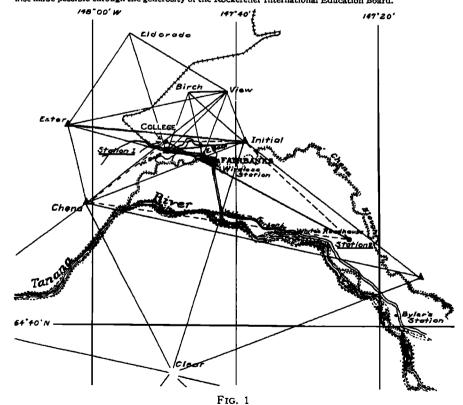
AURORAL OBSERVATIONS AT THE ALASKA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE AND SCHOOL OF MINES. 1930-311

By VERYL FULLER

Description of stations—The two points of observation used for the auroral work are located a little over fourteen miles apart. One, designated as Station 1, is on the college campus: The other, Station 2, is on the Richardson Highway in a southeasterly direction from Station 1. The choice of an outlying station is limited as transportation must be reasonably easy. There are only two possible directions in which the outlying station can be situated. A northerly one and the one chosen. Aside from the direction Station 2 is well located. It has a clear view in all directions. It is easily accessible except in the most severe weather

'This is a summary of a more extended report submitted on the results obtained during the season 1930-31 at the auroral station, Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, at College, Alaska. This station was made possible following the recommendation of the American Geophysical Union, the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, by the generosity of the Rockefeller Foundation, whose Executive Committee passed on November 8, 1929, a resolution appropriating to the College the sum of \$10,000 to establish, equip, and maintain a first-order auroral station at College near Fairbanks, Alaska, to carry out a five-year program of research on the aurora. The site chosen is particularly favorable for this purpose. In addition to physical and cultural considerations, it has an unique advantage as regards geographical position, being practically 180° distant in longitude from the first-order auroral station in Norway, the existence of which was likewise made possible through the generosity of the Rockefeller International Education Board.



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and is at a distance which has proven to be sufficient for most types of auroras.

The distance between the two stations was determined quite accurately by triangulation, using data and base-lines established previously, by the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey and the Land Office. Because of poor weather conditions it was necessary to turn the angles at night using gasoline lanterns as targets. This work was done by Professor R. W. Chase of the Civil Engineering Department of the College. The results of this work give the following data:

Station No. 1—Latitude, 64° 51′ 26′.83; longitude, 147° 49′ 19″.62; azimuth to Station No. 2, 296° 28′ 54″.2; distance to Station 2, 22822.2 meters.

Station No. 2—Latitude, 64° 45′ 56′′.00; longitude, 147° 23′ 34′′.36; azimuth to Station No. 1, 116° 52′ 12′′.5.

Figure 1 shows the location of the two stations and the system of lines used in the triangulation for the distance between the two stations.

Photographic equipment—The photographic equipment used here consists of two special cameras constructed by Karl Ormestad in Oslo, Norway, according to a design originating with Professor Carl Störmer². They are so constructed that six pictures may be taken on one plate in rapid succession by a simple movement of the lens. Adjustment for vertical swing is accomplished by mounting the camera on a gimbal. Thumb-nuts hold the camera in any vertical position. The horizontal adjustment consists of a swivel in the tripod-head. The shutter is a rectangular metal cover hinged to the camera-frame and is of the right size to cover the lens in each of its six positions. This is operated by a small crank at the top of the instrument. The lens is a Hugo Meyer Kino Plasmat having an aperture ratio of f:1.5 and a focal length of 50 mm. The camera is mounted on a sturdy tripod when in use. Each camera is equipped with twelve 9 by 12 cm single, metal plate-holders, carrying-case, ground-glass, lens cleaner, and dark cloth.

Some minor additions and alterations were made in order to make the instruments easier to use with the scheme of ob ervation employed here. The view-finders with which the cameras were originally equipped were not suited to them since they did not show the same size of field of view as the size of picture taken and were besides difficult to use at night. These were replaced by a simple box-type finder which has proven much more usable. The finder consists of a small sheet-metal box open at the front except for vertical and horizontal cross-wires to indicate the center of view. At the back is a small peep-hole. The size of the opening and the length of the box is so proportioned that the field of view is the same as that of the camera lens.

Horizontal circles divided in degrees were put on the gimbal-frame for the purpose of approximate orientation in a horizontal circle. By establishing a true north-and-south line at each station it is easy by the use of these circles to set the cameras at the two stations so that the optical axis of each has the same azimuth.

Vertical circles with levels were also put on the cameras in order that the approximate elevation of the optical axis could be determined. This circle with its level also serves to set the cameras for the purpose of taking the series of star pictures for constructing the "network" charts used in

measuring parallax. Since the cameras are not intended to be leveled accurately when used for taking auroral pictures no leveling device was incorporated in them and for this reason the level used with the vertical circle is arranged so that it has a vertical motion about the center of vertical rotation of the camera.

Figure 2 shows clearly the construction of the camera and also the view-finder on the upper left corner, the horizontal circle, and the vertical circle with its level.

Communication-Although the two points of observation are located

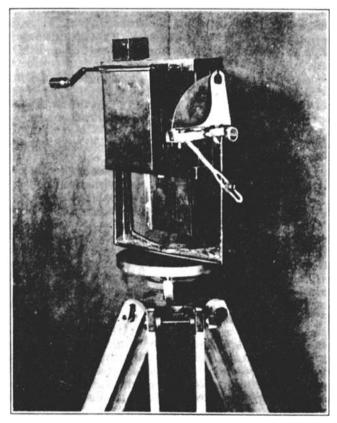


Fig. 2

on the highway near which a telephone line runs it was impossible to use telephones for inter-communication between the stations without constructing a new line because of the interference with regular communication during times of observation. This would have been quite expensive; for this reason therefore it was decided to use radio. Radio has the added advantage that should it be decided to extend the base-line or change it, there would be no difficulty in doing so without added expense.

Since most of the transmitting would be done at Station No. 1, the

transmitter installed there was one of the lowest possible power which would give assured continuous contact with the outlying station at all times. As the distance was only about fifteen miles a 7.5-watt set was selected as having sufficient power to cover this distance even under the worst conditions. Accordingly a set was constructed designed to work in the 80-meter amateur band and capable of transmitting either code or voice. This set consisted of a Hartley oscillating circuit coupled inductively to the antenna and modulated by the constant-current method. The type 210 oscillator-tube is fed by a type 250 modulator which in turn is fed by one stage of transformer-coupled audio amplification using a type 12 tube.

The transmitter receives its power from a R. E. L. catalogue No. 185 power-pack. This is supplied with 110-volt alternating-current power from a motor-generator set since only 110-volt direct-current is available at the college. It seemed more practical to use the motorgenerator and power-pack than to install a high-voltage motor-generator set, for an alternating-current motor-generator was already installed in my home where the set would be used; further if found advisable at a future time to use a more powerful set it would only be necessary to replace the power-pack.

The receiver at this station is a Silver-Marshal four-tube set operated from the conventional "A" and "B" batteries.

The antenna system consists of two complete antennas each with a counterpoise. For transmitting, a quarter-wave system is used. For receiving, a short antenna is used, and because of the poor ground which frozen earth makes, it was found necessary to use a counterpoise for re-

ceiving as well as sending.

The equipment is installed in the author's home on the campus and is operated by the person taking notes who is in constant communication with the observer at the camera by means of a telephone. When voice is used the observer's telephone is connected by a switching arrangement to both the person taking notes and the radio transmitter so that the observer is in direct communication with the outlying station and at the same time with the person taking notes.

The radio apparatus to be used at Station No. 2 had to be easily portable and at the same time reliable. For the latter reason a circuit was chosen for the transmitter using the same type of tubes used in the receiver. All tubes in both the transmitter and receiver are of the -01A type. This arrangement was used so that replacement would be simplified in case of accident to tubes and necessitated the carrying of only one or two extra tubes which could be used in any socket of either receiver or transmitter.

Both the transmitter and receiver were built according to designs given in Engineering Circular No. 10 of the Burgess Battery Company and are similar to those used by the Wilkins-Detroit Arctic Exposition.

The transmitter uses the series Colpitts circuit employing two -01Atubes in parailel. The transmitter has proven to be stable in operation and very dependable.

The receiver is the ordinary three-tube regenerative detector-circuit using capacity-coupling to the antenna and needs no description.

The transmitter and receiver are both mounted in a light yet substantial plywood case, provided with a strip for carrying.

The same antenna and counterpoise are used for both receiving and sending as are also the "A" and "B" batteries. A push-button operated change-over switch, which is conveniently located for the operator, makes this possible.

Time was kept by a Waltham watch and checked against standard time-signals as often as possible, on an average of three times a week. Its rate was found to be fairly constant and had a mean of 0.093 second per hour. A pendulum-clock was available but its rate was unreliable and it was located in an inconvenient place for observational purposes.

"Network" charts—In order to measure the parallax shown by the auroral negatives, charts of the same size as the enlarged negatives are necessary. These consist of right-ascension and declination circles having the distortion due to the camera lens and the projector lens introduced in their construction. By having a large number of these charts representing different parts of the sky along the meridian it is possible to measure the parallax directly with a minimum of preliminary calculation.

The method of preparing these charts, which is due to Professor Harang of Tromsö, Norway, is as follows:

The aurora camera is set up with its optical axis in the plane of the above mentioned meridian. Six or more exposures are then made with a time-interval of eight minutes (star-time) between each exposure. The length of the exposure is just long enough to get an image of the stars without showing any appreciable motion. When the six or eight exposures are made the lens is shifted to a new plate and the camera is elevated to a new position about a degree or two higher than the first and the process of exposure repeated. This is done for all positions from the horizon to well beyond the zenith. The resulting negatives each show a series of pictures of the same group of stars spaced exactly two degrees apart, since the motion of the celestial sphere is one degree in four minutes of time.

To construct the "network" charts then one puts the negative in the projector used for the auroral pictures and adjusts the amount of enlargement until, near the center of the plate one degree (along the meridian) exactly equals one centimeter. This is done by identifying two stars near the center of the plate and computing the difference in degrees between their respective declinations. To check this the cosine of the declination of one of the stars just used is found and when multiplied by two should give the distance in centimeters between the successive images of the star.

When the correct enlargement has been obtained each star-image is plotted on a piece of paper and also the center of the plate. A meridian is then located by calculating the distance in right-ascension from the center of the plate for stars having different declination. After the meridian through the center is located, it is an easy matter to draw in the circles of declination and of hour-angles by simply plotting the correct distance as indicated by the star-images. When the lines have all been plotted a tracing is made in ink, the center is marked with the correct declination of the point, and the chart is ready to use. The whole process is a simple one but requires much time and proves rather tedious when a large number of the charts is required, because extreme care must be exercised in plotting the points and often the star-images are faint which

adds to the difficulty. However, the making of them by this method, long as it is, saves much time over the method of calculating the "network" from the empirical equation for the distortion of the camera lens and projector lens.

So far only fifteen of these charts have been made; however, these are made for use in the part of the sky where most of the aurora photographs

which are good can be calculated.

Visual record of aurora—It is not always possible to send observers to Station No. 2 in time to obtain observations before the display has ended and sometimes the display is so weak that it is inadvisable to make an attempt to make photographic observations. It is, therefore, with this in mind that a record is kept of all displays observed. This record is kept in tabular form that the data may serve to correlate other natural pheomena with the aurora or to determine frequency- or time-curves.

The record includes the following data as shown by the column headings of Table 1.

(1) The date of the G. M. T. given; since midnight G. M. T. is 2 P. M. local standard time this column shows a date one day ahead of the local date. (This is convenient for one date, therefore, can be used during the entire display and makes also a standard of reference.)

(2) The G. M. T. of the first observation of a display.

(3) The form of aurora according to designations of the Photographic Atlas of Auroral Forms³, as follows: (1) Forms without ray-structure—HA, homogeneous quiet arcs, HB, homogeneous bands, PA, pulsating arcs, DS, diffuse luminous surfaces, PS, pulsating surfaces, and G, feeble glow near the horizon resembling the dawn, of white or reddish color; (2) forms with ray-structure—RA, arcs with ray-structure, RB, bands with ray-structure, D, draperies, R, rays, and C, corona; and (3) flaming aurora, F.

(4) Intensity measured by using different thicknesses of celluloid

as a measure-28 thicknesses just obscure the full moon.

(5) Altitudes for the lower and upper border at the center of the display—Z indicating zenith and H horizon.

(6) The western and eastern extremities of the display.

- (7) The duration in hours between the first and final appearance of the aurora.
- (8) The approximate area of the sky covered as a maximum on a scale of 1 to 8 (8 being the entire sky).
- (9) Weather condition at the time of observation, including cloudiness, rain, snow, and wind.
- (10) Height of barometer at time of observation, indicating by r or f whether it is rising or falling.
 - (11) Any additional notes which need to be entered.
 - (12) Number of photographic exposures made if any.

*C. Störmer, Photographic atlas of auroral forms and scheme for visual observations of auroræ. Published by International Geodetic and Geophysical Union, Oslo (1930).

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Table 1—Auroral record, College, Alaska, August 9, 1930, to May 7, 1931—Continued

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Table 1-Auroral record, College, Alaska, August 9, 1930, to May 7, 1931—Continued

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TABLE 1-Auroral record.

	Remarks		See photo notes See photo notes	Changed to D and R at OSh $30m$. HA at $99h$ $00m$		At 11 ^h 30 ^m had "S" shape from SW to NE; changed	to R at 11 ^b 50 ^m Intermittent	At 09 ^b 40 ^m half arc from	N W Brightest at 09 ^b 20 ^m ; broke	Snow blowing badly	See photo notes	See photo notes	Rather diffuse	Faint all evening At 09h 40m HA from NW to	Cone at 08h 00m
	No.		10 10	::	::	::	::	:::	:::	:	17	. 9	::	:::	
	Barom- eter		28.7f 28.7r	29.7	29. r 29.1r	29.5 <i>f</i> 29.6	29.2f 29. r	29.57 29.8 30. 7	30. <i>f</i> 29.7 29.7	29.7r	29.87	29.6f	29.3 29.3	29.25 29.5 28.8	28.91
	Weather		Pt. cloudy Pt. cloudy	Cloudy	Clear	Pt. cloudy Clear	Clear Pt. cloudy	Clear Clear Clear	Clear Clear Clear	Clear; wind	Clear	Clear	Clear; wind	Clear Clear Clear; wind	Clear; wind
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	Remarks	INCILIATING			Gone at 08b 00m; HA at 11b 40m; RA at 12b 00m			Seen through clouds	1	Windy	Seen poorly through haze;	changed to n b at 09 "00"	See photo notes	See photo notes			Faint G again at 13 ^h 00 ^m	Changed to HR at 10h 20m;	see photo notes		Came suddenly; motion;	Sky very light: wind	Sky very light	Lower end below cloud
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Details of photographic auroral log, of methods used to compute distances, and heights of auroras photographed simultaneously at stations 1 and 2 will be given in the second portion of this report to appear in the March 1932 number of the Journal.

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