

CHAPTER VI
THE LOVELAND BRIDGE CASE

July, 1955

Whitecotton's Account

In the CRIFO Orbit for September 2, 1955, Leonard Stringfield described the humanoid encounter referred to as "the bridge case" as follows:

. . . We should like to cite a case involving a prominent businessman, living in Loveland. Occurring several weeks ago, this person, who is a non-drinker and church-goer . . . saw four "strange little men about three feet tall" under a certain bridge. He reported the bizarre affair to the police and we understand that an armed guard was placed there. A similar event supposedly had taken place near Batavia east of Cincinnati.

Following publication of this story in Orbit, Stringfield received information from a source in Loveland concerning alleged F.B.I. involvement in the bridge case. This aspect made the case doubly interesting and we hoped to learn much more during our August 1956 inquiries.

On Sunday evening, August 26, Len arranged a meeting at his home with one of his associates, Frank Whitecotton, chief coordinator for Civil Defense in Hamilton County and surrounding areas (the Cincinnati area), and head of the nearby Loveland Ground Observer Corps (GOC) post. Frank Whitecotton was an impressive man--authoritative, serious, with a craggy face and a shock of white hair. He had a great deal of information regarding local UFO sightings. His staff at the Loveland GOC post was an

active and interested group who had themselves made several UFO observations.

During this meeting we asked the Civil Defense chief if he could provide more information about the bridge case. His response was neither enthusiastic nor informative. He corrected an error in the Orbit summary; the central figure was not a "prominent businessman" of Loveland, but a young volunteer policeman for the Loveland Civil Defense, and therefore known to Mr. Whitecotton, the area's chief Civil Defense co-ordinator. But there was little else Frank Whitecotton was willing to say, claiming that while he was "familiar" with the case, he was "privy to no details." However, he indicated that Police Chief John Fritz of Loveland, the observer's immediate supervisor, should know more about the report. According to Mr. Whitecotton, Chief Fritz had ordered a cordon thrown up around the bridge when he received news of the reported encounter. But Whitecotton warned us that Fritz might not be willing to discuss the case, and he suggested that if we asked him about it, it would be helpful if we did not mention Whitecotton's name.

At this point in our conversation, it was quite obvious that Frank Whitecotton would prefer to change the subject--which he did by introducing another "little man" report that had come to his attention through one of his GOC spotters, Mrs. Emily Magnone, of Loveland Heights.

The "Smelly Little Man" of Loveland Heights

On a warm summer night, about the same time as the bridge case, Mrs. Emily Magnone and her husband were awakened by the continued barking of their dog outside, who was "setting up a terrible fuss." They got up and went to the window to check for prowlers, but saw nothing. They did, however, smell an extremely strong and penetrating odor, "like a swamp." The dog continued to bark and the odor persisted; it was so foul and overpowering, in fact, that the Magnones closed their windows, hot as it was,

in an effort to keep the smell out. But it continued to permeate the house; they went back to bed, the dog continued to bark, and the odor lingered.

The next morning Mrs. Magnone's next-door neighbor (who was not identified in Mr. Whitecotton's account) told her a strange story. The barking dog had also awakened the neighbor and her husband and she, too, had gotten up to see what was wrong. Going to her back porch she saw, in the yard about fifteen feet from the porch, a "little man" of very strange appearance standing motionless. She watched the little being briefly from the porch, then went back inside to turn the porch light on. When she returned to the porch, the creature had vanished. She then turned the light off and checked the yard again; the "thing" had returned to its original spot on the lawn. Again she turned the light on, with the same results: each time the light was turned on, the creature seemed to disappear.

The neighbor described the diminutive prowler as about three feet high, and apparently entirely covered with what looked like twigs or foliage. Mr. Whitecotton could add no further details about eyes, claws, or any reported luminosity.

Taking this third-hand report at face value, we find elements that are familiar. The dog's reaction and the penetrating smell are features that have been reported in other cases involving small entities associated with close encounters of UFOs. The being's reported reaction to light and darkness is also a detail recurring in cases such as the Kelly encounter. The covering of what appeared to be foliage or twigs (assuming that the witness was not mistaking a shrub in her back yard for a creature) is a detail new to us, but perhaps there is a case with a similar description on record.

Unfortunately, we were unable to interview the witness directly. Mr. Whitecotton tried to arrange a meeting with the neighbor through Mrs. Magnone, but repeated attempts to reach Mrs. Magnone by phone suggested that she was probably away on vacation at that

time. We did not feel it appropriate, under the circumstances, to go directly to the neighbor with a request for an interview. The above summary therefore remains unconfirmed.

Although Mr. Whitecotton was unable to give us any substantive information about the bridge case, he did provide us with the name of an important source of information, Loveland Police Chief John K. Fritz. A meeting with Chief Fritz was arranged for Friday afternoon, August 31, with the hope that he could supply us with the details Frank Whitecotton would not.

Chief Fritz's Account of the Bridge Case

When I met Chief Fritz in his office, he was cordial, cooperative and businesslike. But like Mr. Whitecotton, when the subject of the bridge case was brought up, the police chief seemed unwilling to discuss it. The details of the report had come to him second-hand, he told me. From whom? You guessed it, from the local C.D. chief, Frank Whitecotton! This was a fascinating statement, considering what Mr. Whitecotton himself had already told us. I kept the contradiction to myself, in view of Whitecotton's warning that it might not be helpful to mention his name.

When I asked Chief Fritz about the rumor of F.B.I. involvement in the case, his reaction was unmistakable: he began fiddling with his keys and coins on the desk, and shuffling papers. My notes on this detail are explicit: "Fritz is not the sort of man who ordinarily fiddles with keys and papers on his desk." He denied any knowledge of the rumored F.B.I. involvement and as if to change the subject, introduced the Hunnicutt case (see Chapter VIII). It was obvious that he, as well as Frank Whitecotton, would prefer not to discuss the matter.

On the other hand, Chief Fritz was naturally curious about my own interest in the case. I told him about my association with Civilian Saucer Intelligence (CSI) of New York, and of my inquiries with Stringfield into the "little men" reports in the

Cincinnati area. I referred to Isabel Davis's report of her Hopkinsville investigations, and showed Fritz some copies of the Hopkinsville drawings made by Bud Ledwith during his investigations there. Fritz found this information of interest, and after examining some of the material carefully, seemed somewhat less reluctant to discuss the bridge case. But he continued to insist that he'd had nothing to do with it personally, although he did admit knowing the witness rather well.

The witness, who will be referred to only as C.F., had been 19 years old at the time, and served as an auxiliary policeman with Civil Defense, in which capacity he was directly associated with Chief Fritz. According to the police chief, the incident occurred one evening early in July, 1955, or possibly late in June; however, Fritz made no attempt to locate the police report, as he had previously done in discussing the Hunnicutt case. The witness, C.F., was driving a Civil Defense truck at the time and as he was crossing a bridge in the Loveland area (there is one vehicular bridge into Loveland over the Little Miami River from Clermont County), he noticed four small figures on the river bank beneath the bridge. A terrible smell hung over the area. C.F. immediately drove to police headquarters in Loveland and reported the incident. Chief Fritz was not in his office at the time, and those present greeted C.F.'s story with considerable derision and skepticism.

Fritz disclaimed any knowledge of a police cordon being thrown around the bridge; he said that if such an order had been given, it could have come from Civil Defense authorities, although he certainly should have known about it. I once again gently raised the question of F.B.I. involvement and Fritz agreed that it would be interesting to know why the F.B.I. should concern itself with something of this sort, but again he emphasized that he had no direct knowledge of any such official investigation.

Toward the end of our interview, Chief Fritz caught me by surprise by offering to drive me out to C.F.'s home. Although he warned me that the young man might not want to discuss the incident because of the ridicule he had encountered upon reporting it at the time, I found his offer to introduce me to the witness

in marked contrast to his earlier resistance to discussion of the case. I quickly accepted his invitation and we left the police station immediately.

A Visit With the Witness

C.F. lived in a farmhouse out on Ridge Road with his wife and her family. Chief Fritz and I arrived at an inopportune time--the family was just getting ready to sit down to dinner. Those present were C.F., his parents-in-law, a baby, and later, his brother-in-law. We spent no more than ten minutes with them since it was apparent that our visit was not welcome. C.F.'s discomfort, as a matter of fact, was painfully evident. I made every effort to reassure him that my reason for being there was not to embarrass him in any way, but merely to obtain any factual information he might be able to provide. He was willing to part with precious little.

C.F. stated at the outset, and in no uncertain terms, that he would not discuss the incident with anyone, at any time, period. He said he had been ridiculed and abused as a result of his report, and it was quite clear that the young man was very bitter about it. He said that because of his report, he had been forced to quit his job with the Civil Defense. (Chief Fritz told me later that C.F. had resigned because he wanted more responsibility, and Fritz had felt that he lacked sufficient experience; his report of the little men had had nothing to do with it.)

In an effort to elicit some degree of cooperation, I showed C.F. the drawings of the Kelly, Kentucky humanoids. He looked at them with some interest and then volunteered the useful information that the beings he had seen bore no resemblance to the ones in the drawings. When asked if he'd noticed details such as large eyes or claws, C.F. merely remarked that he'd seen "four more-or-less human-looking little men about three feet high," that they had been "moving about oddly" under the bridge, and that there had been "a terrible smell" about the place. He had seen them, he said, for a matter of only ten seconds or so. But more he would not say. He suggested that if I wanted further

details, I would be able to find them in a newspaper account of the incident. I failed to ask either him or Chief Fritz the name and date of the paper that had carried the report--an oversight I find myself still regretting nearly twenty years later. Repeated attempts to find this account have been fruitless.

While the sum total of information gleaned from C.F. was meager, I did leave with more than I had when I arrived. C.F.'s determination not to discuss the case--even more emphatic than either Fritz's or Whitecotton's--was of particular interest. Had the negative reaction to his report been so strong that he harbored a grudge more than a year later? I had given him no reason to expect ridicule or abuse from me; on the contrary, I made my reason for being there quite clear. Then why such a determined wall of resistance? Perhaps it was not his idea.

Was the F.B.I. Involved at Loveland?

It is almost impossible not to speculate about the reluctance of everyone involved in the bridge case to talk about it. Both Chief Fritz and Frank Whitecotton spoke openly of other cases at least as strange as the bridge case. It is my guarded opinion, based upon the impressions drawn from my visits, that C.F. had probably been told to keep quiet about his report, and that Frank Whitecotton and Chief Fritz may also have been asked to say nothing about it. Who might have made such a request?

In his book, Inside Saucer Post . . . 3-0 Blue, Len Stringfield wrote: "I did learn from a member of the school board of that community that the incident [the Loveland bridge case--Ed.] had been investigated by the F.B.I." (1) A request by that agency for silence from citizens in "sensitive" situations (in the interests of "national security," of course) would not be inconsistent with what we already know of its procedural policies. And it would not be the first time, nor the last, that the F.B.I. has been said to figure in UFO cases and humanoid reports.

The first reported instance of alleged F.B.I. involvement in a UFO case was in the William Rhodes sighting at Phoenix, Arizona, on July 7, 1947. In that incident F.B.I. agents are said to have taken the witness's two photographs of the UFO. In this case, the final disposition of these photographs is known. (2) F.B.I. agents were also reported to have been among the witnesses to the green fireball display over New Mexico on December 8, 1948. (3) There was F.B.I. involvement in the Lelah Stoker sighting of an object and occupant in Chicago, Illinois on April 8, 1954, according to the Air Force report (see page vii for a summary of this report.) Again according to the Air Force case file, an F.B.I. agent was present at the first official interview of Patrolman Lonnie Zamora, following his object-occupant sighting at Socorro, New Mexico, on April 24, 1964. Government agents of an unspecified agency quickly stepped in and silenced William Blackburn following his encounter with some humanoids at Brands Flats, Virginia, on January 19, 1965. The Air Force case files on at least six other humanoid reports disclose the same kind of participation by the F.B.I.--and this could be just the tip of the iceberg. There is no hard evidence that the F.B.I. was indeed involved with the bridge case; however, the above-cited precedents could help explain the consistent attitude of the participants in the incident.

Would this theory be invalidated by the fact that Chief Fritz went out of his way to introduce me to the witness, though he had been asked not to discuss the case? Not at all. Even though he might have agreed not to talk about it, it's unlikely that he ever agreed not to introduce C.F. to inquiring UFO investigators. After all, a good, first-hand impression is not the same thing as discussing the matter!

There are other examples of Chief Fritz's willingness to assist me wherever possible. With regard to the Hunnicut encounter at Branch Hill (Chapter VIII), he not only volunteered information about a previously unknown case, but described his own part in it fully and freely. When I told him of my third-

hand information concerning the report of Mrs. Magnone's neighbor, who had seen the "smelly little man" in her Loveland Heights back yard, he volunteered to drive me around to the address listed in the telephone directory for Mrs. Magnone, on the chance that she might be at home. She was not, but this side trip does illustrate that Chief Fritz was quite willing to cooperate in every way he could. (That side trip also provided me with some idea of Mrs. Magnone's neighborhood; it was a newly-developed section of town and I saw no swampy areas nearby that could have accounted for the unusual odor that she and her neighbor had described.)

There is one more important point that should be mentioned. At the peak of press publicity about Hopkinsville and attendant reports, the Air Force, in an obvious effort to counteract and defuse these reports, issued a statement about "flying saucers" and their pilots. Captain Robert White, of the Air Force Office of Information in Washington, told a Scripps-Howard reporter that "the consensus of Americans who've reported seeing invaders from outer space in the past four years is that the space visitors are little guys less than four feet tall, they're greenish, they usually glow, especially if excited, and often they smell bad." (4) The interesting point is that not one of any of the publicized reports of occupants had described odors. On the other hand, odors were associated with unpublished reports from the Loveland area, which might suggest that the Air Force knew something about flying saucer occupants that the public did not.

Regarding C.F.'s story, little can be said about a report in which the only witness has refused to provide essential details. Is this an admission that the story may be false? Whatever C.F.'s reasons were for remaining silent, there was nothing in the information he did provide that would suggest this was the case--quite the contrary. Nor was there anything in what Frank Whitecotton or Chief Fritz said that might suggest either man considered the report to be untrue. It is not likely that

Chief Fritz would have wasted his time driving me out to meet C.F. if he had believed the witness was a liar--had this been the case, he would have told me so in his office. Nor would Mr. Whitecotton have referred us to Chief Fritz in the first place if he had believed C.F.'s story were false.

Based on everything I could learn about the bridge case, I am reasonably satisfied that it probably took place as generally outlined above; that C.F.'s report of it may have created a minor flap at police headquarters that probably resulted in some jurisdictional differences among the various local authorities in charge of such matters; and that the F.B.I. could have been brought into the case through Frank Whitecotton's connection with Civil Defense. It is also possible that a report of the incident lies buried somewhere in the archives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

With this possibility in mind, I wrote a letter to the local F.B.I. office inquiring about such a record. In a letter dated January 21, 1975 (see page 136), Special Agent Palmer M. Baken, Jr., of the Cincinnati office of the Bureau, replied curtly, "Although I would like to be of assistance in connection with your research, this office does not have the information you desire." He regretted being unable to help me, he said. Technically speaking, it may be the truth.

It is more likely that there is some newspaper account of the bridge case buried in a local library or newspaper morgue, or perhaps in someone's personal UFO clipping files, that would substantiate the event, provide a precise date of occurrence, and perhaps add a few more details to the meager few already on record. In the absence of such a reference, the bridge case must be considered inconclusive, lacking sufficient information to make a satisfactory judgment.



*In Reply, Please Refer to
File No.*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Post Office Box 1277
Cincinnati, Ohio 45201
January 21, 1975

Mr. Ted Bloecher
317 East 83rd Street
New York, New York 10028

Dear Mr. Bloecher:

Your letter of January 12, 1975, has been received. Although I would like to be of assistance in connection with your research, this office does not have the information you desire.

I regret being unable to be of help in this instance.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Palmer M. Baker, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

PALMER M. BAKER, JR.
Special Agent in Charge

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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REFERENCES
CHAPTER VI

1. Stringfield, Inside Saucer Post, . . . 3-0, Blue, p. 66.
2. See Ted Bloecher, Report on the UFO Wave of 1947, p. IV-5.
(Published privately by the author, 1967.)
3. See Major Donald E. Keyhoe, Flying Saucers From Outer Space
(Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1953), p. 211.
4. See, for example, Albert Colgrove's syndicated article in
The Cincinnati Post, August 25, 1955, and The New York World
Telegram and Sun, August 25, 1955.

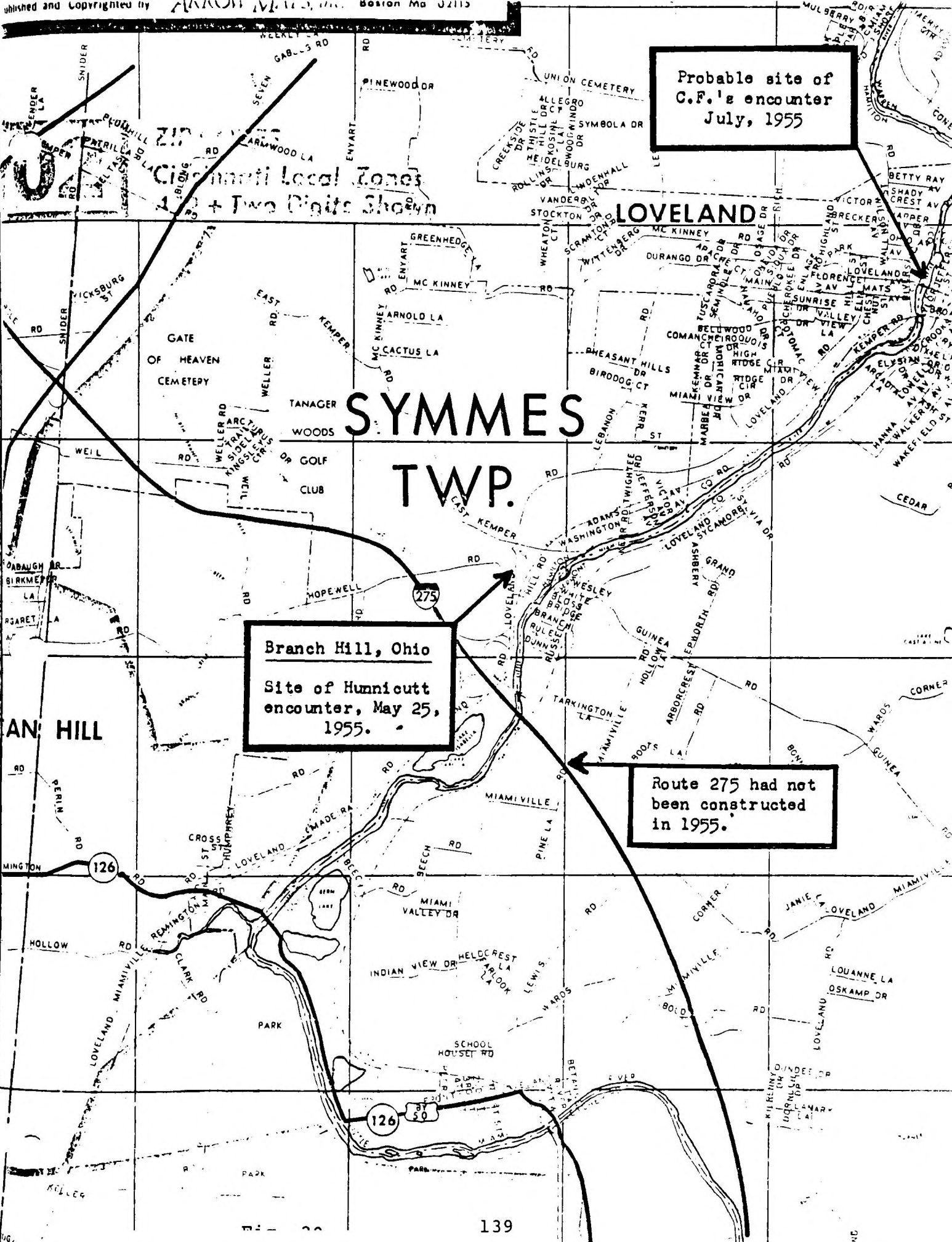
CHAPTER VII

THE HUNNICUTT ENCOUNTER AT BRANCH HILL

May 25, 1955

The Branch Hill encounter was unknown, prior to August 1956, beyond the actual participants. The story came to light during my interview with Loveland Police Chief John K. Fritz on August 31. The meeting had been arranged so that I could inquire about the Loveland bridge case (see Chapter VI). But when I asked him about this at the outset of our interview, Chief Fritz appeared reluctant to discuss it. In what seemed a diversionary tactic, he changed the subject to another humanoid encounter that had occurred near Loveland some months before the bridge case. He showed no hesitation in discussing this case, and freely provided all the details he could recall. He could not remember the exact date but believed it had been in March or April, 1955. He searched his files for the police report on the case, but since he was looking under the wrong date, he was unable to find it.

Chief Fritz told me that this was the kind of a report that "would make your hair stand on end." The back of my neck did tingle perceptibly. He recounted how he had been awakened by someone pounding on his front door about four o'clock in the morning. Upon answering, he found a somewhat shaken man named Robert Hunnicutt standing in the doorway. "He looked as if he'd seen a ghost," Fritz said. Hunnicutt, a short-order chef in a newly-opened Loveland area restaurant, told the police chief that while he was driving northeast through Branch Hill (in Symmes Township) on the Madeira-Loveland Pike, he had seen a



Probable site of C.F.'s encounter July, 1955

Branch Hill, Ohio
Site of Humnutt encounter, May 25, 1955.

Route 275 had not been constructed in 1955.

SYMMES TWP.

group of "strange little men" along the side of the road with "their backs to the bushes." Curious, he had stopped the car and gotten out. According to Fritz, the witness claimed he had seen "fire coming out of their hands," and that a "terrible odor" permeated the place. When Hunnicutt realized he was looking at something quite out of the ordinary he became frightened; jumping back into his car, he had driven directly to the police chief's home.

Fritz, who knew Hunnicutt, found it difficult to believe the story "straight out," but he said there was no question in his mind that Hunnicutt was "scared to death. . . . The man had seen something, and there's no argument to that." By getting close enough to smell his breath, Fritz was satisfied that there was no question of Hunnicutt's having been drinking. He agreed to check the area and told Hunnicutt to go on home.

Chief Fritz dressed, got his gun and loaded his camera, and drove to the area indicated by Hunnicutt. He made four or five passes along the road looking for signs of something unusual but saw nothing out of the ordinary. Alone, with the details of Hunnicutt's strange story fresh in his mind, Fritz acknowledged that he indeed "felt peculiar." He also felt, he said, like he might be "the biggest fool in Loveland."

Asked why he had taken a camera, Fritz said he wanted evidence in the form of photographs if he came upon anything unusual. Asked what he would have done had he encountered the strange beings, he replied that he would have gotten out of his car "and tried to talk to them, to find out where they come from." He added that "someone has to do it sooner or later."

While Hunnicutt had not reported seeing a UFO, Chief Fritz said that there had been a sighting earlier that same night by members of the local GOC. The UFO sighting was later reported in the local newspaper, the Loveland Herald, but Fritz did not have a copy of the press story. This proved an important reference, however, serving to date Hunnicutt's encounter precisely. Chief Fritz willingly provided the current address of the witness

who, at the time of the inquiry, resided in Avondale. He was contacted immediately upon my return from Loveland, and agreed to meet with the Stringfields and me on the following evening.

Hunnicut's Strange Story

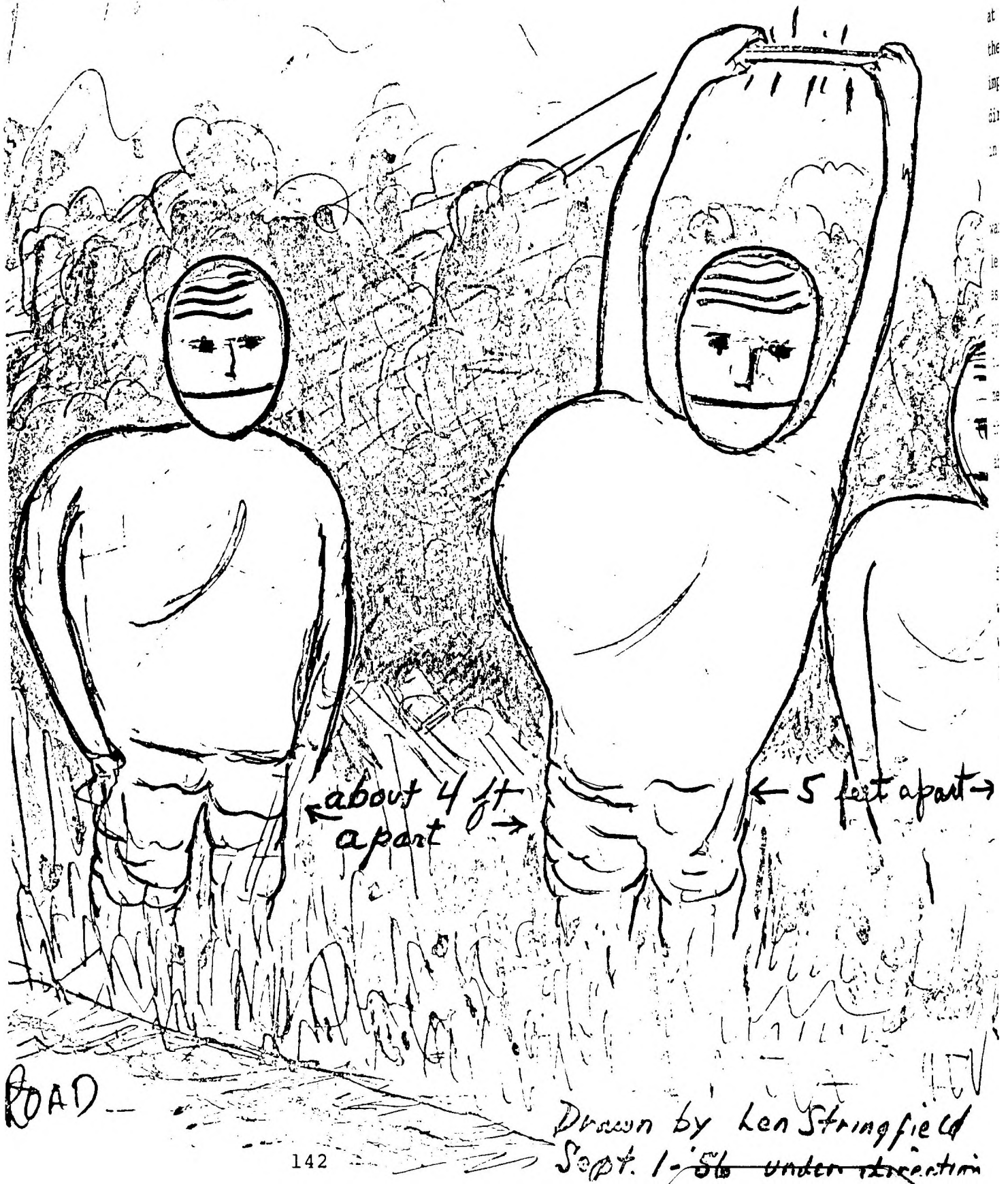
At the time of our interview on September 1, 1956, Robert Hunnicut was the maitre d' of a restaurant in downtown Cincinnati. We met him early in the evening, before he was scheduled to go on duty, and spent more than an hour with him going over the details of his strange experience. Extensive notes were taken and Stringfield made a drawing of the "little men" under the careful supervision of the witness. Hunnicutt was cooperative in responding to our many questions, and impressed us with the cautious manner in which he reconstructed all those details he could accurately recall.

As did Chief Fritz, Hunnicutt placed the date in either March or April, 1955. He was returning home from work on that morning at about 3:30 a.m., driving north on the Madeira-Loveland Pike, in the vicinity of Hopewell Road at Branch Hill in Symmes Township. As he topped a rise in the road and was coming down a slight grade, his car lights fell on what he first thought were three men kneeling down in the grass on the right side of the road, just inside the berm.

"My first impression," he told us, "was that there were three crazy guys praying by the side of the road." Hunnicutt brought his car to a stop "to see what gives," with the car lights illuminating the scene. It was at this point that he realized these were not three kneeling men: a sense of something quite extraordinary came over him as he saw that the figures before him were not even men.

The figures were short, about three and a half feet in height, and they stood in a roughly triangular position facing the opposite side of the road. One was forward and closer to the shoulder, and to the witness, while the other two stood in flank positions to the rear. The forward figure held his arms

creatures about 3½ ft. tall.
witnessed by Robert Hunnicott
May 25, 1955



ROAD

Drawn by Len Stringfield
Sept. 1-'56 under instruction

a foot or so above his head and it appeared to Hunnicutt as though he were holding a rod, or a chain, in this upraised position. (This detail of upraised arms was described in both the Stockton, Georgia, encounter (See Chapter VIII) and in the Kelly case (Part One)). Sparks, blue-white in color and two or three at a time, were seen jumping back and forth from one hand to the other, just above and below the "rod." It was Hunnicutt's impression that the beings were concentrating on some spot directly across the road, although he could see nothing unusual in the woods to the west of the Pike.

As Hunnicutt got out of the left side of his car, the forward figure lowered his arms and near his feet appeared to release whatever he had been holding. To the witness, "it looked as if he tied it around his ankles." Then, as Hunnicutt stood by the left side of the car, all three figures simultaneously turned slightly toward their left so that they now faced the witness. Motionless, and without sound or change of expression, they stared directly at him. In the car lights Hunnicutt was able to observe a number of details.

This most extraordinary trio was made up of three humanoid figures of a greyish color--approximately the same shade of grey for their heads as for their "garments." "Fairly ugly" were the words Hunnicutt used to describe them. A large, straight mouth, without any apparent lip muscles, crossed nearly the entire lower portion of their faces--an effect which reminded the witness of a frog. The nose was indistinct, with no unusual feature that the witness could discern. The eyes seemed to be more or less normal, except that no eyebrows could be seen. The pate was bald and appeared to have rolls of fat running horizontally across the top, rather like the corrugated effect of a doll's painted-on hair--except that there was no difference in color.

The most remarkable feature was the upper torso: the chest was decidedly lopsided. On the right side it swelled out in an unusually large bulge that began under the armpit and extended down to the waist, giving the figures a markedly asymmetrical

appearance. The arms seemed to be of uneven length, the right being longer than the left, as though to accommodate this unusual feature. (The lopsided torso seems to be a detail unique among humanoid reports; no other example has yet been found that matches it.) Hunnicutt saw nothing unusual about the hands, although he could not say how many fingers they had.

If the beings wore garments above their waists, they were tight-fitting and of the same grey color as the rest of the body. There was no line of demarcation to be detected between a garment and the skin itself. Below the waist, however, there seemed to be a loose-fitting garment of the same grey color, but Hunnicutt was unable to recall any details other than that the hips and waist appeared to be "heavy." He could see no feet, but the figures stood in six-inch high grass.

Hunnicutt's car was parked about 10 feet away from the humanoids. After standing next to the left-hand door for perhaps a minute or a minute and a half, his curiosity overcame whatever fear he may have felt and he started to walk around the left front of the car toward the beings. As he reached the front fender, the little humanoids simultaneously moved slightly forward and toward the witness--a "peculiar" motion that was quite "definite and graceful." Hunnicutt had the distinct impression that he should approach no closer--he said that no words were needed to convey this message. He stood by the front fender for perhaps two or three minutes more, too amazed by this bizarre spectacle to be frightened.

Hunnicutt said that when he finally left, it was merely to get someone else to see these outlandish figures. Getting back into his car, he was suddenly aware of an extremely strong and penetrating odor; it was most noticeable as he drove off. He compared it to a combination of "fresh-cut alfalfa, with a slight trace of almonds." Only as he drove away, past these three grotesques, did the frightening implications of what he had seen begin to sink in. Although it was nearly four o'clock in the morning, he drove directly to the home of Loveland Police Chief John K. Fritz.

Hunnicuttt said he had an impression that he may have intruded upon some kind of an "operation." Asked to explain, he said that when he realized the figures weren't praying, he got the distinct feeling that the forward figure was using the implement in his hands as a signal to someone, or some thing, in the woods on the opposite side of the road, although he could see nothing in the darkness along this sparsely settled section of Branch Hill.

Regarding the odor, Hunnicutt said that several months later (in July or August), he was driving along the same road with a girl friend late at night. When he passed the site of his earlier encounter, both he and the girl noticed the same strong odor he had smelled before. He stopped the car, looked around and seeing nothing unusual, drove on.

Hunnicuttt also confirmed that there had been a UFO sighting at the Loveland GOC post earlier on the same night he encountered the "little men." He said that an account of this observation had been published in the next edition of the local paper.

UFO Sighting at Loveland GOC

During our August 26 interview with Frank Whitecotton at the Stringfield's home, Mr. Whitecotton had mentioned several UFO sightings by members of the Loveland GOC post. One sighting in particular he described in great detail. His wife and another woman were manning the post one evening in the spring of 1955 when several objects were spotted. An official report was made to the filter center of Columbus, and jets were scrambled to investigate. One of the UFO's buzzed the GOC tower and so frightened Mrs. Whitecotton and her colleague that they fled the post, leaving the door to the tower wide open.

Mr. Whitecotton considered this particular incident important, and because of its official status, asked us not to take notes. Not yet having heard of the Hunnicutt encounter at Branch Hill on the same night as a GOC sighting at Loveland, we were unaware of the significance of Mr. Whitecotton's account. Neither Len nor I tried to commit the details of his story to paper after he had left.

Several years later, however, on a subsequent visit to Cincinnati, I had an opportunity to go through the newspaper morgue of the Loveland Herald in search of the press reference to the GOC sighting mentioned by both Chief Fritz and Robert Hunnicutt. The story had been published on Thursday, June 2, 1955.

FOUR 'FLYING SAUCERS' SIGHTED BY LOVELAND GOC TOWER

Planes Sent Up to Check Object Reported by Observer With Long Service

On Tuesday, May 24, at 7:48 p.m., according to the log which is kept of the flights of planes reported at the Ground Observer Tower on Lebanon Road, four flying saucers flying in formation passed over and were reported to Columbus by the observer on duty.

They were flying in a northerly direction and when reported to Columbus planes were sent out to identify them. No public report came back to the tower, but this is regular practice and none was expected.

The observer on duty at the time was Mrs. Frank Whitecotton. She had served more hours in the observation tower than any other person and was said to be thoroughly qualified in plane identification and reporting.

"This may come as somewhat of a surprise to some of the skeptics, but now that flying saucers have been identified here by one of our own workers, let us not be lulled into complacency," a C.D. official said.

"Keep the watch tower occupied at all times. The very moment it is left unmanned may be the time the enemy will strike. Join the GOC today. It will be a pleasant place to spend a few hours each week this summer."

It was not until this important reference was found that a connection could be made between Frank Whitecotton's report of the Loveland GOC sighting and the news account mentioned by Chief Fritz and Robert Hunnicutt. Although the news item abounds in non sequiturs and promotional "hype" for the local GOC, it unfortunately lacks any of the dramatic details regarding the UFO sighting that were described by Mr. Whitecotton. It does serve

the vital purpose, on the other hand, of providing the correct date for the Hunnicutt encounter at Branch Hill.

A Credible Account of an Incredible Encounter

Although this report involves only a single witness, there are other points that argue favorably for its credibility. Robert Hunnicutt was straightforward and cooperative in answering all our questions about his experience, and in helping Stringfield prepare a sketch of the humanoids. His manner was quiet and cautious, given to understatement in recounting the details. If he was uncertain about a particular point, he said so. Nothing in his presentation suggested that he was elaborating or lying. Internally, there was nothing in his story that was inconsistent with what Chief Fritz had already reported to me. Hunnicutt's reconstruction of his encounter impressed us as being a careful recollection of his observation of strange and unidentifiable beings--beings certainly not native to Ohio, nor to any other part of the world with which we are familiar.

Hunnicutt's initial response to the situation is also significant. He responded by reporting it immediately to the Chief of Police. This would hardly have been the case, and particularly at that hour of the morning, if Hunnicutt had not been quite certain about what he had seen. Chief Fritz's account of his own involvement supports Hunnicutt's report: it was evident that Fritz took the story seriously enough to get dressed and go out to the site to investigate. Finally, the news story about the UFO sighting at the Loveland GOC post earlier in the evening, to which both men referred, lends additional weight to the report. (The relationship--if any--of the UFO sighting to Hunnicutt's encounter, remains uncertain.)

Hunnicutt never sought publicity as a result of his encounter. The report came to our attention by chance, and it was Stringfield and I who sought the witness out. Once contacted, he asked only that his name not be associated with any published account of the incident. (Unfortunately, this request was

ignored by others and his name has been part of the published record for a number of years.)

The temptation to dismiss Hunnicutt's story because it is so strange is understandable. But such encounters with strange and unidentifiable life-forms continue to be reported in great volume. Only by carefully examining these accounts, and those who make them, can we find the clues to the nature of the phenomenon.

CHAPTER VIII
MRS. SYMONDS AT STOCKTON
July 3, 1955

The News Account

On August 22 and 23, 1955, newspapers all over the country were publishing stories from Hopkinsville, Kentucky, about the farmhouse "siege" by that infamous "army of little green men." The attendant publicity brought to light still another encounter with diminutive humanoids that had occurred in southern Georgia seven weeks earlier. The single witness was a Cincinnati-area resident who had been en route to Florida for a vacation with her husband. On August 23, the Cincinnati Post printed the following account, which was picked up by the wire services and carried in a number of national daily newspapers.

CINCINNATIANS SAW LITTLE GREEN MEN, TOO

Woman Tried to Keep Experience Quiet; She Feared No
One Would Believe Her

By Charles Doctor

Mrs. Margaret Symonds, 52, of 5133 Highview Drive, never told anybody but her closest friends because she was positive no one would believe her. But the story got out.

She saw the little green men.

It happened while she was driving late one night near Stockton, Ga. Her husband knew of it and so did a few others. But Mrs. Symonds never said a word publicly until The Post told the story Monday of the Hopkinsville, Ky., farm family which reported an all-night battle with the "green men from outer space."

Mrs. Symmonds told the story of her experience Tuesday. She said:

"It happened about 3:30 a.m. July 3, near Stockton, Ga. My husband Wesley and I were driving through the night for a summer vacation in Florida. I was at the wheel. Wesley was in the back sleeping.

"Suddenly, there in the middle of the road were four little men about three feet tall wearing greenish-gray coats. They had little sticks and looked like they were digging in the road.

"I screamed and turned the car towards the side of the road to avoid them. Then I stepped on the gas. I was petrified.

"Wesley woke up. I told him what happened. He wanted to go back and see them. But not me!!"

When Mrs. Symmonds got to Miami, Fla., she met a good friend, Mrs. Bart Mangini, of 2069 Fanwood Avenue. She told Mrs. Mangini about her encounter with the little green men. Mrs. Mangini cautioned her against telling anyone else about it. Mrs. Symmonds took the advice.

Mrs. Symmonds says the green creatures reminded her of the witch on the broom. She admits, "It does sound like a strange story when you tell it. But it isn't when you see it. It scares you."

Accompanying this article was a photograph of Mr. and Mrs. Symmonds standing by the Post cartoonist's desk, on which an imaginative drawing (see Figure 22) could be seen. Two days later, this drawing was carried by the wire services along with the Air Force public relations statement by Captain Robert White on "flying saucers" and "little green men." Printed as a representation of the "little men" reported by Mrs. Symmonds, there was no explanation that this cartoon had been prepared before Mrs. Symmonds told her story to Charles Doctor of the Post, and that it was not, in fact, an accurate depiction of the creatures she saw.

Len Stringfield summarized Mrs. Symmonds' story in the September 3, 1955 issue of his CRIFO Orbit. Since this was one of the humanoid reports about which we sought additional first-



Figure 22. SINGLE FIGURE SKETCHED BY CINCINNATI POST ARTIST
FROM MRS. SYMONDS'S DESCRIPTION

hand information a year later, he arranged a meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Symmonds at his home while I was visiting in Cincinnati. This August 28 meeting gave us the opportunity to check carefully all the details of Mrs. Symmonds' encounter.

Mrs. Symmonds' Deposition

Besides giving us her first-hand account of the Stockton encounter, Mrs. Symmonds provided a most valuable reference--a transcript of a deposition she had made on September 5, 1955 for Calvin W. Prem, Assistant Prosecuting Attorney for Hamilton County, as follows:

State of Ohio |
County of Hamilton | S.S.

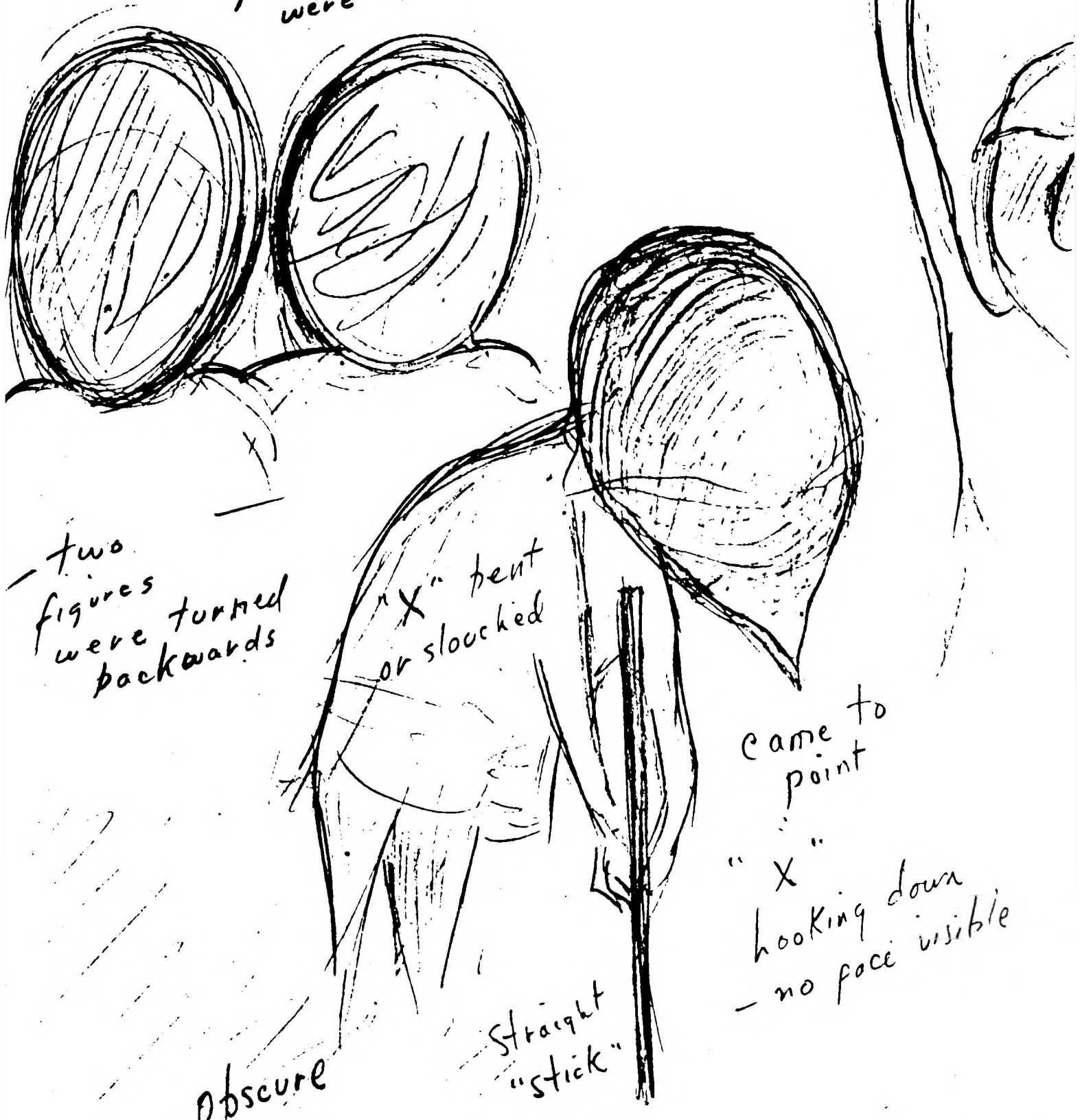
Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State of Ohio, personally appeared Margaret Symmonds, of 5133 Highway Avenue, Covedale, Hamilton County, Ohio, and states that she and her husband were driving to Florida on Saturday and Sunday, July 2nd-3rd, 1955, in their brand new Oldsmobile; that she left Cincinnati 7:30 a.m. Saturday and drove straight through, stopping regularly along the way; that she and her husband alternated driving; that she was driving about 3:30 a.m. on highway 129 just south of Stockton, Georgia; that Mr. Symmonds was dozing on the rear seat; and makes the following statement, to wit:

It was a clear night, the moon was shining, there were no houses, you could see for quite a way, the road was straight and good--it was a two (2) lane highway with flat shoulders on each side. I was driving at about 60 mph. I first noticed something in the center of the road when my headlights, which were on the upper beam, shone on four objects that I first thought were animals--maybe hogs or something. As I drove closer I reduced speed because I didn't want to hit them. Then, as I got almost up to them, I could see that they were wearing some kind of clothing--what appeared to be capes--grey-greenish

Fig. 23. FIGURES DESCRIBED

BY MRS. SYMMONDS

Two background
figures
were indistinct



two
figures
were turned
backwards

"X" bent
or slouched

came to
point

"X"
hooking down
- no face visible

Obscure

Straight
"stick"
no waver

Drawn by L.H. Stringfield
Aug 28, 1956

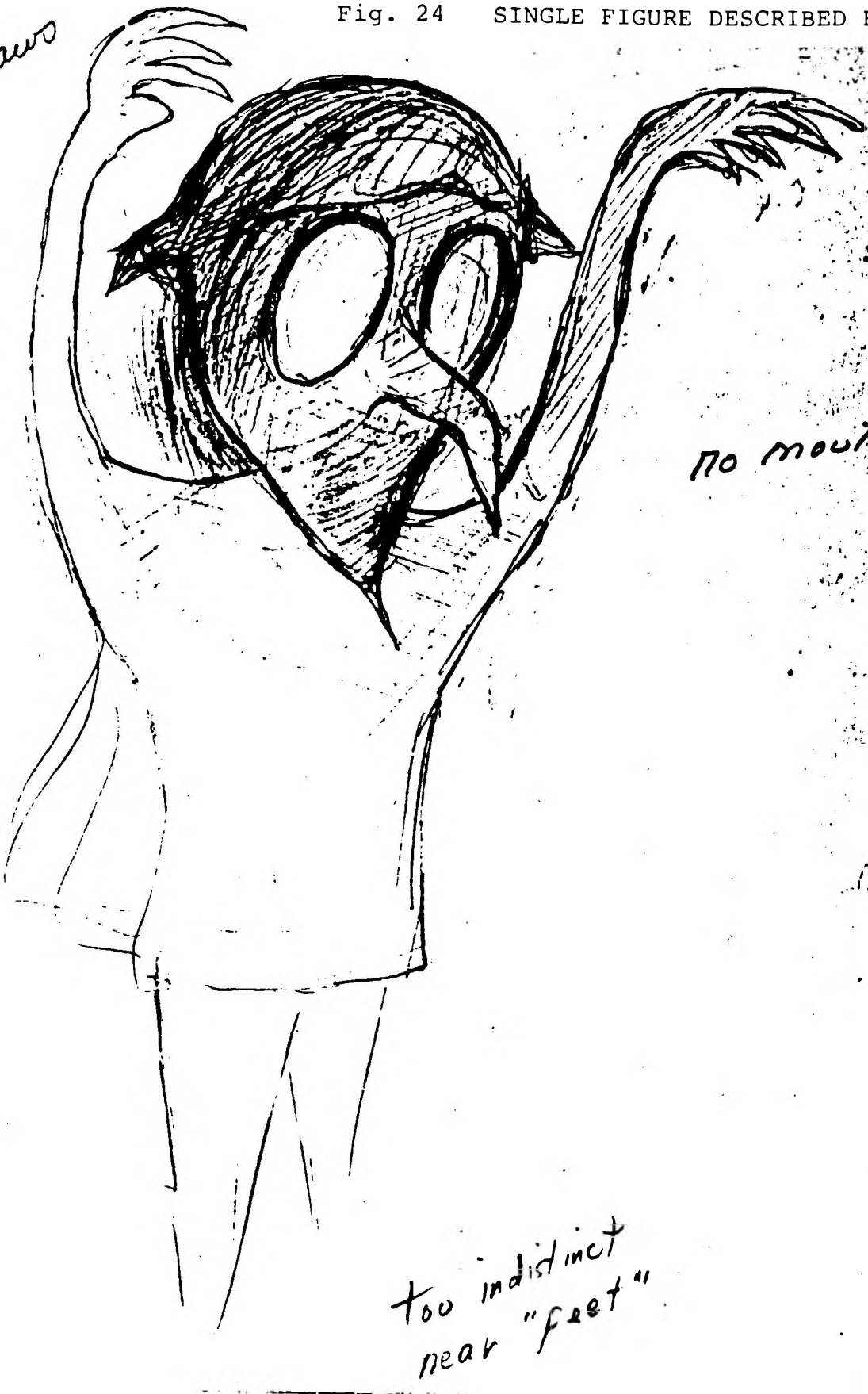
in color. One of them had what looked like a stick and they were huddled together in the center of the road as though they were about to dig in the road.

As I drove up, I had slowed down to about 40 mph. One of the things stepped to the side about a foot to get out of my way, and looked right at me. He had the stick in his hand. His arms looked longer than would be proportionate for the size of the body. The head looked to be of approximately normal size, only roundish. (Mrs. Symmonds explained to us that a normal-sized human head on a body the size of these beings appeared out of proportion.) It had what looked like a slouch hat on turned down all around. I had never seen anything like them before and I had never seen any clothes or material like that, either. The eyes, there were two of them, were big, like saucers, and they reflected a reddish light. I saw no pupils. I was terrified. As I drove close, I swerved to the right side of the road, but I didn't lose control of the car. I passed close enough to reach out and touch them. I speeded up right away and kept driving. I screamed and my husband woke up. He wanted to go back and see what it was, but I was afraid.

The nose was long--real long--and pointed. It reminded me of a witch. I heard no noise. And I smelled nothing peculiar. I was told since I came back and told what I saw that these things are supposed to smell, but I didn't smell anything.

The mouth seemed small to me. I didn't notice any lips. The lights didn't seem to bother them any. And except for that one step that the one took sideways, that was the only movement. The others didn't look up. I would say that they were all about the same size and about up to the bottom of my car window. Maybe about 3½ or 4 feet high. Their legs appeared to be short. I couldn't see too much about their bodies because of the cape. I didn't see any button on the front of the thing. That was drawn there by the Post's artist. By the way, he drew

like claws



no mouth

too indistinct
near "feet"

Mrs. Symmonds - Stockton, GA

Drawn by L. H. Stringfield
Aug 29 1956

two pictures before I got there, then had me pick one out and made several changes as I told him about what I saw. When I told him about the slouch hat, the artist drew one on and a photographer took my picture. That's the one that was in the paper last week (the Cincinnati Post, August 23, 1955).

The hands had claws on them, real long claws. I don't know how many fingers or if one was short like a thumb. And I didn't pay too much attention to the feet. It seems to me that they were not of unusual size or shape. The skin seemed to be a dark color and very rough or coarse. I don't know if it was scaly or not. The legs seemed to be very short for the size of the body, and the arms seemed long. The one holding the stick held it in his right hand (in describing this detail to us, Mrs. Symmonds was certain that the figure holding the stick used both "hands" to grasp it) and although I don't know what kind of a stick it was, it was short and as he held his arms in a hanging position, the stick touched the ground. When I first saw them, the one with the stick had his back to me. His shoulders were very square and seemed unusually strong-looking for that size body.

This is exactly, as clearly as I can recall and describe, what I saw. I was not drinking or groggy from driving. My head was clear--I was chewing gum. I told my friends in Florida about what I saw and, since I returned to Cincinnati, only a few close friends and members of the family. Most people laugh at me and think that I'm crazy, but I know what I saw. I was not seeing things.

I was going to call the Post as soon as I got back, but because almost everybody laughed at me, I decided not to. Then last week, when I read about that story about those people in Hopkinsville, Ky., seeing "little green men," I called the Post--Charlie Doctor is who I talked to--and reported what I saw in Georgia. They took a description over the phone. It was later when I went there and saw the two drawings they had.

I have read this statement, consisting of four (4) pages, each one initialed by me, and, being duly cautioned and sworn, say that it was written in my presence, and in the presence of my husband, Wesley Symmonds, by Calvin W. Prem, a Notary; that it is true and correct.

(signed) Margaret Symmonds

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence this 5th day of September, 1955.

(signed) Calvin W. Prem
Notary Public in and
for the State of Ohio.
My commission expires
10/26/57.

Witness

(signed) Wesley Symmonds

Additional Details

In addition to going over each point of the deposition in detail with us, Mrs. Symmonds assisted Len in preparing an accurate drawing of the creatures she had seen (see pages 151, 153 and 155 for drawings by Cincinnati Post and by Leonard Stringfield). While she was doing this, she realized for the first time that her sworn statement was incorrect in one detail: it was not the figure closest to her that had held the stick, but the figure to its right, standing in the center of the highway, "poking" at the road. When she recalled that the figure standing closest to her--the one that had stepped to the side as she passed--was standing with its arms upraised above its head, she suddenly realized, "Why, he couldn't have been holding the stick, he had his arms up!" Mrs. Symmonds told us that she saw no evidence of an elbow joint on the figure with upraised arms.

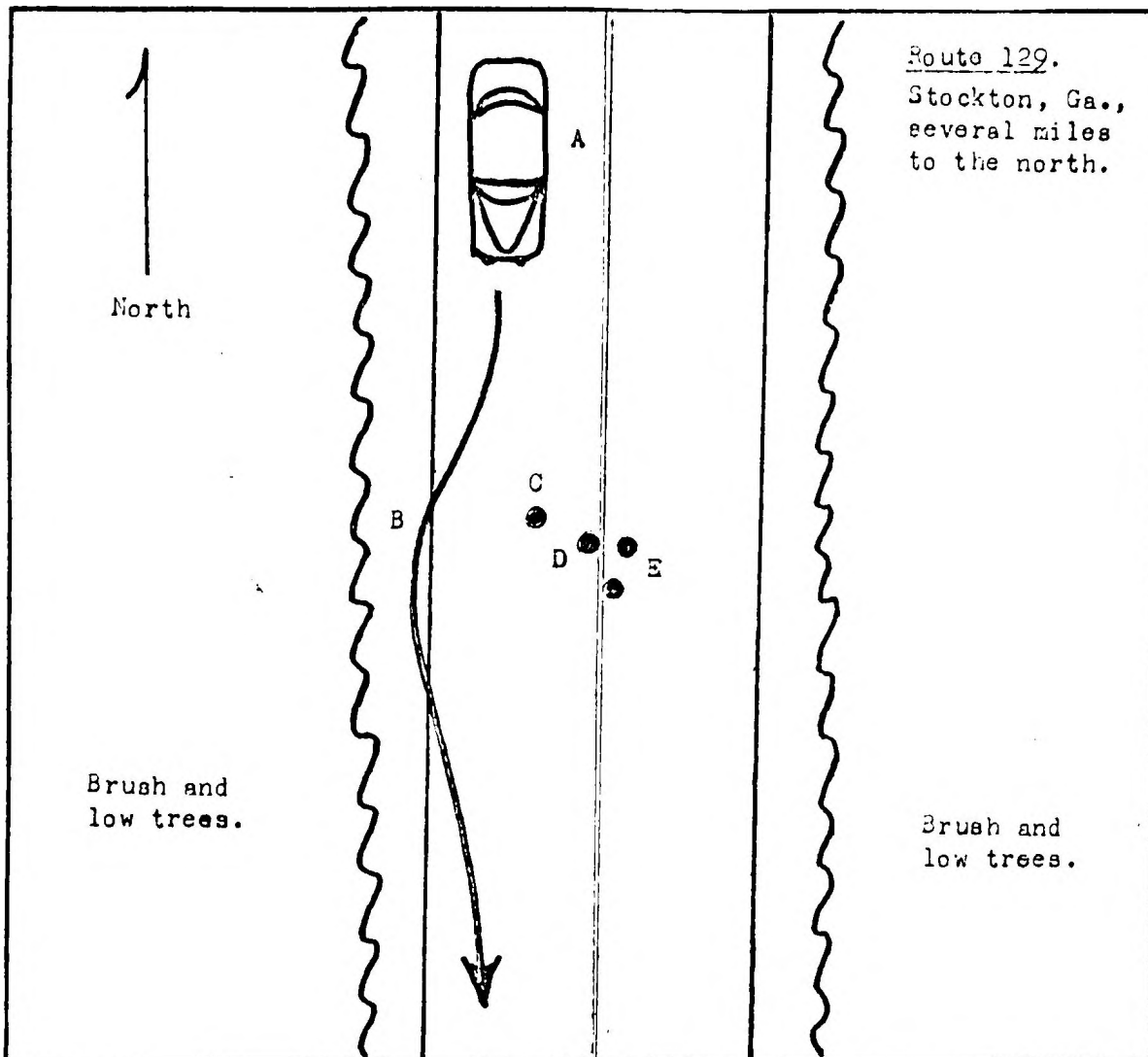
Mrs. Symmonds made one other important correction: in her deposition, the figures are described as "grey-greenish" in color. She said emphatically that the beings were grey, not green, and she could not account for this error in her statement. Interestingly, the same mistake occurred in the news report of the incident, as it did in most of the press accounts of the Hopkinsville encounter. At the time, "little green men" had jokingly become the generic title of "flying saucer" occupants. Not only the press, but the Air Force as well, found the term appropriate for use in their public pronouncements on the subject, carrying, as it did, the taint of the ridiculous. Possibly even notary publics found the word "green" irresistible, despite the lack of justification for its use.

Mrs. Symmonds recalled one particular aspect of her observation that stuck in her mind as most unusual: as she drove by the group of figures, the three in the center of the road "didn't move a muscle"; the only movement of any kind was the "little step backward" by the figure nearest to the car. Otherwise, she said, the group appeared to be entirely oblivious of her presence.

The entire incident took place in less than 30 seconds, according to Mrs. Symmonds. A duration of half that time would probably be more accurate, since the distance involved was certainly no more than several hundred feet; a car traveling at 40 miles per hour would cover the distance in a matter of seconds. Although she had seen no sign of a UFO near the site, Mrs. Symmonds passed through the area very quickly, and as she pointed out, "anything could have been hidden in the bushes to the side of the road."

Mrs. Symmonds told us that she and her husband had driven over the same route on the annual Florida vacation in 1956, and they had paid close attention to the area several miles south of Stockton on Route 129. It was desolate country, Mrs. Symmonds said, devoid of any houses or signs of human habitation. The highway is lined on both sides with low trees and scrub brush.

Fig. 25 DIAGRAM OF HIGHWAY SHOWING LOCATION OF SMALL FIGURES AND CAR



Mrs. Margaret Symmonds, driving south in car (A) on Route 129, several miles south of Stockton, Georgia, saw four creatures (C, D, & E) ahead of her in the middle of the road. As she approached, she slowed down and swerved to the right on the shoulder of the highway (B) to avoid hitting creature standing in her lane (C). Creature in the center (D) was "poking at the road" with a stick-like object. Two creatures in the rear (E) had their backs to the witness.

Just as she swerved to avoid hitting creature (C), he stepped to the side, away from the car. The others did not look up, and the one with the stick (D) held the stick in two hands. Mrs. Symmonds passed to the right of them within three or four feet, but close enough to (C) to reach out and touch him. The entire episode took less than 30 seconds, from the moment she first spotted them until she drove past them and, screaming, woke up her husband, who had been sleeping in back.

It is the sort of isolated landscape where "anything might happen and there would be no one within miles to know of it," she told us.

In our interview with the witness, Mrs. Symmonds gave us a clear and detailed account of her experience in Georgia. Straightforward and cooperative, there was nothing in her manner or presentation to suggest that she was elaborating on the facts or lying. The two corrections in her deposition regarding the figure holding the stick and the color of the creatures were called to our attention at once, and the points were properly cleared up. She was quite certain that what she described to us was a true and accurate recollection of the event, and she gave us no reason to doubt her.

Because there was no UFO associated with Mrs. Symmond's encounter, a search of various newspaper sources was made to see if there were any reports of aerial phenomena in the Stockton area at that time. None was found, but in spite of the absence of any associated UFO activity, it is possible to compare certain features of the Stockton humanoids with those of reported UFO occupants--the large, luminous eyes, the clawed hands, and the size of the beings, for example. Lacking specific evidence of related UFO activity, however, it is reasonable to conclude that whatever it was that Mrs. Symmonds saw on this isolated stretch of Georgia highway, it was certainly not native to that area--nor to any other part of the world we know. For this reason, Mrs. Symmonds' encounter must be classified as unexplained.