

Flying Saucers

Tuesday three in the afternoon 24 June 1947

Kenneth Arnold of Boise, rescue pilot, businessman, deputy sheriff and federal marshal, U.S.

Forest Serviceman

At 9,000 feet crystal-clear conditions

Alone in his Callair between Chehalis and Yakima

An hour's detour searching for a lost transport

Out of the blue a flash like just before a midair crash

Made him look left north of Mount Rainier

To see at ninety degrees

Nine seeming jet planes in a V pointed south

The echelon vaguely bobbing and weaving

Flashing reflections

Twenty-four miles off

Against Rainier's snows, tailless—

Flying nearly forty miles

Between Mounts Rainier and Adams

Three times the speed of sound

The first crossed the ridge bridging the mountains

As the last came over its north crest five miles back

Nine crescents needing to be

Half a mile long to be seen

Flying that fast that far away

So smooth mirroring sunlight

Like speedboats on rough water

Wavering in formation

Like the tail of a Chinese kite

Wings tipping flashing blue white

Each like a saucer skipped over water