 p.m. that Mark Stamey of Syracuse, N.Y., entered the water in his scuba diving gear. His left wrist had a rope tied to it. The rope was held at the shore by a member of the Civil Air Patrol.

The boat made its way to the spot where the glowing light was seen Saturday night and early Sunday morning by witnesses.

Stamey made several dives into the murky water. At about 2:35 he handed members of the boat crew the lantern he had found in about eight to ten feet of water.

The boat was rowed ashore. The lantern was handed over to Acting Chief Dottle who showed it to members of the press and proclaimed that the search for the UFO was being terminated by his department.

He asked that all spectators return home as the search for the unidentified flying object was over as far as he and the city police department was concerned.