

1. DATE - TIME GROUP 3 September 53 4/0320Z	2. LOCATION Modesto, California
3. SOURCE Civilian	10. CONCLUSION AIRCRAFT
4. NUMBER OF OBJECTS One	
5. LENGTH OF OBSERVATION Not Reported	11. BRIEF SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS A photograph of an elliptical shaped object was taken with a speed graphic camera (the exposure) by a newspaper photographer. The camera was left unattended on top of a building between the hours of 1000 and 0015 ZT for purpose of photographing an object similar to one seen earlier.
6. TYPE OF OBSERVATION Ground-Vision	
7. COURSE Not Reported	COMMENTS: A civilian ground observer crew noted an a/c with a landing light in a traffic pattern at Modesto Airport several times during the interval that exposure was made. It was the opinion of preparing officer that elliptical object on the photos was the result of the flash of an a/c landing light.
8. PHOTOS ☒ Yes (PRINT ONLY) ☐ No	
9. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ☐ Yes ☒ No	

3 Sep 53 Modesto, Cal. (photo neg) b-7

MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

3 SEPTEMBER 1953

A newspaper photographer and a news reporter, for the same paper, saw a yellowish white light at 7:45 p.m., PDT, 3 September 1953. The light seemed to be about ten degrees above the horizon in the direction of the Modesto Airport. The witnesses said it appeared to remain stationary as they drove a distance of about one mile East where it vanished from view. They believed it to be an aircraft with landing light on flying the upwind leg at Modesto Airport.

The news photographer took his camera to the newspaper building and set it up on the roof in the direction he believed he had seen the light. He left his camera unattended with the shutter open for about four hours. He developed the film on 8 September 1953. When he noticed the elliptical light and could not explain it, he called Castle Air Force Base.

The exposure was made with a speed graphic camera, set on f22 and unattended except for opening and closing the shutter. The exposure was made sometime between 8:20 p.m. 3 September and 00:15 am, 4 September. The camera was located about 40 feet above the street and oriented East. The geographic location is 37.38¹/₂N - 121.00W. The elliptical light is approximately at ten degree elevation and on a bearing of ninety degrees.

It is the opinion of the preparing officer that the elliptical light in the photograph is the flash of a landing light of an aircraft

12

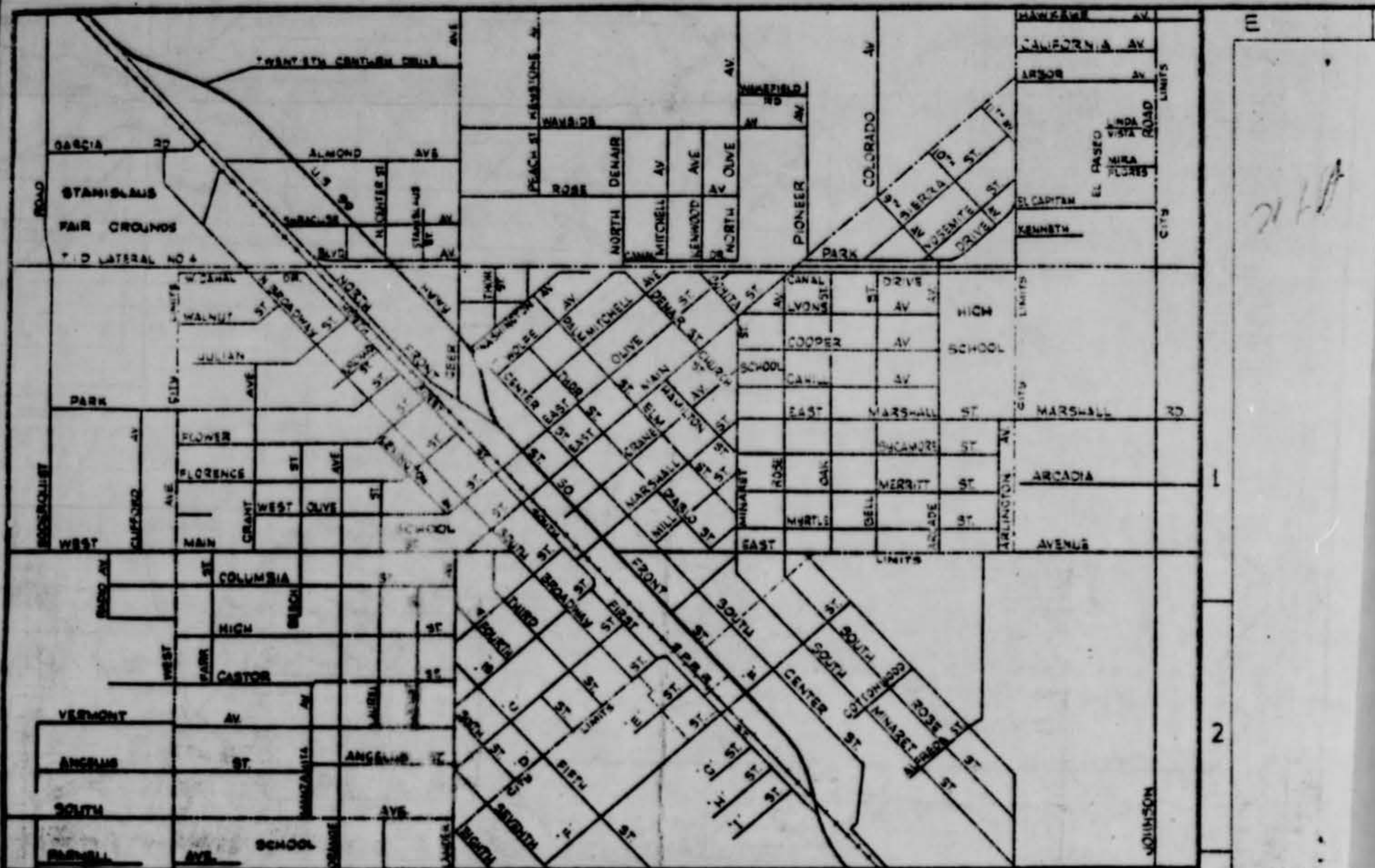
flying in the vicinity of Modesto Airport. Civil Defense ground observers on duty during the time exposure noted what they believed was a small aircraft with landing light on, flying the traffic pattern at Modesto Airport between 10:15 pm - 10:30 pm, PDT, 3 September 1953.

The conclusion is based on the statements of the observers and the coincidence of the northeast orientation of the runway and its location. The runway was $4\frac{1}{2}$ NM from the observers and $2\frac{1}{2}$ NM from the camera.

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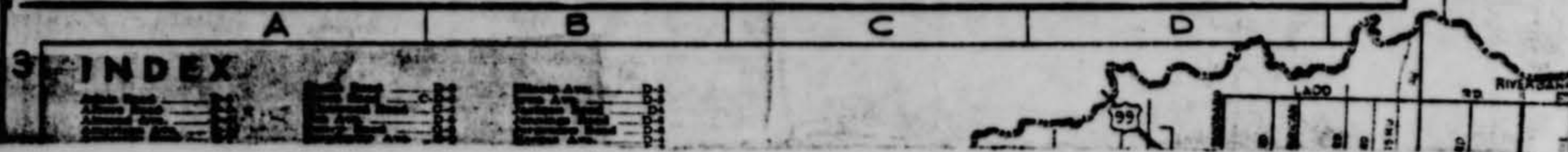
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Population 6221





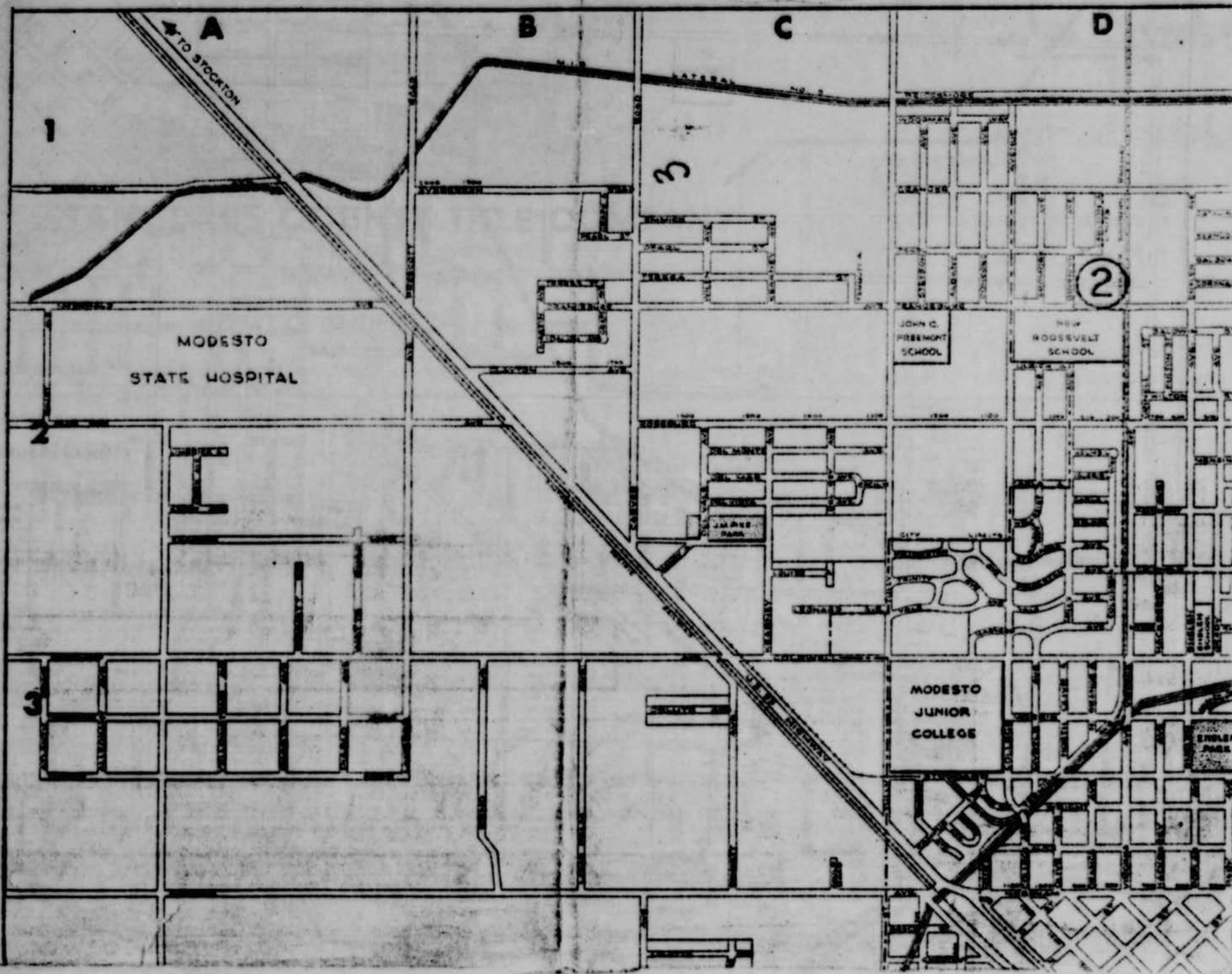
STANISLAUS COUNTY TITLE COMPANY

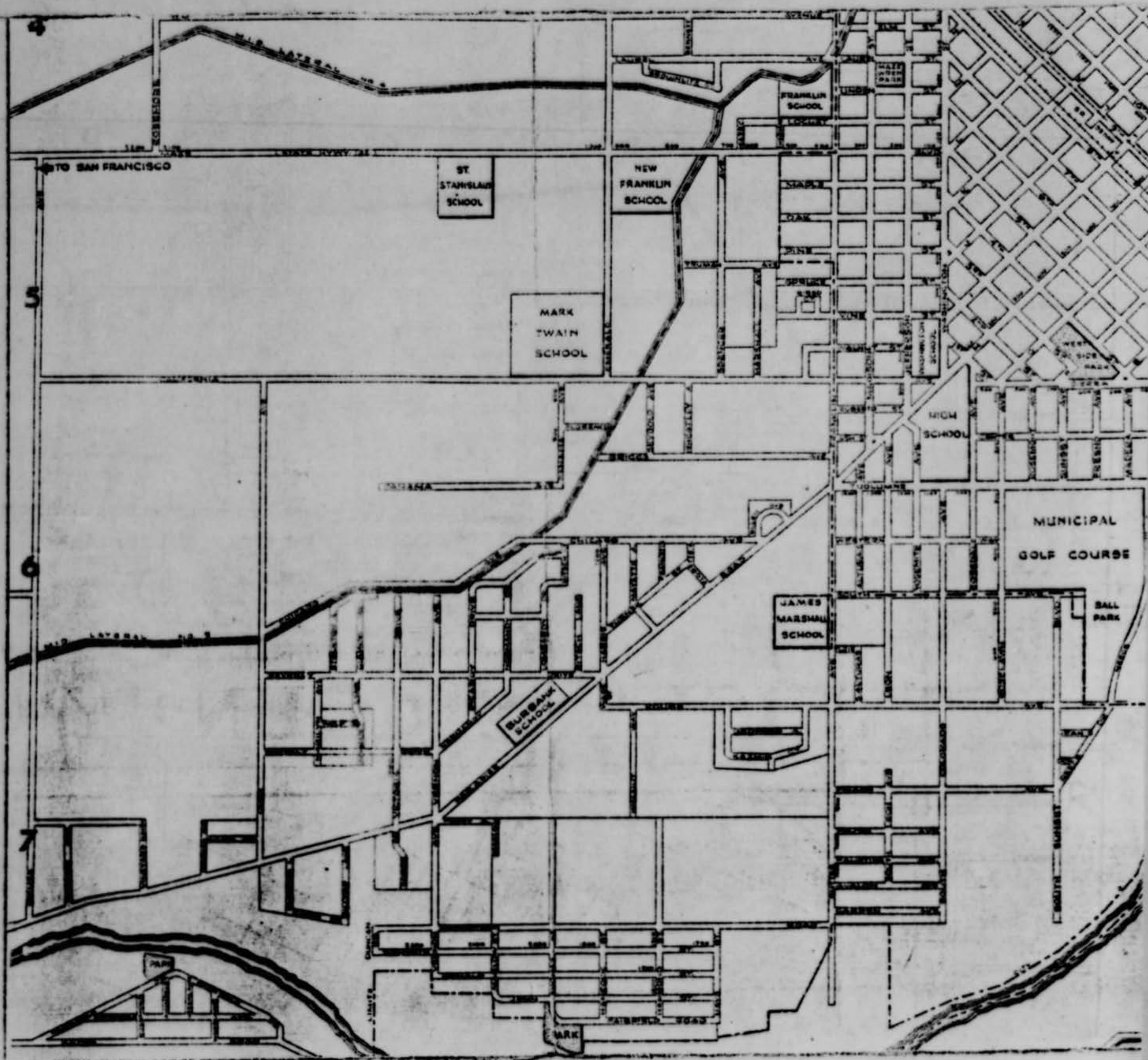
1207 EYE STREET - PHONE 88
MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

HENRY G. ANDERSON, President

STANISLAUS COUNTY







SECRET - SECURITY INFORMATION - U.S. EMBASSY - WASHINGTON, D.C.

1953 SEP 14

10:08

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- 4. AT Reading File

11 SEP 13 01
Action

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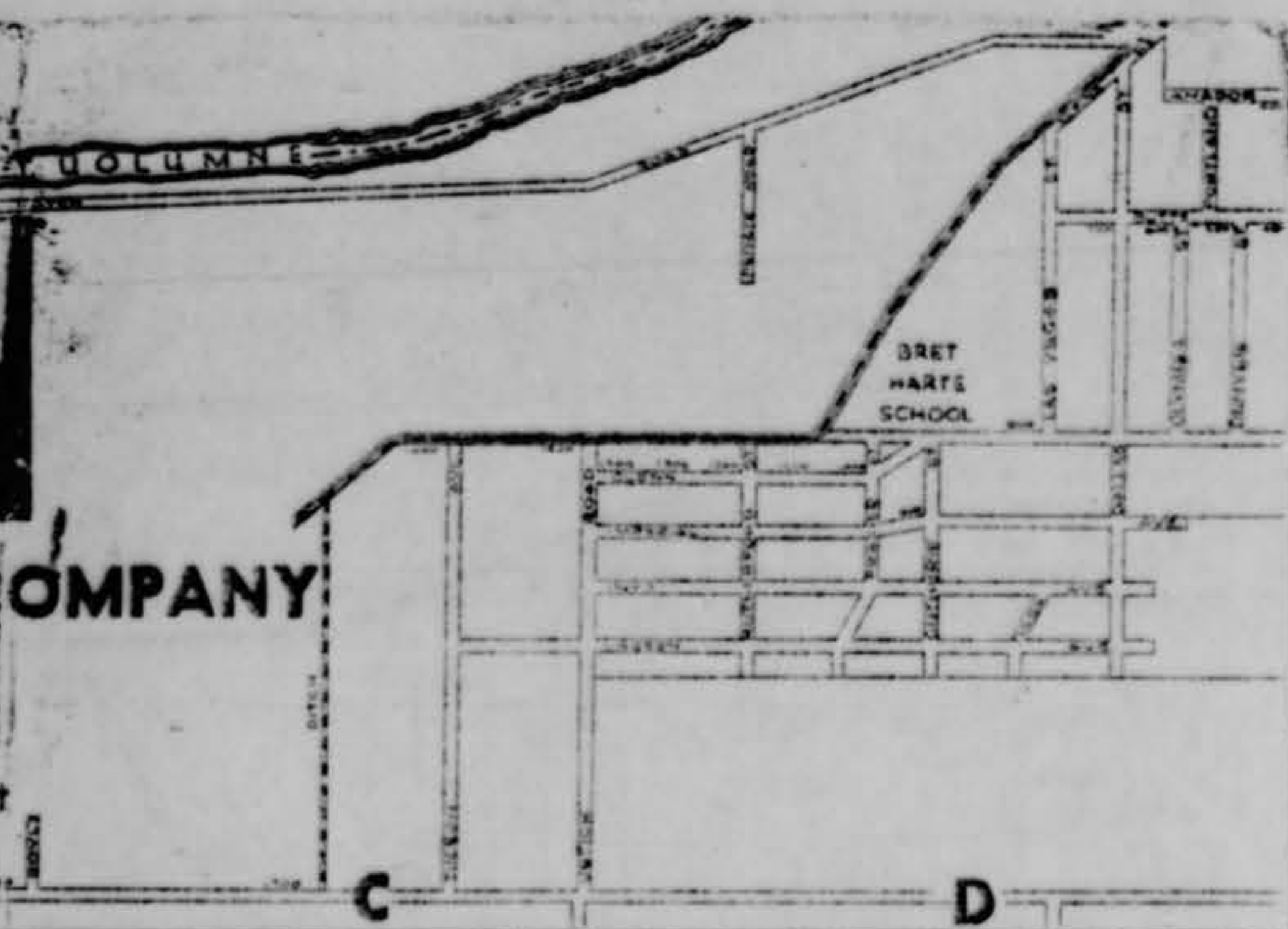
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1207 EYE STREET - PHONE 88
MODESTO, CALIFORNIA

HENRY G. ANDERSON, President

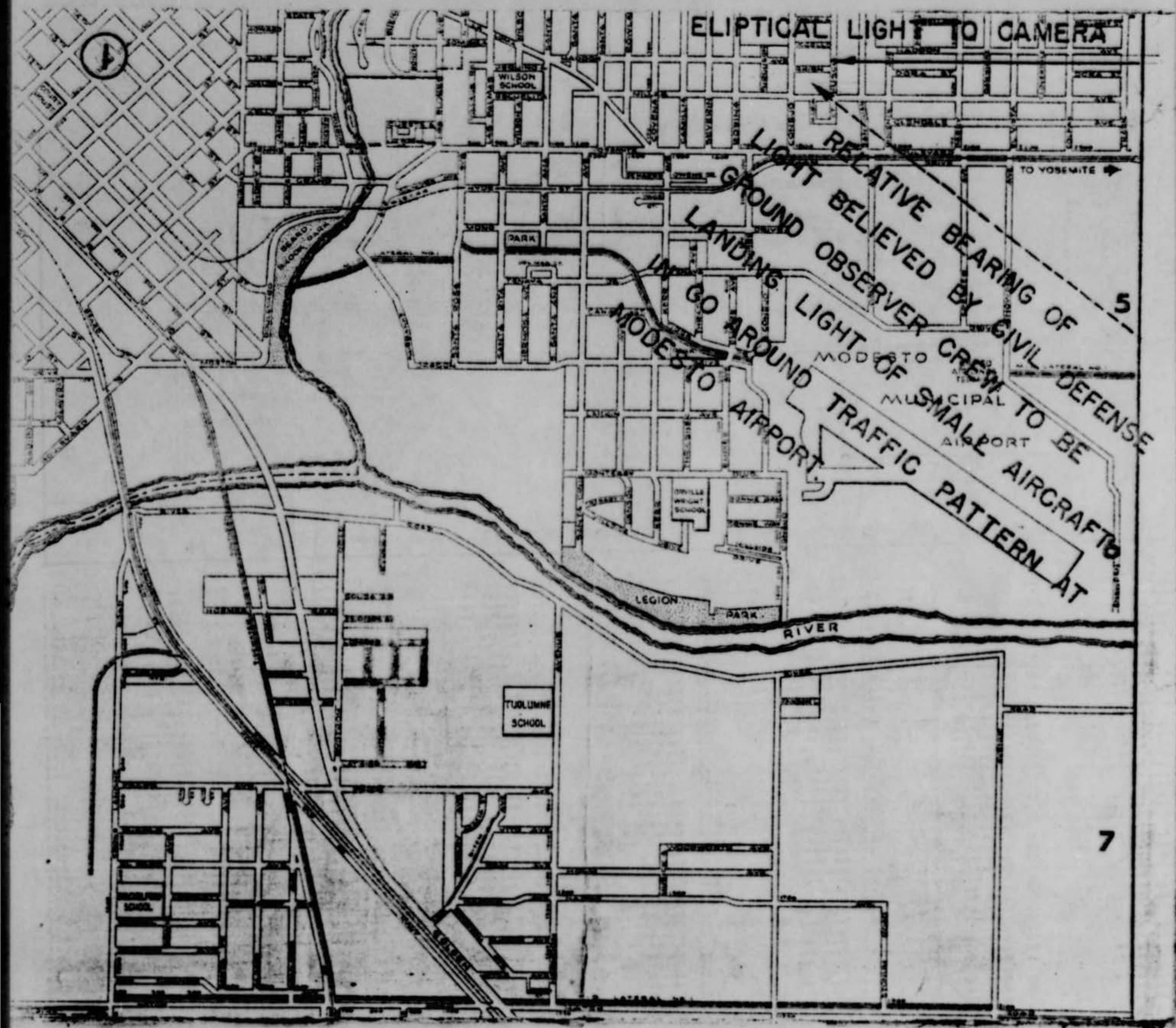
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(City of Modesto)

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ROUTING

JOINT MESSAGEFORM

COMMUNICATIONS CENTER NO.

81P 17

FROM: (Originator)

COMDR ATIC

TO: COMDR CASTLE AF BASE CALIFORNIA

INFO:

FROM: AFOIN-ATIAE-9-3-E FOR 93rd Bomb Wg

Reurnag ODCI 5120 dtd 112037Z Sep 53. Request that your organization obtain subject negative or a copy. Also, request you obtain supporting data and forward to this Center as soon as possible.

In reply cite Project Blue Book.

COORDINATION:

ATIAE-5 *MB Luter* DATE *14 Sep 53*

A/IC FURCH

ATIAE-5 *1st Lt. HANAWALT* DATE *14 Sep 53*

A/IC COL JOHNSON

ATIAE-5 *William K. HANAWALT* DATE *15 Sep 53*

COL O'HARA

OFFICIAL FILE COPY

10073
ELECTRONICS BRANCH
Office of Record

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 1 OF 1 PAGES

DRAFTER'S NAME (and signature, when required)

A/IC Max Furch/ *Max Furch* EWC/303

RELEASING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE

Barbara P Hanawalt

SYMBOL ATIAE-5

TELEPHONE 05305

OFFICIAL TITLE BARBARA P HANAWALT, 1st Lt, USAF
Adjutant

DD FORM 173

REPLACES WD AGO FORM 11-168, 15 JUN 1945, AND WD AGO FORM 2998, 1 APR 1946, WHICH MAY BE USED.

15-58923-2 ☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1950-O-575946

FM COMDR 93D BOMWG CASTLE AFB CALIF

TO JEPHQ HQ USAF WASHDC

JEDWP/COMDRIWRIGHT PATTERSON AFB OHIO

JEDEN/COMDR ENT AFB COLO

JEDMH/COMDRSAC OFFUTT AFB NEBR

JWPRH/COMDRAF 15 MARCH AFB CALIF

ODCI 5120. ATTN: HQ USAF, D/I. ATTN: WRIGHT PATTERSON, ATIC, ATIAA-2C.
FLYOB RPT.

- (1) ELLIPTICAL SHAPED LIGHT APPEARING ON PHOTO NEG
- (2) TAKEN SOMETIME BETWEEN 2015 AND 2015 PDT 3 SEPI53.
- (3) TAKEN BY SPEED GRAPHIC CAMERA ON F22 UNATTENDED EXCEPT FOR OPENING SHUTTER AT 2015 AND CLOSING AT 2015 HRS PDT 3 SEPI53.
- (4) CAMERA ON TRIPOD 40 FT ABOVE TERRAIN ON TOP OF MODESTO BEE NEWSPAPER BLDG IN CTR OF MODESTO, CALIF. ELLIPTICAL LIGHT IS APRX 10 DEG ELEV ON BEARING OF E.
- (5) PICTURE TAKEN BY RELIABLE NEWSPAPER PHOTO, EX USAF 1ST LT NAV.

PAGE TWO JWPJVI054

(6) WIND APRX 12 KNOTS FR 335 DEG.

(7) SEE ITEM 12

(8) PHOTO NEG DEVELOPED 8 SEP 53

(9) NO INTERCEPTION

(10) CIVIL DEF AND GRSR CREW ON DUTY IN THEIR TOWER NOTED LANDING LIGHT
AN ACFT FLYING TRAFFIC PATTERN AT MODESTO AIRPORT BETWEEN 2215 AND 2230
PRS 3 SEPI53.

11/20/53 JWPJIM

Wing Intelligence
Castle AF Base, California

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1. The preparing officer in company with an OSI agent and a Castle AF Base PIO representative drove to Modesto, California on 3 September 1953 to view a photograph showing an unidentified elliptical shaped light.

2. The reason given for taking the picture was that Mr. ~~Charles H. H. H.~~ Modesto Bee newspaper photographer, and Mrs. ~~Charles H. H. H.~~ a reporter for the same paper saw a yellowish white light at 1945PDT 3 September 1953. The light seemed to be about 10 degrees above the horizon in the direction of Modesto Airport. They said it appeared to remain stationary as they drove a distance of about one mile East where it vanished from view. They believed it was an aircraft with landing light on flying the upwind leg at Modesto Airport. Nevertheless, ~~Charles H. H. H.~~ took his camera to the newspaper building and set it up on the roof in the direction he believed he had seen the light. He left his camera unattended with the shutter open for about four hours. He developed the film on 3 September 1953. When he noticed the elliptical light and could not explain it, he called Castle AF Base.

a. The following are the details surrounding the unexplained elliptical light on the negative:

- (1) Description: One elliptical shaped light in a nearly horizontal attitude.
- (2) Time and Date: Sometime between the hours of 2020 to 0015PDT, 3 September 1953.
- (3) Manner of Observation: Exposure was made with a Speed Graphic camera set on f22 and unattended except for opening and closing the shutter.
- (4) Location of Observer: The camera was located on top of the Modesto Bee Newspaper Building, about 40 feet above the street, and oriented East. The geographic location is 37°38' N - 121°00' W. The elliptical light is approximately at 10 degrees elevation and on a bearing of 90 degrees.
- (5) Identifying Information of Observers: There is no estimate of the reliability of the sighting since the camera was unattended. Photographer ~~Charles H. H. H.~~ is an ex-First Lieutenant USAF Navigator.
- (6) Weather and Winds: The sky was clear, slight haze near the horizon, and wind 12 knots from 335 degrees.
- (7) Activity or Condition Which Might Account for the Sighting: See item (10).
- (8) Physical Evidence: Photograph made by Castle AFB Photo Lab from the negative loaned by the newspaper. Submitted as Inclosure 1.
- (9) Intercession: None.
- (10) Air Traffic in Area: Civil defense ground observers on duty during the time exposure noted what they believed was a small aircraft with landing light on flying the traffic pattern at Modesto Airport between 2215 and 2230PDT, 3 September 1953.

17 SEP 53 00 23Z

bb

*ATTN: AF-5
2.3. Atria
3. R. Yule*

Action

RD088

WPG072

KY0155

XDB113

CKA132

JWPJM 221

RR JEDWP JWPJM 222

DE JWPJM 96

R 162240Z

FM COMDR BMBW 93 CASTLE AFB CALIF

TO JEDWP/COMDR ATIC WRIGHT PATERSON AFB OHIO

INFO JWPJM/COMDR AF15 MARCH AFB CALIF

ODC15225 CITE PROJ BLUE BK URMSG AFOIN-ATIEA-9-3-E, AF FORM 112

FLYOBRT REPT COMPL W/PHOTO AND MAP WAS DSPCH TO HQ AF 15 FOR

SUBQ FWDING TO YOUR HQ 11 SEP 53. SOURCE INSISTED UPON RETENTION OF NEG.

16/2320Z SEP JWPJM

Should be sent

to ATIAE

Too

03:40
21 OCT 53

FLYOB RPT

Modesto, California

Hq, 93d Bomb Wing, Castle AFB, California

11 September 1953

3 September 1953

F-6

Major Roy E. Gudith

Various civilians

TT 93BW (N), ODCI 5120

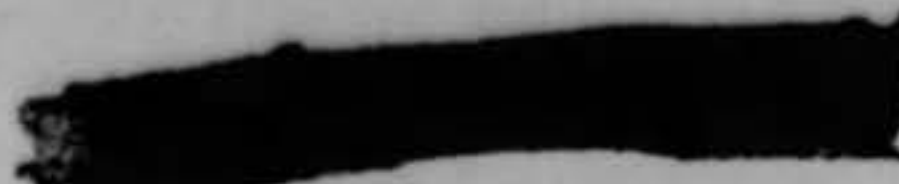
Forwarded herewith is a photograph showing an elliptical shaped light. The photo was made at night from the top of a building in Modesto, California. The camera was oriented towards the East and was left unattended for four hours except for opening and closing the shutter. A civil defense ground observer crew noted an aircraft with a landing light on fly the traffic pattern at Modesto Airport several times during the interval that the exposure was made. It is the opinion of the Preparing Officer that the elliptical light on the photo negative is the result of the flash of an aircraft landing light.

ROY E. GUDITH
Major, USAF
Wing Intelligence Officer

2

1. Photograph (6 cys) (Rec'd 1/2)
2. Map of Modesto, Calif. showing location of observers (1 cy)

UNCLASSIFIED



Wing Intelligence
Castle AF Base, California

3

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3. Comments of Preparing Officer: It is the opinion of the preparing officer that the elliptical light in the photograph is the flash of a landing light of an aircraft flying in the vicinity of Modesto Airport. This conclusion is based on statements of observers and the coincidence of the northwest orientation of the runway and its location. The runway was $4\frac{1}{2}$ NM from the observers and $2\frac{1}{2}$ NM from the camera. See map, Inclosure 2.

flying in the vicinity of Modesto Airport. Civil Defense ground observers on duty during the time exposure noted what they believed was a small aircraft with landing light on, flying the traffic pattern at Modesto Airport between 10:15 pm - 10:30 pm, PDT, 3 September 1953.

The conclusion is based on the statements of the observers and the coincidence of the northeast orientation of the runway and its location. The runway was $4\frac{1}{2}$ NM from the observers and $2\frac{1}{2}$ NM from the camera.