

NOTE: 1st REPORT PUBLISHED

Veil of Secrecy Kept on Report Of Area UFO

Carbondale police clamped a lid of secrecy around the Russell Park area early this morning after persons reported seeing strange lights in the area possibly from a UFO-type object.

The entire site off Park Street had been blocked by police, who refused to allow the news media near an old abandoned coal breaker by the park.

A call was made to Forest City police for geiger counters at 1:30 a.m. this morning. Carbondale officials also reportedly were in touch by phone with the government UFO information center in the midwest.

Police said they would issue a statement on the investigation early this morning.

UFO Official Due in Carbondale Today to Investigate Pond Object

An official from the UFO Net-Park, told The Tribune he made plans to visit Carbondale today and make an attempt to recover the object which reportedly plunged into a silt pond early Saturday night.

Douglas Daine, Section Director for the UFO network, an organization made up of college professors and scientists, told The Tribune he would be in Carbondale sometime today to carry out an investigation. He said Dottie investigated the home in New York State.

Some 30 members of the Civil Air Patrol were called in to guard the area overnight and it was reported that scuba divers will make an attempt to retrieve the object this morning. The pond area has been cordoned off by police since early Saturday night when the UFO was reported to Carbondale.

Acting Police Chief Francis Dottie said his department received several anonymous phone calls pertaining to mysterious lights in the Russell Park area shortly after 7 p.m. Saturday. One of these callers, James Brownell, an employee of Russell Park, was the first to report the incident.

Another specialist said the object moved when it was shot at by a Carbondale officer. Dottie said late Monday that no one fired at the source of the light.

And the incredulity over the outcome held by many residents was matched by at least two of the UFO specialists who invaded the town.

After the press conference, both Robert D. Barry, director of the 20th Century UFO Bureau in Collinswood, N.J., and Matthew J. Graeber, director of the UFO Research Information Center in Philadelphia, said they were not satisfied with the lantern as an answer. Barry, however, said he might have a report ready on the matter early next week.

Doubts Linger Over Hoax Verdict

By BRIAN TOOLAN
Hours after searchers pulled a railroad lantern from a mine water pond behind Carbondale's Russell Park Monday, as dusk was giving fast to heavy darkness, hundreds of persons still lined the shores.

Police and fire companies had left long ago. So had a detail of Civil Air Patrol and scuba divers. But few of the spectators who remained were ready to believe that the 36 hours of suspense over a reported UFO sighting had ended.

Carbondale authorities tried to put the lid on the case at a news conference at City Hall. The official verdict: It was a hoax. Someone called police Saturday at 7 p.m. and said they saw bright lights shoot over a mountain, hover over a pond and then drop 500 feet into the water. Before investigators got to the scene, the pranksters allegedly dropped the lighted lantern into the pond.

"It was just a plain hoax," Acting Police Chief Francis Dottie said. "And I even saw it from the wadding and fell

deeper in the pond where it was covered by mud and debris. The lantern's just about the size of a car flashing light."

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And the youngsters who started the hoax Saturday (Please Turn to Page 11)

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night were sticking to their story even after a barrage of questioning by police and news reporters from as far away as Philadelphia.

A lady with three little children in tow, who was at the pond late Monday despite saying she was happy with the lantern answer, may have summed it up best for those who were holding up judgment: "If it was a hoax, then a lot of people were made out to be liars."