

2

UNCLASSIFIED
UNCONFIRMED

Incident #204

DATE OF REPORT 8 Nov 48

ATTC NO. _____

LOCATION Panama

AP NO. _____

SOURCE Weather observer

REPORT NO. _____

DATE IN TO ATTC _____

DATE OF REPORT _____

COLOR Like Star

TIME OF OBSERVING 1640

SPEED _____

SHAPE Spherical with tail (comet)

ALTITUDE high

SIZE Larger than Venus

LENGTH OF TIME OBSERVED 40 minutes

COURSE _____

TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground

NO. IN GROUP 1

MANEUVERS _____

BOUND _____

PHOTOS _____ SKETCHES _____

1948 L
Comet

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Temporary ATTC Form 329
(2 Jan 52)

[Redacted Box]

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Incident #204 -- Panama -- 8 November 1948

It seems entirely probable that the object sighted in this incident was the comet 1948L, which had been discovered two days earlier in Australia. The comet was suitably placed for observation near the equator and in the southern hemisphere. The time of observation also checks closely with the time of visibility. There is no single statement in the limited report that contradicts the comet hypothesis. If the observer had given the actual bearings of the object, these would have clinched the matter.

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~~RESTRICTED~~

HEADQUARTERS
AIR WEATHER SERVICE
Andrews Air Force Base
Washington 25, D. C.

In Reply
Refer To: AFS DSS

11 May 1949

SUBJECT: Unidentified Flying Objects

TO : Commanding General
Air Materiel Command
Wright-Patterson Air Force Base
Dayton, Ohio
ATTN: MC1AXO-3

1. Reference is made to letter from your headquarters, MC1AXS, dated 9 March 1949, subject "Unidentified Flying Objects," and first indorsement thereto by this headquarters, dated 31 March 1949.

2. The incident summaries 173 through 233 have been checked against routine weather-balloon ascents made by the Air Force, Navy and Weather Bureau. Comments based on this review are inclosed.

3. It is recommended that the "Guide To Investigation Of Unidentified Aerial Objects" be changed as follows: Item 13, "Direction of Flight of Object," should be clarified so that vertical and horizontal motions are distinguished if possible, and so that motion is specified as the direction towards which the object appears to move. "Relative to Radar Settings" should include a statement of the type of radar set used.

FOR THE CHIEF, AIR WEATHER SERVICE

2 Incls:
1 - Incident Summaries
2 - Comments 173 thru 233

/s/ W. A. West
W. A. WEST
Lt. Col., USAF
Adjutant General

8 Nov

No. 204; Venus.

Incident # 204

At 1640, Nov. 8, 1948 Operator [REDACTED] when making a GCT weather report saw what ~~XX~~ appeared to be a comet in the southeast quadrant of the sky. It had a long cone of light which ended in a star larger than Venus. It remained visible to the naked eye for approximately 40 minutes until beginning of sunlight dimmed the brilliance of the phenomena and full sunrise obliterated it. Appeared to have about four grades of intensity in the tail.

Incident # 204

Dr HYNEK'S EVALUATIONS EXTRACTED FROM PROJECT GRUDGE REPORT.

INCIDENT INDEX

1. Astronomical

a. High probability:

#26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 48, 49, 59, 60, 66, 69, 70, 94,
95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 104, 116, 119, 132, 136, 140,
147, 148, 158, 174, 184, 185, 187, 197, 203, 204, 208, 216,
219, 238.

b. Fair or low probability:

#19, 20, 23, 24, 28, 35, 35, 46, 50, 63, 67, 80, 82, 93, 100,
112, 120, 121, 129, 130, 144, 153, 165, 166, 167, 175, 192,
199, 202, 205, 220, 230, 240.

2. Non-astronomical but suggestive of other explanations

a. Balloons or ordinary aircraft:

#3, 11, 22, 41, 42, 53, 54, 73, 81, 83, 91, 92, 113, 114, 115,
126, 131, 138, 141, 145, 155, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 163,
169, 171, 173, 178, 180, 182, 188, 190, 194, 195, 196, 198,
200, 201, 209, 210, 217, 222, 235, 237, 239.

b. Rockets, flares or falling bodies:

#4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 25, 56, 65, 78, 106, 107,
108, 109, 133, 170, 211, 218.

c. Miscellaneous (reflections, auroral streamers, birds, etc.):

#39, 89, 123, 124, 128, 146, 164, 181, 189, 214, 221, 231, 234.

3. Non-astronomical, with no explanation evident

a. Lack of evidence precludes explanation:

#38, 44, 45, 47, 55, 57, 72, 86, 87, 88, 90, 99, 110, 117, 118,
125, 127, 137, 139, 149, 150, 177, 179, 191, 206, 212, 213,
229, 232, 233.

b. Evidence offered suggests no explanation:

#1, 2, 10, 17, 21, 29, 37, 40, 51, 52, 58, 61, 62, 64, 68, 71,
75, 76, 77, 79, 84, 105, 111, 122, 135, 151, 152, 154, 162,
168, 172, 176, 183, 186, 193, 207, 215, 223, 224, 225, 226,
227, 236, 241, 242, 243, 244, 134.

COPY

COPY

Copied fr the Original PAA messages:

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28/3 TIKS KE OPN

SJO OA CK74 082019

KMIA BLB DP OW WA OA PAA

DPMIA COPIES OWBLE WABLE OWSAL STOP RE OWB 081640 OPERATOR [REDACTED] WHEN MAKING 1000 GCT WEA REPORT SAW WHAT APPEARED AS COMET IN SE QUADRANT OF SKY WITH VERY LONG CONE OF LIGHT COVERING WHILE SE...QUAD ENDING IN STAR LARGER THAN VENUS STOP THIS ALL VISABLE TO NAKED EYE FOR APPRX 40 MINS UNTIL BEGINNING OF SUNLITE DIMED BRILLIANCE AND FULL SUNRISE NI OBLITERATED PHENOMENO STOP ADVISE IF THIS WAS COMET OASJO 082010

2046Z

OPN BLB OW (FR CANAL ZONE, PANAMA)

SAL SJO PAA OA KMIA PAA DP

OASAL OASJO COPY DPMIA STOP FURTHER REPORTS OF COMETS COMMA REQUEST YOU ADVISE DPMIA COPY OWBLE WABLE COMET POSITION LENGTH TIME VISIBLE WHETHER VISIBLE NAKED EYE STOP OWBLE

081640

WU 11/48

WHZ 146/1 WBR GEN KMIA DPL 17 081530

(FR MIAMI TO CZ PANAMA)

BLB PAA OW

OWBLE STOP WBYR 081112 WRED SASPO COMET POSITION LENGTH TIME VISIBLE WHETHER VISIBLE NAKED EYE DPMIA 081530

OPN KBLB OW

KMIA PAA OW OX OK

(CZ, PANAMA TO MIAMI)

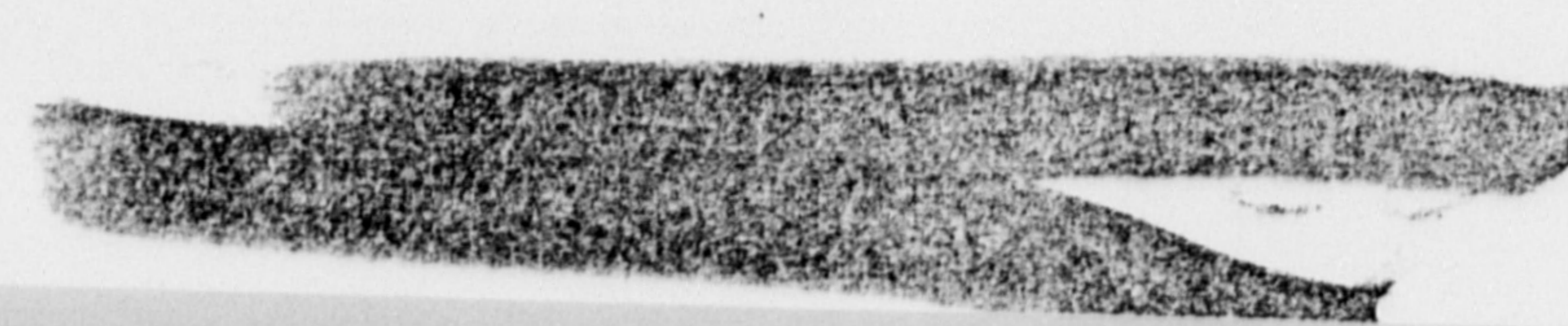
OWKMIA OKMIA OKMIA STOP SAL AND SJO WEA OBSERVERS SIGHTED COMET AT APPROX 1045 WITH ABOUT FOUR GRADES OF TAIL OWKBLB 081112

AZ 11/48

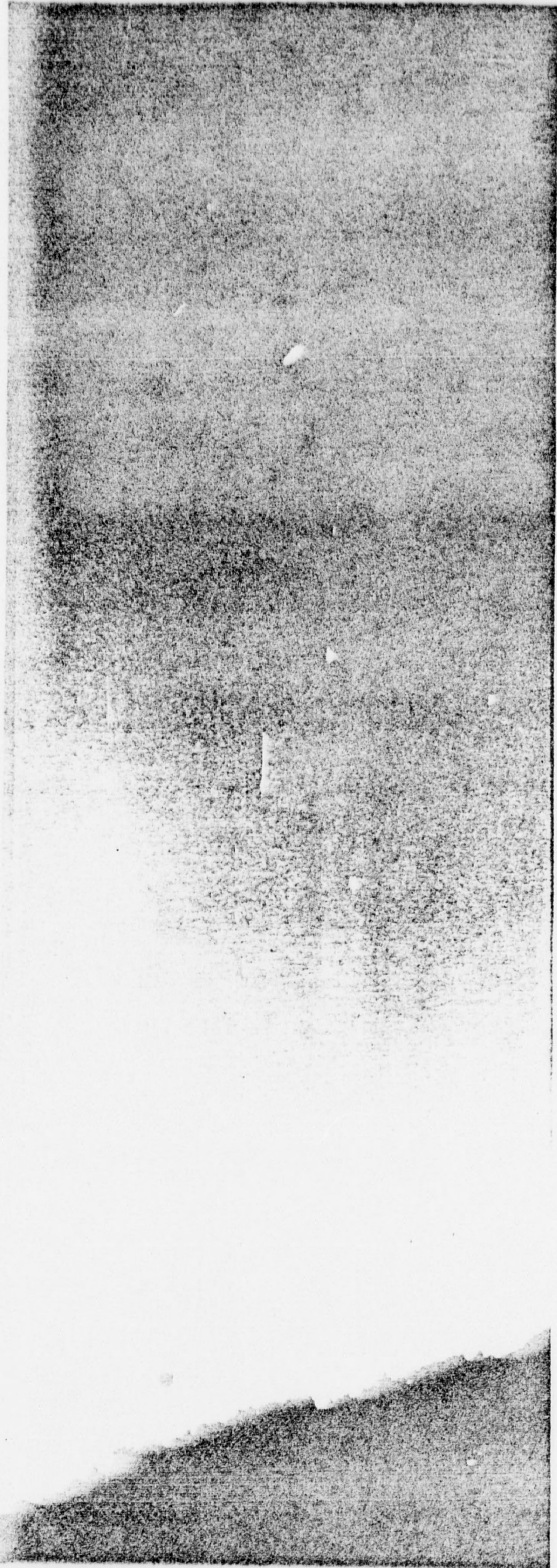
Nov 8 - 1640

COPY

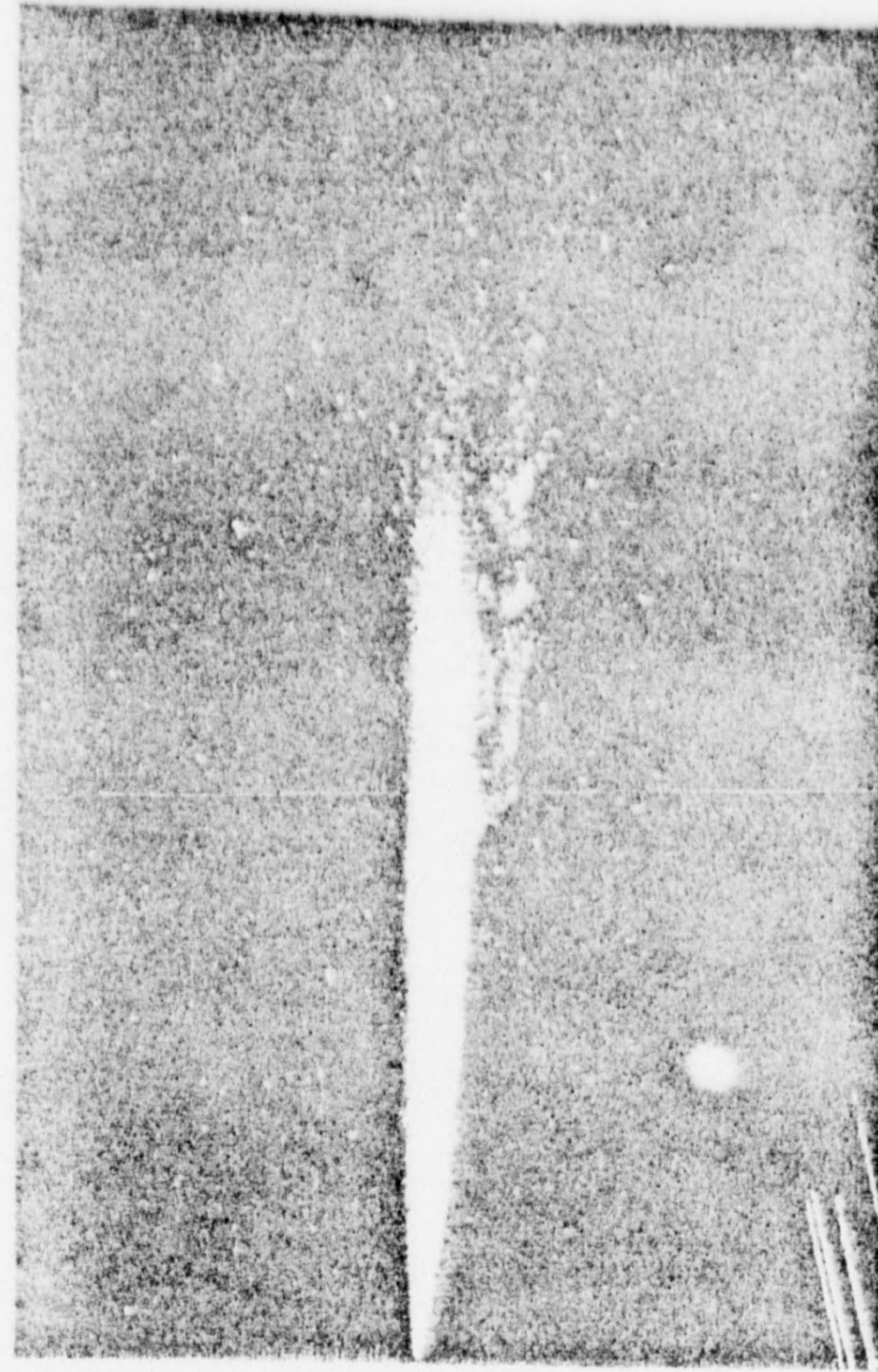
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204



AT DAWN the new comet is photographed with an ordinary camera from a California mountain. The comet was about 50 million miles away from earth. Star appears as streak because of earth's rotation during 10-minute exposure.



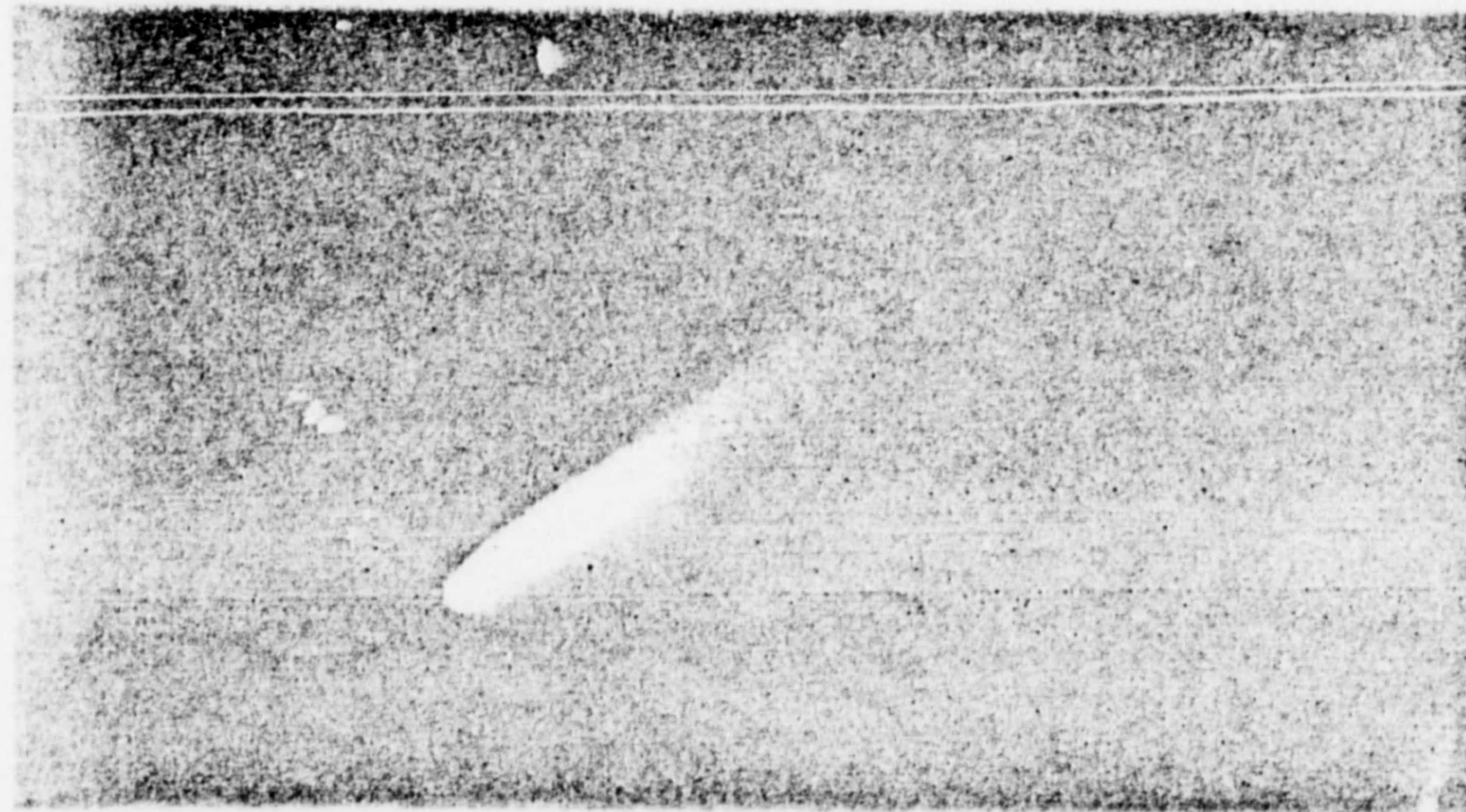
AWESOME HALLEY'S COMET LAST APPEARED IN 1910

BRIGHT NEW COMET

It has a tail extending for 15 million miles

At the first gray light of dawn on Nov. 6 a bright white ball with a filmy white tail appeared in the sky over Australia. Dr. Harley Wood, an astronomer in Sydney, immediately recognizing the phenomenon as a new and extraordinary comet, excitedly set up his spectroscope to study its gleaming light. Then he flashed word to other astronomers over the world that he had sighted one of the brightest and most spectacular comets yet to appear in this century.

Three days later thrilled early risers in the southern and western parts of the U.S. were able to observe the rare celestial body with the naked eye. Moving close to the sun but away from it at a speed of about 123,000 mph, the comet was visible for a brief 60 minutes before it was obscured by the sun's light. Astronomers estimated that its head had a diameter of almost 100,000 miles, about the same as the planet Jupiter, and that its gaseous tail (caused by the pressure of sunlight on the head) reached out at least 15 million miles. Because the comet was moving away from the sun, the gas atoms and molecules in its tail were pushed in front of the head by the sun's radiation instead of being pushed behind it, as would have happened if the comet had been approaching the sun. Although not so long as the 90-million-mile tail of famed Halley's comet (*above*), the magnitude of the new comet (*below*) was almost as striking.



NEW COMET and its tail appear as broad shaft of light in this photograph made with the 18-inch telescopic camera at Palomar mountain observatory. Most of comet's glow is light which is received from the sun and then reflected.