

# HISTORICAL ASTRONOMY DIVISION NEWSLETTER 14 NOVEMBER 1989

## *-- CHAIRMAN'S REPORT --* Katherine Bracher

On June 11 and 12, 1989, the HAD met at the University of Michigan, in conjunction with the summer meeting of the American Astronomical Society. The Sunday HAD session (held the day before the AAS meetings started) at the old Detroit Observatory drew 25 HAD members, and included papers on the history of the observatory and later a tour of the facility, now being restored through the effort of Professor Nicholas Steneck of the Department of History. Instruments there include a 12-inch Henry Fitz refractor and a beautiful large meridian circle by Pistor and Martins. Participants in the session heard three papers on the history of the observatory and its staff in the 19th and early 20th centuries, given by Margaret Steneck, Nicholas Steneck, and Rudi Lindner, all of the University of Michigan. Other talks were given by T. R. Williams (on R. R. McMath) and by Owen Gingerich (on the 1953 Michigan Summer Symposium in Astrophysics).

On Monday, June 12, the HAD held a morning session as part of the regular AAS meeting. Three historical papers were contributed. K. D. Pang presented a provocative analysis of Shang Dynasty oracle bones and eclipse records, D. E. Osterbrock discussed W. W. Campbell, and W. Liller examined the orientation of ceremonial platforms on Easter Island. This last talk was originally scheduled for Boston, and was presented here as a late paper. These sessions were quite well attended (75-100 people) especially since the overall AAS meetings were very small. The paucity of contributed papers is partly due to the fact that this meeting was only six months after the very popular and heavily attended historical meetings in Boston in January.

Our next meeting will also be popular and heavily attended, in Washington D. C. in January. David DeVorkin gives details in this Newsletter. The Sunday sessions at the U.S. Naval Observatory should be of wide interest. I encourage you to get your reservation cards in to Steve Dick ASAP.

There was no formal HAD business session at Michigan, although we held an informal lunch and did discuss sites for future meetings, possible invitations from the DPS, and other matters. These will be taken up in Washington at our formal business meeting, to be held on Saturday, from 1:00 - 2:00 pm in the room scheduled for the HAD sessions.

## *-- THE WASHINGTON MEETINGS, JANUARY 9 - 14, 1990*

As reported in Newsletter 13, we will have four paper sessions during the Washington meetings. In addition to the two regular contributed paper sessions, to be held on Saturday, January 13 at the Crystal City meeting site, we will have two special sessions on national observatories on Sunday, January 14. Please note that attendance at the USNO special sessions will be limited, so reservations will be necessary. A reservation form is included on the special page in this Newsletter that outlines the exciting schedule of events on Sunday.

*CONTRIBUTED PAPERS: SATURDAY SESSIONS, JANUARY 13TH,  
IN CRYSTAL CITY*

ALL Oral Sessions in: Salon #6 Arlington Ballroom

Each contributed (c) paper is allotted ten minutes, leaving just 2 minutes for discussion in these two 90 minute sessions. Invited paper(s) (i) are given 15 minutes, with 2 minutes for discussion.

*HAD DISPLAY SESSION I: ARCHAEOASTRONOMY (Saturday)*

- (c) -- Computer Graphics Model of the Three-Slab Site on Fajada Butte, New Mexico (A. Sofaer, R. M. Sinclair, E. Brechner)

*HAD ORAL SESSION I: Classical and Early Astronomy: 10:00 - 11:30 am:*

- (c) -- Dating the Crucifixion (B. E. Schaefer)
- (c) -- The Dawn Sky on Lailat-ul-qadr (the Night of Power) (I. A. Ahmad)
- (c) -- Richard III's Solar Eclipse (K. Bracher)
- (c) -- Christopher Schissler's Wonderful "Bowl of Ahaz" of 1578 (Owen Gingerich and Philip Sadler)
- (c) -- 17th Century Lunar Occultation Observations (N. M. White)
- (c) -- History of the Vienna University Observatory: A Database (M. G. Firneis)
- (i) -- The Lost Port Orford Meteorite Hoax (H. Plotkin)

*HAD BUSINESS MEETING  
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm  
Salon #6 Arlington Ballroom*

There will be much to discuss at the HAD Business meeting. Uppermost will be the sites for the next two years, and possible HAD participation in upcoming DPS meetings (Oct 1990), as well as plans for Albuquerque (June 1990) and for Chicago (June 1992?). Other business at this time includes the historical preservation of astronomical documentation, specifically the files of the AAS and of the ApJ, and a more recent issue of renting out the HAD mailing list.

*HAD ORAL SESSION II: 20th Century History: 2:00 - 3:30 pm:  
Salon #6 Arlington Ballroom*

- (c) -- Astronomy and Physics at Wellesley in the days of Annie Jump Cannon (B. L. Welther)
- (c) -- The Lamont-Hussey Observatory: In the Veldt that Drove Men Mad (R. P. Lindner)
- (c) -- Why Start with Cepheids? The Origin of Eddington's Generalized Stellar Models (J. Eisberg)
- (c) -- Urban Growth and the Search for a New Steward Observatory Site, 1920 - 1950 (G. E. Webb)
- (c) -- Self-Made Cosmologist: The Education of Edwin Hubble (R. S. Brashear, D. E. Osterbrock, J. A. Gwinn)
- (c) -- Long-Term Careers of Astronomers with Doctoral Degrees from Prestigious vs. Non-Prestigious Institutions (V. Trimble)
- (c) -- The First Superluminal Cosmic Source: Light Echoes from 1901 to 1990 (J. E. Felton)

*HAD ORAL SESSIONS III and IV:*

*Special All-Day Session  
NATIONAL OBSERVATORIES: ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS*

PLEASE REFER TO THE SPECIAL PROGRAM PAGE  
AT THE END OF THE NEWSLETTER

The morning session will focus on the international setting. Invited speakers include Alan Batten, Adriaan Blaauw, Richard Jarrell, Philip C. Keenan, Robert Smith, David Evans, and Susan DeBarbat. They will cover Pulkova, ESO, Canadian observatories, the Paris and Greenwich Observatories, observatories in Latin America and South Africa. The afternoon session will cover the American setting, where invited speakers will be Don Osterbrock, Dorrit Hoffleit, and Steve Dick on aspects of the USNO, Frank Edmondson on AURA, Allan Needell and Woody Sullivan on NRAO, and Craig Waff on the Jupiter Orbiter Probe.

Since the Observatory sits on highly restricted real estate, the USNO hosts have decided to provide a lunch on the grounds, at a nominal charge (see the reservation form). There will also be a tour of the observatory and an early evening reception will follow the sessions.

The Sunday session will be on a first-come first served basis, because the seating limit is 100 people. Please call or write Steve Dick, Historian, U. S. Naval Observatory, (34th and Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington DC 20392/(202) - 653-0145) as soon as possible if you are planning to attend the Sunday session and the reception following.

*Workshop on Historic Preservation Issues  
Dealing with Historic American Observatories*

This activity, organized by the National Park Service, was canceled in October by them when a preliminary hearing in Washington revealed significant issues that had not been addressed by the regulatory arms of the NSF and NASA. More details may be available at the time of the AAS meetings in Washington.

*-- NEWS OF THE PROFESSION*

GRANTS-IN-AID (continuing) for History of Modern Physics and Allied Sciences (astronomy, geophysics, etc.): The Center for History of Physics of the American Institute of Physics has a program of grants-in-aid for research in the history of modern physics and allied sciences such as astronomy, geophysics and optics. Grants can be awarded in amounts up to \$2000 each. Funds can be used only to reimburse direct expenses associated with the work. Preference will be given to those who need part of the funds for travel and subsistence to use the resources of the Center's Niels Bohr Library in New York City, or to microfilm papers or to tape-record oral history interviews with copies deposited in the Niels Bohr Library. Applicants should either be working toward a graduate degree in the history of science, or show a record of publication in the field. To apply, send a vitae plus a letter of not more than two pages describing your research project, including a brief budget showing predicted expenses, to: Spencer R. Weart, Center for History of Physics, American Institute of Physics, 335 East 45th Street, New York, NYC 10017. Deadlines for receipt of applications are June 30 and December 31 of each year.

**HOW TO READ YOUR ADDRESS LABEL:**

A number of people have asked how to read the mailing label, to determine status and membership type. Here's how:

Dr. First and Last Name. (Type) m/d/yr (Status)  
address  
address  
address

Under Type: F = full AAS member  
A = Affiliate  
S = Associate or Special  
J = Junior AAS member  
C = Corporate member

m/d/yr = date your membership lapses

Status Y = dues in arrears (PAY UP!!)  
N = dues OK, (unless the date is  
passed, then it means that I have  
given you a grace period...)

# NATIONAL OBSERVATORIES: ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS

*A Joint HAD-NAVOBSY Symposium*

Sunday, January 14, 1990

U.S. Naval Observatory

**The International Setting: 9:30-12:00**

**Chair: Steven J. Dick**

*L'Observatoire de Paris: 3 siècles aux services des sciences* — Suzanne Debarbat, Paris Observatory

*What are Observatories For?: The Case of the Royal Observatory at Greenwich in the 19th Century* — Robert Smith, National Air and Space Museum

*The South African Astronomical Observatory* — David S. Evans, University of Texas

*Pulkovo Observatory and the Arc of the Meridian* — Alan H. Batten, Dominion Astrophysical Observatory

*The Earliest National Observatories in Latin America* — Philip C. Keenan, Perkins Observatory

*A Splendid Observatory That No One Needed: The Origins of the Dominion Observatory, Ottawa* — Richard Jarrell, York University

*An Effort in Europeanization* — Adriaan Blaauw, Kapteyn Laboratory/ESO/Leiden Observatory

— Lunch —

**The American Setting: 1:00-3:30**

**Chair: John Lankford**

*America's First National Observatory: The Origins of the U.S. Naval Observatory* — Steven Dick, U.S. Naval Observatory

*George Willis Ritchey, Captain J.F. Hellweg, and the Building of the U.S. Naval Observatory Ritchey-Chretien Reflector* — Donald Osterbrock, Institute for Advanced Study

*Grote Reber, the Carnegie Institution of Washington and Radio Astronomy: Episodes in the Progression Toward Big Science* — Allan Needel, National Air and Space Museum

*National Radio Observatories: Contrasting Styles in the USA, Britain and Australia in the Pre-1950 Period* — Woodruff T. Sullivan, University of Washington

*AURA, The Evolution of an Idea* — Frank Edmondson, Indiana University

*Yale and the USNO in the Brouwer and Clemence Era* — Dorrit Hoffleit, Yale University

*Jupiter Orbiter Probe: The Marketing of a NASA Planetary Spacecraft Mission* — Craig B. Waff, Jet Propulsion Laboratory

— Reception and Tour of the Observatory —

Bus transportation between the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel and the Naval Observatory will be provided. Parking is available on the grounds of the Observatory. Lunch will be served