
REMEMBERING DICK HALL

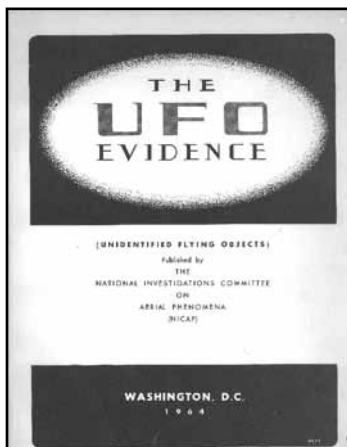
BY TED BLOECHER

On July 17, 2009, ufology tragically lost one of its premiere investigators, researchers, and UFO authors, when Richard H. Hall, of Brentwood, Maryland, succumbed to colon cancer at the age of 78. His output was remarkable, notable mainly for his two extraordinary volumes on the history of UFO sightings: *The UFO Evidence*, published by the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (NICAP) in 1964, and *The UFO Evidence, Vol. II*, published by Scarecrow Press, in 2000. But it wasn't merely as a UFO author that Dick made notable contributions; in 2006, he published *Women on the Civil War Battlefield* (University Press of Kansas), a fascinating report on women's active roles on the battlefields of the Civil War, often disguised as men, taken from firsthand accounts in diaries and letters of the period.

It was my honor and privilege to have known Dick Hall longer than any other associate or colleague in UFO research and investigation, having first met him when he joined Civilian Saucer Intelligence of New York in the mid-1950s, while he was still



Richard H. Hall



official publication, *The UFO Investigator*.

Ted Bloecher is a veteran ufologist who began studying the phenomenon in 1952.

After CSI of New York became inactive in the early 1960s, it was Dick Hall who was responsible for bringing Isabel Davis, one of CSI's founders and major players, to Washington to work on the NICAP staff, in 1966. And during the summer of the following year, Hall opened up NICAP's vast resources while I was writing *The UFO Wave of 1947*.

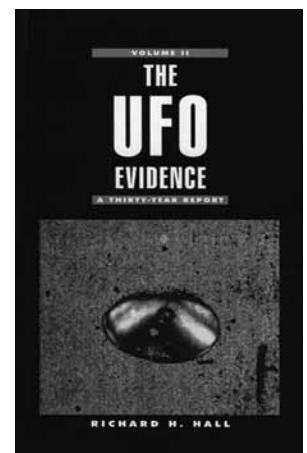
Without Dick's generous assistance and cooperation, as well as NICAP's invaluable support, that volume could never have been written.

And in May 1968, it was Dick Hall who was largely responsible for my having made the decision to put my theatre career on temporary hold, move to Washington, and join the staff of NICAP, where I would remain for the next 16 months.

Following NICAP's gradual decline that began in 1969 and led to its eventual demise in the 1970s, Dick moved into other areas, working in the Washington branch of the American Psychological Association, and during the 1980s as an abstractor and indexer at Congressional Information Services, in Bethesda, Maryland; but he remained active in UFO

research and investigation, and during the 1990s he served on the board of directors for the Fund for UFO Research. Among the other notable books on the UFO subject was his *Uninvited Guests*, published in 1988 by Aurora Press in Santa Fe. Dick and I stayed in touch through the years, and I was a house guest of his many, many times after he had moved to Brentwood, Maryland, just outside of Washington.

I would like to extend my sympathies to Dick's two surviving brothers, Bob and Bill Hall, and his sister, Mary Lou Dabbs, of Augusta, Georgia, and their respective families. It was because of their consideration and generosity that I was able to join them for



several days during a week of family reunion late in June, down in Maryland, at which time I had the chance to visit with Dick for the last time. Although he was physically quite fragile by then, his mental capabilities were sharp and very

much in focus, and I am grateful to his family, and to John Carlson, of College Park, for making this final visit possible.

Dick, you will be sorely missed by your many friends and colleagues. Have a safe journey. ♦

DICK HALL AND THE CLOSED CIRCLE

BY JEROME CLARK

Time has been good to ufology's extraterrestrial hypothesis. Its key prediction, made before even one was known to exist, is being fulfilled daily. It turns out that yes, extrasolar planets are ubiquitous. The more there are, the greater the likelihood—perhaps bordering on certainty—of a noteworthy number of worlds hospitable to life, including intelligent life. If, as astrobiologists contend, the galaxy indeed hosts advanced civilizations in the tens of millions (or more), the greater the likelihood—perhaps, again, bordering on certainty—that we will, inevitably, detect evidence of their overwhelming presence. Enter the UFO phenomenon.

A supremely logical man, Dick Hall saw early on that the ETH—well before it was called that—was what remained after you eliminated the explanations that represented themselves as prosaic, even if sometimes they were extraordinary in themselves. Except to the grimly determined, prosaic explanations for the core phenomenon of daylight discs, radar/visuals, CE2s, and the like have proven exercises in futility, serving no evident purpose but to hold heresy at continued bay and to insist, in effect, that long neglect justifies further neglect. After all, what else could justify it?

Dick transcended not only the drearily wrong-headed, not-so-smart, conventional wisdom about UFOs but also ufology's assorted ideological fads, for example the fascination with supernaturalism on one hand and the embrace of skepticism by some prominent European figures on the other. He lived long enough to see the great circle close. Yes, he was stubborn, which is sometimes—not, of course, always—a virtue; but more than that, he never abandoned his coolly reasoned reading of the evidence.

Dick was older than I am (by almost exactly 16 years), but we both had been around long enough to know first-generation ufology and to grasp that, whatever its faults and limitations (and there were many), it was essentially correct in its reading of the issue it confronted. I don't mean just about the ETH, though that, too; first-generation ufology, however naïve it often was, understood that UFO reports are amenable to scientific investigation and analysis. The phenomenon has something to engage the attention of mili-

tary forces, intelligence agencies, psychologists, folklorists, and pop-culturists, but fundamentally, it is a question that only science, properly and fearlessly applied, will be able to answer.

In the meantime, it's up to us ufologists, who too often fall down on the job both because we lack the necessary resources and because, frankly, many of us simply know no better. The best of us, and Dick was as good as they come, have learned to gaze forward, toward a time when (possibly) no ufologist now living remains, a time when scientists turn to what, often at great personal sacrifice (and let us note that Dick died in poverty), we preserved. If not for our research and analysis, the history and contours of a significant phenomenon, arguably a profoundly significant one, would have been lost. After all, hardly anybody in elite authority was paying attention, except to ridicule, disparage, and confuse the discussion with dubious polemics.

In his last years Dick published an old-fashioned paper-and-print bulletin, *The Journal of UFO History*, which mostly examined those remarkable hard-evidence cases from the early years of the controversy, the sorts of reports the ET-phobes in and out of ufology would prefer drop deep into the darkest corner of the memory hole. Dick also contributed regularly to the popular e-mail forum UFO Updates, mostly to challenge both the rigid skeptics and the unhinged believers. He refused to suffer fools gladly, and when he saw the same old foolishness continually reassert itself, he could wax sulphurous. I knew exactly how he felt. He had all the right enemies.

Toward the end, a few weird obsessives were openly desiring his imminent departure, along with mine and several others', from the earth. We were flattered that they cared.

Aside from ufology, Dick and I shared political sympathies, a passion for American history, and a longtime fascination—which we discovered by sheer accident over a conference breakfast one day—with the legendary Western lawman Wyatt Earp. Earp is a controversial figure, but we learned that we had come to identical conclusions about him, too.

Under the sometimes fierce exterior, Dick was a warm, gentle, witty, and forever curious man. He had many friends, and all of us will never cease missing him. He was a giant in ufology's earth. ♦

Jerome Clark, an IUR editor, is the author of The UFO Encyclopedia (1990–1998), Unnatural Phenomena (2005), and other books.