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THE SCRANTON TIMES, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1974

UFO Experts Have Doubts About

By JERRY PALKO and MIKE TUSKO
Times Correspondents

While they aren't willing to say so, UFO experts who spent most of Monday in Carbondale attempting to determine what, if anything, fell into a silt pond near Russell Park during the weekend, appeared somewhat reluctant to accept the police theory that the whole episode was a hoax.

At the site and conducting extensive interviews and other research Monday were Douglas Dams, Port Crane, N.Y., an associate of Dr. Allen Hynek, a noted UFO specialist at Northwestern University in Illinois; Matthew J. Graeber, a member of the UFO Research Investigation Center, Philadelphia, and Robert D.

Barry, director of the 20th Century UFO Bureau, Collingswood, N.J.

Before the battery-powered railroad lantern was retrieved by a scuba diver Monday afternoon, Mr. Barry told reporters, "Three witnesses reported to us that the UFO came from an easterly direction over Salem Mountain, landed in the middle of the pond . . . He didn't say it crashed into it, he said it landed in the middle of the pond and then proceeded under the water to approximately 25 feet from the shore."

He added, "We have three witnesses that saw it in flight and two witnesses who saw it in the pond moving to where it finally stopped."

When a reporter questioned Mr. Barry on the credibility of the wit-

nesses, he replied, "because they're teenagers doesn't mean they're not credible witnesses."

Asked if he suspected a hoax at that point (it was shortly before noon), he said, "At this point I don't." He also said that prior to coming to Carbondale he was in the York area and talked to three people, one who had a sighting of a UFO Thursday night and two that had a sighting Friday night. "Then there's this one Saturday night. Now if it's all tied in, I don't know," Mr. Barry said.

Mr. Graeber interjected that a UFO "flap" was going on at present and that there have been recent sightings in the Lake Como area. A "flap" is the term used by UFO buffs to describe a rash of UFO sightings in a specific time period.

One thing that sparked the curio of the UFO men was this account by an eyewitness:

"I'd say 15 minutes elapsed before splashdown and the time I got there (the pond). I stayed here until 3:30 the morning. The glow seemed to dim, then less intense, then brighter say it took around five minutes complete a cycle. It pulsedated very slowly. You could just about see it who was at its lowest point."

This "witness" was older than youngsters who first told police a the object.

After the railroad lantern was disered and the UFO men joined Mayo J. Kaufman and police at a press ference at City Hall, Mr. Dams toic

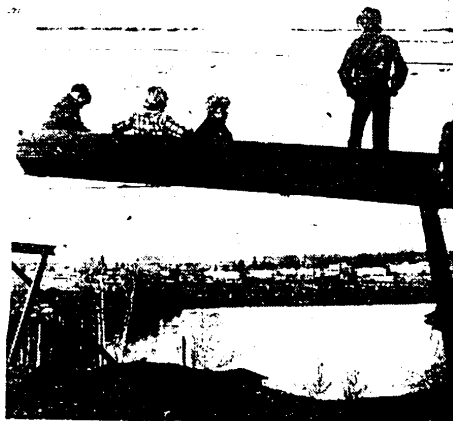
Carbondale Hoax

porters, "The people involved probably saw a falling star and then somebody probably got hold of this idea and then probably perpetrated this hoax. But you've got to remember that if they did see a falling star, it was unidentified to them."

Mr. Barry, however, wasn't at all prepared to write off the incident as a hoax. He told reporters, "Concerning the attempt to recover this object in the pond, in interviewing the officers, they used a fish net that was tied to a ten-foot wooden pole. And, in attempting to get this net over the object, I was informed that whatever this thing was at the bottom, they felt that there was something bigger underneath than that (object) they had the net over. And it was at this

point that the light went out, whatever it was. But he said that he (one of the police officers) could not move it. Whatever it was, you could not move it. This is not the only case of an underwater thing. There was one down in Massachusetts in November of last year that was investigated by the Coast Guard. It was about four or five feet under water. So this isn't the first case of some type of an object being under water that had some type of a glow."

On a final note, although police intend to review the case in search of perpetrators of the hoax, if it was that, as late as last night one of the youths who told authorities he saw something come over the mountain and land in the pond was still sticking to his story.



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Diver Finds 'Light' in Pond; Police Plan Probe of Hoax

"All that glitters is not gold" is an old saying. By the same token, all that glitters isn't a flying saucer either.

This fact hit home with somewhat of a groan in Carbondale Monday afternoon, when the hand of a scuba diver emerged from the murky waters of a silt pond behind Russell Park clutching an electric railroad lantern.

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It didn't take too long after that for authorities to start admitting that the "whirling" and "glowing" object that was supposed to have come over Salem Mountain Saturday night and land in the pond was not a visitor from another world, but probably the object of one massive hoax.

To understand just how big a hoax it was, it is necessary to note a few facts. For example, once it was learned there was a "glowing" object in the pond, the area, located

on land now owned by John C. Baumann, turned into one massive tourist mecca. People appeared to come from everywhere. They came from Philadelphia, Syracuse, Connecticut, New York and elsewhere. Newsmen came from as many faraway places. Police received hundreds of phone calls. One was from Canada, another from Indiana, and according to an officer on the afternoon shift, one "from England."

UFO specialists poured in from Philadelphia, New York and Connecticut. Once the operation got under way to lower the water in the pond, fire trucks came from Carbondale, Mayfield, Jermy, Vandling, Archbald, Olyphant and Scott Twp. There were 14 fire trucks in all. A backhoe was brought in on a hug flatbed truck.

Police were present from Carbondale, Fell Twp., Greenfield Twp., Archbald, Mayfield and Forest City. Every regional newspaper,

radio station and television station was represented. A three-man TV crew drove to the area from Philadelphia. A newsman drove in from Syracuse. Dozens of civil air patrolmen and fire police were there. About the only thing that wasn't there was a little green man from Mars.

Acting Police Chief Francis Dottle had suspected for some time that the object was explainable. He theorized soon after the initial reports that it might be a flashlight in a bottle tossed into the pond by pranksters. However, by Sunday morning, the crowds began pouring in. Dozens of different stories circulated. The acting chief suddenly found his highest problem not the object in the pond, but the crowd which was growing larger by the minute.

The decision was made Monday to drain the pond. A backhoe was brought in by Sil Tolerico Construction Co. to dig out an outlet at the back

of the pond, and pumper trucks were brought in to pump the water out. A boat was put in the water and, shortly thereafter, a scuba diver was in. About ten minutes later the mystery was over.

At a press conference called in Carbondale City Council chambers by the acting chief and Mayor A. J. Kaufman to write an end to the story, the mayor-praised Sgt. Dottle and local police for their handling of the matter and thanked those who assisted from the neighboring communities. Sgt. Dottle said the next step will be a thorough review of the case to determine the identity of those responsible for the hoax.

Authorities were unable to give an estimate of what the hoax cost the city. In addition, an Olyphant fire truck was damaged when it backed into a ditch. Several minor injuries and at least one car accident were caused by the hoax.



Scuba diver recovers railroader's lantern from bottom of Carbondale pond to end speculation about unidentified flying object (UFO). Superimposed closeup of the lantern

Times Photo by F illustrates its makeup. The 36-hour incident attracts spread attention.