

18 August. The Gerald Merritt case.

“Had the eerie sensation that they were watching us—their presence seemed to be felt.”

A brief account of this case is given on page 52 of the monograph *UFOs: A History 1955 July-September 15th*. Enough additional detail was found in two other sources to warrant the recording of the data here. One is a personal letter from the principle witness to UFO researcher Robert Gribble. The second is a “looking back” article in a Nebraska newspaper. In a letter to Mr. Gribble dated November 30, 1955, Gerald Merritt wrote:

“I was on the Republican River between the towns of Oxford and Orleans, Nebraska, pumping gravel for a road project. It was a clear night and our plant was well lighted. The pump was on a barge 100 feet out in the river. The banks of the river are about 10 feet high and lined with trees about 40 feet high so our view of the horizon was rather limited. At about 11:30 p.m., I received a distress signal from the barge and went out. The pumper, Paul Deitz, Orleans, Nebraska, pointed to the sky over the north bank, above the trees, to an upright circle of about 12 lights. They were larger and brighter than stars and seemed to be hovering over our operations. I never doubted for a moment that these weren’t flying saucers and had the eerie sensation that they were watching us—their presence seemed to be felt. By the time I went back to shore to get another man to see them, they had disappeared.

“I immediately decided to drive to Oxford (6 miles) and call my home town paper, *The Lincoln Journal*, to see if they had any reports on flying saucers that night. They had not received any but detained me about 10 minutes asking a lot of questions. When I returned to the river about 30 minutes later, the men were very excited and said that about 50 planes and jets had flown over our area, so the Air Force, too, was convinced that something unusual was ‘in the air.’” (xx.)

(xx.) Letter: To: Mr. Robert J. Gribble, Civilian Flying Saucer Intelligence, Seattle 1, Washington. From: Gerald Merritt, 1965 B. Street, Lincoln, Nebraska. (Davidson-Merritt Sand and Gravel Company) Date: 30 November 55. Robert Gribble files. Now in the author’s files.

“Mr. Merritt recalls vividly the night of August 19 [sic –should read “18”], 1955. He and two others were working in a gravel pit near Oxford when he got a distress signal from his pumper operator five hundred feet away.

“Mr. Merritt responded, was surprised to see the man pointing skyward.

“‘I looked up,’ Mr. Merritt said, ‘and saw what appeared to be a dark object surrounded by a circle of 12 lights.

“‘I know the object was solid because you couldn’t see the stars behind it. There was no sound and whatever it was stood perfectly still. We couldn’t tell how high it was above near-by trees.’

“The two men, Mr. Merritt said, ‘watched the object ‘four or five minutes’ before he went to summon the third worker. When he got back, it was gone.

“Mr. Merritt said he started to drive into Oxford but turned back when he realized that few people would be awake.

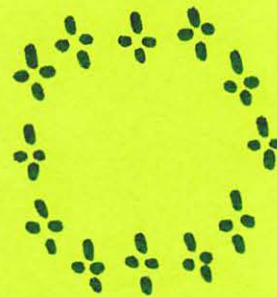
“‘The other men told me that while I was gone,’ he said, ‘that a group of planes roared directly over the pit. We figured some one must have picked up the object on a radar screen.’

“Mr. Merritt, a former University of Nebraska student, has never seen another unidentified flying object.

“But he is sure in his own mind that he saw something real that night in 1955—that it was no optical illusion.” (xx.)

(xx.) Frisbie, Al. “Sky Sightings in the 50’s Still Vivid.” Plattsmouth, Nebraska. (? newspaper name unreadable) 24 April 66.

1955:
CE1.
Between
Oxford
& Orleans,
NE



jets seem
to
Coincidentally
show up
shortly
thereafter.