

# LUBBOCK DUCKS OVER THE ANDES

Gordon Creighton

A REPORT FROM SOUTH AMERICA BY WAY OF HONG KONG!

AT approximately 2110 hours CST on August 25, 1951, in Lubbock, Texas, a group of five professors from Texas Tech., and a graduate student working for his Ph.D., were sitting outside enjoying the cool night air when they observed the rapid transit overhead of what they all took to be a formation flight of eighteen UFOs. At least one hundred other people in and around Lubbock also saw the phenomenon, and many of them, it seems, also felt that they had seen something decidedly out of the ordinary. However, as all who have studied *Project Blue Book*<sup>1</sup> will know, the six academics and the rest of the eyewitnesses were mistaken, and most grievously so, for what they had seen were merely the luminous bellies of a party of airborne ducks. At 2330 hours, and shortly thereafter, during the night of August 31, 1951, a college freshman of Texas Tech. observed the passage of three more formation flights of the ducks over his house, and had time to get his camera and secure two good photographs of one flight and three of another. These pictures have since become famous in the literature of "our subject" as the photographs of the "Lubbock Lights."

Since 1951 the phenomenon has continued to crop up regularly and there are similar reports from various parts of the world. For example, a few years ago, in the small town where I live, not far from London, a policeman's wife telephoned me to say in confidence that a formation flight of twentyfive of the ducks had just been seen here, and that "the usual Police report had gone forward to the usual place." (More than this the good lady felt that it would be unwise for her to say.)

From South America — particularly from Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and especially the region of the Andes — there has been a steady trickle of such accounts, of which at least fifteen will be found in my various reports from that Continent for FSR since 1961.

Two new accounts that reached me recently are indicative of the same patterns, suggesting that the Lubbock Ducks are still on the wing above the mighty Cordillera of the Andes.

The first of the two new reports is from the Buenos Aires office of the French News Agency, Agence France-Presse (AFP), and is dated April 12, 1978, but I have not yet managed to see it in its original French or Spanish text, so I am obliged to take it from the Chinese version<sup>2</sup> which appeared in the Hongkong daily newspaper *Ming Pao* for April 14. For this timely Chinese clipping, I am most grateful to our friends (*needless to say, already FSR subscribers!*) Dr. Paul Siu (Siu Kin-Kwan) and

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Headline from the Ming Pao daily of 14.4.78

his beautiful wife Sabrina, with whom Mrs. C. and I had the great pleasure of travelling across Western Europe as far as Vienna in the summer of 1977.

My rendering of this Chinese report is as follows:—

The headline reads:

ANDES MOUNTAINS A PARADISE FOR UFOs. SEVERAL TENS OF UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECTS IN FORMATION FLIGHT SEEN BY MANY WITNESSES DURING PAST WEEK. "JUST SHOOTING STARS," SAY THE EXPERTS.

The report is datelined Buenos Aires, April 12 (AFP).

"The Chief of Police in the small town of Catamarca in north-western Argentina stated in today's evening papers that he has seen a formation of unidentified flying objects pass over.

"This is only the latest of countless reports received during this past week from eyewitnesses. The area skirting the foot of the Andes has become a veritable resort for UFOs. This state of affairs commenced last week when, in the small town of Ma-Hsi-T'e<sup>3</sup>, in the Province of San Luis, a number of inhabitants observed, at night, about thirty brightly glowing UFOs performing manoeuvres in the skies overhead. Since then, talk in that whole town has been of virtually nothing else. In their homes, on the streets, in the cafés, everybody is discussing it, and as time goes by it seems that more and more folk are reporting that they have seen them, so that even the World Cup has been totally forgotten.

"Then, just as the excitement was beginning to die down, a crowd of workers in the town of Mendoza saw a similar formation of UFOs pass over. These eyewitnesses all say that there were thirty saucers, in

perfect formation, which went over Mendoza and then vanished from sight towards the Andes.

"And now, to cap it all, the Chief of Police of Catamarca has joined the ranks of the eyewitnesses, and given his own official testimony. On Thursday<sup>4</sup> evening, just before nightfall, he and the officers of his staff saw about thirty brightly glowing UFOs shoot across the sky and disappear towards the west. And, by the time this strange news item had itself passed over the Andes, and had reached Chile on the other side, Chile too was beginning to have its own wave of UFO reports. Early last year, as will be recalled, Chile had the case of the military patrol who said that they had encountered beings from a flying saucer.<sup>5</sup>

"However, the Bureau for the Investigation of Space Phenomena says that all these stories of flying saucers in formation refer to nothing more than meteors<sup>6</sup>, of which there are always some showers every year during the early part of May."

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The second report, for which we are much indebted to FSR's Correspondent in Venezuela, Sr. Victor Gesua of Caracas, is also an AFP wire originating in Argentina, and comes from the Caracas newspaper *El Universal* of May 8. My translation from the Spanish is as follows:—

"San Luis, Argentina, May 7. (AFP). It has been revealed here today that a squadron of some forty flying saucers, in perfect formation, has passed several times to and fro across the air-space of this province of Argentina, which lies some 400 kilometres to the west of Buenos Aires.

"According to reports received by the local newspaper, *La Voz del Sud*, and by their regional correspondents, the first sighting of these UFOs took

place during the night of last Thursday.<sup>7</sup>

"The eyewitnesses say the weird craft passed overhead bathed in a tremendous greenish-blue glow.

"The craft were in V-formation, and in the course of several of the fly-overs the formation split up into two sections which, so the dumbfounded witnesses say, then came together to form the V-pattern again after executing perfect curves."

#### References

1. See *Project Blue Book*, edited by Brad Steiger, Ch.IV (Ballantine Paperback Books, N.Y., 1976).
2. They know how to prepare roast duck to perfection in China, the *Peking Duck* being especially famous in their cuisine. Chinese readers must have been thrilled to learn from the paper that these savoury birds abound in South America as they do in Old Cathay, and even fly around in disciplined formations there — no doubt *oven-ready*, as we say of our turkeys.
3. I have been unable to identify the place rendered in Chinese as Ma-Hsi-T'e. (For those who are interested, I might add that Buenos Aires comes out in Chinese as Bu-Yi-No-Ssu-Ai-Li-Ssu; Catamarca as K'a-T'e-Ma-Chia; Mendoza as Man-Du-Sha.)
4. Thursday, April 6, 1978.
5. See *The Arica Encounter*, in FSR Vol. 23, No. 5.
6. The study of Astronomy and related cosmic phenomena is an absorbing, full-time job. It would consequently be a bit churlish of us to expect the personnel of the Argentine Bureau for the Investigation of Space Phenomena to be *ornithologists* too, and to know that this particular pesky phenomenon had long ago been identified — not as meteors but as luminous ducks — and by the most prestigious ornithological experts of our planet, the staff of *Project Blue Book*!
7. Thursday, May 4, 1978. (Do these ducks have a preference for *Thursdays*?)

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(see back cover)

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# UFO

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