

A History of NASIC

NATIONAL AIR AND SPACE INTELLIGENCE CENTER

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, OHIO

The Swamp Gas is Restless

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In the late 1960's, the Air Force office charged with monitoring information on unidentified flying objects (UFOs) moved into an office down the hall from my office. The combination of my curious nature and an attractive blond secretary was more than enough to get me to ask her if I could read their reports on UFO sightings. She politely said, "No!"

About 1 or 2 years later, she came into my office. She was a very concerned about the sighting of moving lights over a swamp in Michigan. She stated that the lights, which were seen by several people, moved up and down and sideways. She needed an explanation for this the phenmon. Neither my coworker, Mr. Robert Cherpski, nor I knew what was the source of these lights.

Then I recalled from my freshman college chemistry class that sometimes swamps emit methane gas and that gas may be luminous. I quickly stated that if it was methane gas, then the gas would rise and probably drift, but it would not go up and down. So I said, "Don't quote me, because neither one of us knows the source of lights in that sighting."

The next day, it was reported in the news media that the lights were caused by swamp gas. The media had a ball with that explanation, especially political cartoonists. There were a number of comments stating that the swamp gas was restless.