

1956: Americus, GA.

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"White hot" UFO sighting UFO hovers nearby, threatens to explode

One summer night when Charles Kohlase was still in college, he and his father watched a UFO moving across a confield near their home in Georgia for about ten minutes.

"However, the UFO was close enough to be seen well for only about two minutes," said Kohlase.

"Being of a scientific discipline, I do not believe in 'flying saucers'. And yet, what I saw did look like a large 'flying saucer' of a diameter of 30 to 50 feet and a thickness of 5 to 15 feet.

"It is my opinion that the object was solid, that it contained an energy source that was the cause of the object's luminosity, and that it was under control. I will always remember and be impressed by this UFO sighting."

Now a space scientist, Kohlase is reluctant to discuss the sighting with the media for fear of seeing some sensational headline such as "Space expert believes UFOs are of extraterrestrial origin."

Which would be nonsense, of course, for the only claim he makes is that he saw a UFO - whatever that may be. He does not know what it was or

where it came from. Here is his story:

"I returned home one evening in August 1956 from a six-week midshipman summer cruise on a destroyer. I was a college student at Georgia Tech and was enrolled in the Naval ROTC program."

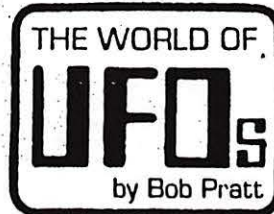
His home was 3 miles south of Americus, Ga. It was about 10 p.m. when he arrived and found his father watching television. His stepmother was out playing bridge.

UFO seen in sky

Part of the cruise had been spent on navigation and locating stars. His father, an amateur astronomer and a civilian pilot, suggested they go outside and see how well he could locate stars.

Their house sits in a dense grove of trees, so they walked to a cornfield 200 yards away and for 15 minutes Kohlase tried to find stars his father named. Then they spotted something.

"We noticed over the far end of the field a light moving parallel to the horizon and blinking on about every 10 seconds for a duration of 2 or 3



seconds. The light appeared to be going back and forth, left to right, above the trees about the width of the field.

"We soon began to lose interest and decided to return to the house. Then we looked again and the light wasn't moving back and forth any more. It seemed to be coming slowly toward us, pulsing off and on.

"It kept coming and finally stopped at a place that was about a 45-degree angle of elevation to us. It emitted no sound and no exhaust.

White hot UFO

"Then the first thing happened that really scared us. This thing just turned a brilliant white hot. I shouldn't say hot because I didn't feel any heat from it, but it was extremely bright.

"I crouched down covering my face with my arms in anticipation of a possible explosion. I was convinced that this - whatever it was, maybe an airplane - was about to blow up in a trillion pieces.

"But nothing happened. There was no noise. This brilliant whiteness began to dull, to tone down to about a blacksmith's horseshoe red, like when you pull a piece of iron out of the fire.

"For the first time I could see its outline. It appeared to be a saucer shaped object 30 to 50 feet in diameter that was between 50 to 100 yards away.

"Then it began to move very slowly back in the other direction. When it got fairly far away, it looked more spherical than it did saucer shaped.

"This object continued moving until it got back over the tops of the distant pine trees. Then two other lights somewhere in the distance rose up from the other side of the trees. The three objects then moved off the southwest and disappeared in a minute or so."

Kohlase, who is the mission design manager of the Voyager space mission at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, added:

"I went out for a couple of nights after the sighting and sat in a chair in the field, but I never saw anything again." (c) Bob Pratt 1981

Have any questions or comments about UFOs? Just write to: The World of UFOs, in care of this newspaper.

DISPLAY FOR A "TO-BE" SPACE SCIENTIST.

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130

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