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Darlington, Wisconsin

31 May 1953

I. DESCRIPTION

Between 0900 CUT and 1100 CUT on 31 May 1953, eleven persons in the Darling-Darlington area in Wisconsin sighted an unidentified aerial object. The object appeared as a steady white light coming generally out of the East and disappearing about overhead after 8 hours of continuous observation. It appeared low on the Eastern horizon, much brighter than the surrounding stars. It was reported to hover and then move at definite speeds by several local inhabitants. Including several police officers and Ground Observer Corps members. Two of the police men pursued the object in their squad car without gaining any noticeable ground. A telescope was employed to view the phenomenon by the GOC members. The weather during the time of sighting was unusually clear with a few scattered clouds created on a north heading by the wind.

II. DISCUSSION

A newspaper account of the sighting came to the attention of STIC and in a report an officer and an astronomer were sent to the area of the sighting. They interrogated eight of the eleven observers in attempting to piece together the variety of reports. Estimates of altitude and sighting readings were obtained from different observers at varied locations in Monroe and Darlington for evenly spaced time intervals during the 8 hour period. The description of the object turned out to be the same with all observers - bright white. The description of the maneuvers varied, however, some stating the object rose slowly, others saying it moved at great speeds, and then hovered. The latter description usually came from observers while riding in a car. All agreed that the object was too bright to be a star and moreover it was seen in the daytime.

It was determined that the path of the object in question across the sky, its position at appearance and disappearance, very closely paralleled the path of the planet Venus on 31 May 1953. Venus on this day rose at 0500 CUT and set at the approximate sunset twilight. Under ideal weather conditions it can be seen in the daytime, although this is rare. The fact that GOC personnel first sighted it at night and had the object pre-posted for daylight observation allowed them to keep it under constant surveillance. Reports that the object maneuvered radially usually came from persons driving in cars while observing the object. If Venus is viewed at for any length of time without any balancing reference point, it can appear to perform erratic maneuvers.

GOC personnel alerted the Chicago Filter center and jets were alerted to investigate. This was during daylight observation and the jets, although alerted toward the object by visual directions from Darlington, were unable to locate the unknown.

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