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#### A. S. Department of Justice

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2005

ENTIRE FILE REVIEWED FOR HISTORICAL DECLASSIFICATION

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10/5/06 BY 60309 UP 170000

FEDERAL BUREAU

Of

### INVESTIGATION

Declassification authority derived from FBI Automatic Declassification Guide, issued May 24, 2007

Screened by NARA (RD-F) 10-17-2018 FOIA # 58950 DOCID: 34278200

## USE CARE IN HANDLING THIS FILE

Transfer-Gall 421

NW#:58950

## Office Memorandum · United States Government

: Director, FBI

DATE: November 19, 1947

FROM SAC. Oklahoma City

MADELINE GYVINNE MERCHANT

ATOMIC EFFERGY ACT

On October 14, 1947 Mr. P. M. JUVENAL, Security Officer, Tinker Field, Oklahoma City, advised this office that the above named individual appeared at Tinker Field on that date, attempting to obtain employment as a Press Agent at a reported salary of approximately \$7,200 a year. She was interviewed by Mr. JUVENAL under the pretext of being a Personnel Counselor, and she advised that she had been writing articles on atomic, nuclear, ionic, and ray warfare for the Atomic Energy Commission. These articles had been submitted to the War Department for ATC. She claimed to have been in close contact with scientists of Los Alamos, New Mexico, and her divorced husband, BENSON MERCHANT, one of the original engineers at that facility. She also claimed to be in close contact with FBI Agent FEMER (phonetic) at Santa Fe. New Mexico. Mrs. MERCHANT advised that she was presently residing with her mother, Mrs. H. F. INYERS, 918 Northeast 18th Street, Oklahoma City.

Mr. JUVENAL advised that MERCHANT did not give any information which could be construed as confidential, but claimed to have written articles under her maiden name, MADELINE GWYNNE, on various theories, and that these articles had met with wide acclaim. Mr. JUVENAL expressed the opinion that Mrs. MERCHANT was probably a psychopathic case. She claimed that she was well known to the FBI, AEC, and U. S. Army.

By teletype dated October 14, 1947 the El Paso Office was requested to furnish this office with any information in their files concerning Mrs. MERCHANT.

By teletype of the same date the El Paso Office advised that Mrs. MADELINE GWYNNE MERCHANT had visited the Santa Fe Resident Agency, at which time she advised that she had received several reports concerning light objects seen at night and followed by explosions. She claimed to be a student of radio waves and reportedly discussed the above flying objects with officials of AEC', Los Alamos, New Mexico, including SIDNEY NEWBERGER, Chief of Intelligence. LERCHANT was also reported to have written the Secretary of War and other government officials concerning her theories. The El Paso Office advised that officials of the AEC, Los Alamos, consider MERCHART to be unreliable and possibly not well balanced mentally.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 06 BY 60309 W

NW#:58950

Director, FBI
Re: Madeline Gwynne Merchant
Atomic Energy Act

November 19, 1947

On October 22, 1947 Mrs. MERCHANT personally appeared at the Oklahoma City Office, at which time she stated that she wanted to report that on October 10, 1947 a disc was sighted north of Oklahoma City by her step-father and mother. This disc was traveling from the east, apparently going in a semicircle to the northeast. She requested that this information be furnished to the Bureau for transmittal to appropriate Army officials.

It was apparent that Mrs. MERCHANT is suffering from some mental disorder and it was noticeable that she has dropsy. It is not believed that she is reliable and no investigation will be conducted by this office.

CC: El Paso

DRS:bnm 117-3 Director, FBI

Hovember 19, 1947

SAC. Oklahema City

MADELINE GWYNNE MERCHANT ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

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DATE 10/5/06 BY 60 30 9 (10/74)

NW#:58950 DocId:34278200

Hovember 19, 1947

Director, FBI Ro: Madeline Gwynne Merchant Atomic Energy Act

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It was apparent that Mrs. MERCHART is suffering from some mental disorder and it was noticeable that she has dropsy. It is not believed that she is reliable and no investigation will be conducted by this office.

CC: El Paso

128:ban 117-8

	STANDARD FORM NO. 64	
	Office Memorandum .	UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
	TO : MR. D. M. LADD	DATE: November 19, 1948
	FROM : MR. H. B. FLETCHER	
fi.	SUBJECT: MRS. MADELINE GWYNNE MERCHANT	ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED  HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED  Mr. Tolson  Life Clean  Mr. Clean  Mr
17	SODJECT. MRS. MADELINE GWINNE MERCHANT	DATE AS OF BY 66309 WAYNE Lead NICHOIS IN ROSEN Tracy
	*	Mr. Rgan Mr. Ournea Mr. Harbo Mr. Harbo
	tion into the "background, objectives an	rmy Air Forces for an investiga- kr. PennIngton kr. Quinn Tamo Tele. Room Tele. Room Kr. Nesse
	subject.	Wise Holman Miss Gandy
	A review of Bureau files reflect Juvenal, Security Officer, Tinker Field,	in file 117-286-1 that Mr. P. M.
	1947, that in his opinion Mrs. Merchant File 62-83894 Serial 37 contains information	was probably a psychopathic case. VKW Britis
	Chief of Security and Intelligence for to of the AEC consider the subject unreliable.	he AEC at Los Alamos, stated officials
	In the same serial, the El Paso office s	tated Mrs. Merchant personally appeared.
	tion concerning "flying disks". It is s	u on October 22, 1947, to report informa-
	"It was apparent Mrs. Merchant is su	
	and it was noticeable that she has d she is reliable"	ropsy. It is not believed that
	A card is maintained in the Crim	e Records Section of the Bureau indicat-
	ing that Mrs. Merchant may be mentally i	11.
	ACTION:	
	In view of the above information that the investigation requested be cond	the Army Air Forces may not desire
	memorandum be directed to the Liaison Se be orally furnished to the Army Air Force	ction and the substance of the above
		desires any action taken in this matter.
	" " " " LE TOTAL DE T	a he
	Attachment to The Mayor	Copuci OST-USAF- Checking.
	1.30 [1.3]	11/20
	EFL: jmf / 1/8 - 1 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0 - 0	Ji 117-286,2
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NW#:58950 DocId:34278200

117-286

December 9, 1947

CONTINUE TOURISTAL BY SPECIAL MESSENGER

Atomic Energy Commission Room 38, Public Health Building Washington, D. C.

DECLASSIFIED BY GO 309 MC/ YEAR

Attention: Rear Admiral John E. Gingrich

Director of Security and Intelligence

From:

John Edgar Hoover, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: MADELINE GYYNNE MERCHANT

Mr. P. M. Juvenal, Security Officer, Tinker Field, Oklahoma City, has advised the Oklahoma City Office of this Bureau that Mrs. Merchant appeared at Tinker Field on October 14, 1947 and attempted to obtain employment as a Press Agent at a reported salary of \$7,200.00 a year.

In an interview with Mr. Juvenal, she advised that she had been writing articles on atomic, nuclear, ionic, and ray warfare for the Atomic Energy Commission. She claimed to be in close contact with scientists at Los Alamos and stated that her divorced husband, Benson Merchant, was one of the original engineers at that facility. Mr. Juvenal advised that Mrs. Merchant did not give any information which could be construed as confidential. but claimed to have written articles under her maiden name, Madeline Gwynne, on various theories and that these articles had met with wide acclaim. Mr. Juvenal was of the opinion that Mrs. Herchant was probably a psychopathic case.

The files of this Bureau reflect that Mrs. Merchant contacted the El Paso Office and advised that she had received several reports concerning light objects seen at night and followed by explosions. She claimed to be a student of radio waves and reportedly discussed flying objects with officials of the Atomic Energy Commission at Los Alamos, including Mr. Sidney Newberger. She also claimed to have written the Secretary of War and other Government officials concerning her theories. The El Paso Office has advised that officials of the Commission at Los Alamos consider Mrs. Merchant to be unreliable and possibly not well balanced mentally. (Au 117-186-1)

This is being furnished for your information.

CWB:AM COMMUNICATIONS S FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

NW#:58950

Mr. Tolson

#### fice Memorandum UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

: Director, FBI

DATE: October 28, 1949

SAC, Oklahoma City

MADELINE GWYNNE MERCHANT SUBJECT: ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

Remylet 11/19/47.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE DISTOR BY 60309 LICE

By letter dated 11/25/47 the Butte office forwarded to this office the original and a carbon copy of questionnaire received by WILLIAM D. TALLEY, Canyon County Coroner, Nampa, Idaho, on November 20, 1947, apparently from the above captioned individual, who gave her address as 918 N.E. 18th St., Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Enclosed herewith is the carbon copy of the questionnaire, and this office is in possession of the original.

The Butte office in their letter of November 25, 1947, advised that an explosion caused by butane gas leakage occurred at Nampa, Idaho, on November 15. 1947. Five persons were killed, 50 were injured, and three buildings were demolished as a result of the explosion. Mrs. FAY DORR, a waitress in the Canyon Cafe, across the street from the explosion, reported to the newspapers that she thought she had seen "a ball of fire" at the time of the explosion. Mr. TALIEY advised the Butte office that he had interviewed Mrs. DORR relative to the "ball of fire" and that it was concluded that Mrs. DORR had seen the reflection of the blast in a window of the Canyon Cafe.

The Butte office requested the Oklahoma City office to ascertain from Mrs. MERCHANT her reason for desiring information regarding the "ball of fire" and why she requested this information be sent to the FBI Agent at Santa Fe, New Mexico. By letter dated December 29, 1947, this office forwarded to the Butte office the information contained in referenced letter to the Bureau, and no investigation was conducted by this office since it appeared Mrs. MERCHANT was not reliable and was possibly suffering from some mental disability.

The Butte office by letter dated October 7, 1949, advises they had received correspondence from the above captioned on July 25, 1949, in which she desired information be furnished the nearest Military Security Office in that area in regard to seven V-shaped objects that were sighted over the Mountain Home Desert, which is near Boise, Idaho, on July 24, 1949, by an unidentified pilot. The Butte office advised MERCHANT claimed she had received this information in the Daily Oklahoman newspaper dated July 25, 1949.

Enclosed with Subject's letter was a "data sheet" containing 18 questions which pertained to V-shaped objects, and according to the Butte letter, these questions were very similar to the data desired by Air Force Intelligence Offices in regard to flying saucers, discs and other/similar flying objects. The Butte office has advised Subject desired no acknowledgment to her correspondence, but requested the completed questionnaire be forwarded to appropriate military security authorities. The Butte office has advised this information was furnished Army Esclosure

cc Butte (65-0-206)

INDEXED - 130

RECORDED - 130

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WHS:PM 117-3

DocId:34278200 NW#:58950

OC 117-3

authorities at Great Falls, Montana, Air Base; Hill Field Air Base, Ogden, Utah; McCord Field, Washington; and the Salt Lake City office.

On October 3, 1949, the Butte office received correspondence from the Inspector General, AAF, 15th District, OSI, Great Falls Air Force Base, Great Falls, Montana. Enclosed with this correspondence to the Butte office was a letter from the OSI, USAF, which advised that Subject associates with known Communists, and is considered dangerous, and further that Subject's letter was being forwarded to the Air Materiel Section for evaluation. The Butte office requested the Oklahoma City office to obtain all information in possession of the Headquarters Office, OSI, at Washington, D.C., concerning Subject's association with known Communists.

The Oklahoma City office has no information concerning Subject not already provided to the Bureau in referenced letter, except that one Mrs. MADELINE GWYNNE MERCHANT, by letter to this office dated August 2, 1948, advised she had attended Oklahoma University in the Spring of 1935, at which time she had attended lectures given by one Dr. EATON (possibly identical with HOWARD O. EATON, Professor of Philosophy.) Subject stated she was suspicious of Dr. EATON since he had recommended to her as his student, that she give serious consideration to Socialist or State ownership of all property. She advised that he also suggested that such a change in concepts might be effected by legislation, and should that not be effective, "mild force" or "mild revolution" might have to occur.

The files of this office reflect HOWARD OF EATON was Faculty Adviser of the Equal Education Committee at the University of Oklahoma, which, according to informants, is controlled by Communist Party members.

In view of the above, the Bureau is requested to obtain from the Headquarters of OSI any information they have concerning Subject and/or her association with known Communists. No investigation will be conducted by this office inasmuch as it appears from information in the file that she is mentally unbalanced.

October 28, 1949

Director, FBI

SAC, Oklahoma City

MADELINE GWYNNE MERCHANT ATOMIC ENERGY ACT

Remylet 11/19/47.

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WHS: FM 117-3

NW#:58950 DocId:34278200

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Enclosure to Bureau MADELINE GWYNNE MERCHANT ATOMIC ENERGY ACT OC 117-3

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
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DATE LOS OL BY 60309 LCC

918 N.E. 18th St.
Oklahoma City (5) Okla.
Nov. 17, 1947

Mr. William D. Talley, Canyon County Coroner, Nampa, Idaho.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10/5/06 BY 1000 09 100 00

Dear Sir:

\*ball-of-fire described in a news release as seen by Mrs. Fay Dorr and others on Sunday, Nov. 16, 1947?

1.	Was the reported number of persons killed (five) correct 1
2.	Of the fifty persons reported injured, how many are seriously
	injured
	Are the injuried suffering from burns similar to lightning burns?
4.	Direction from which "ball-of-fire" came.
5•	Size, (as accurate as possible)
6.	Was it seen by others before it entered the cafe kitchen
7.	Did it oxplode?
	Color
	Exact hour of occurance
10.	Shape of object
	Remarks:
12.	What was the state of the weather?

On a separate shest of paper, please give any other unusual impressions seeing the "ball-of-fire."

Thanking you very kindly for your earliest possible reply, I am, DocId: 34278200
Sincerely,

NW#:58950

cc/	The	carbon	сору	enclosed	should	be	mailed	to	Mr.	Francis	Finley,		
												In-C	harge.
						Federal Building,				59	2472		
				**					San	ta Fe, N	.M.		

P.S. This communication should not be discussed any more than absolutely necessary to secure the desired details, except with members of the FBI or official members of the War Depit.

Additional remarks:	<del></del>	<del></del>	<del></del>	
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Use space below if necessary:

NW#:58950

SAC, GRANNA City

Howesber 21, 1949

Director, FBI

MADELLOR GIVERS RESCHART ATOMIC ENSIGN ACT DUTCHN FILO 117-226

Rewrist dated October 28, 1949, in which you requested that the Bureau obtain from the Headquarters of the Office of Special Investigations my information that they may have concerning the subject and/or her association with known Communists.

Bureau files reflect that OGI requested on investigation concerning the background, objectives and reliability of the subject in Hoverber, 1948. This request was uithingen on December 22, 1948, in view of the information indicating that the subject was suffering from a montal disorder.

In view of the background of this subject, no impuly will be used by the Bureau as requested in your measurable.

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KWD:mm

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RECEIVED-X T. ACCIA T. S. DEPT. OF JUSTION

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