THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted]

Incident #33, [illegible] -- page [illegible]

too was the planet Venus. In the absence of exact measures, however, it is impossible to establish that it was or was not. It is unfortunate that theodolite measures of the afternoon observations were evidently not made.)

It has been unofficially reported that the object was a Navy scientific balloon. If this can be established, it is to be preferred as an explanation. However, if one accepts the notion that reports from various other localities in the state refer to the same object, any such device must have been a good many miles [illegible] -- 25 to 30 -- in order to have been seen clearly, almost simultaneously, from places 175 miles apart.

It is entirely possible, of course, that the first sightings were of some sort of balloon or aircraft, but that when these reports came to Godman Field, a careful scanning of the sky revealed Venus, and it could be that Lieutenant Mantell did actually give chase to the planet, even though whatever object had been the source of the excitement elsewhere had disappeared. At the altitudes that the pilot reached, Venus would have been very much more easily observed than from the ground, and it might even be that he did not actually pick it up until he was at a considerable altitude. The one piece of evidence that leads this investigator to believe that at the time of Lieutenant Mantell's death he was actually trying to reach Venus is

[redacted]

UNCLASSIFIED

THIS PAGE IS UNCLASSIFIED