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Attached is correspondence from Stewart to Hale about taking motion pictures of the building of the new telescope. I am transmitting this to you at the request of Prof. Trowbridge.



Selskar M. Gunn

SMG:PH: 1E
11/7/28

To Dean Trowbridge
For his information

J. Q. Stewart 11-1-28

1032

November 1, 1928

Dr. George E. Hale
Mt. Wilson Observatory
Pasadena, Calif.

My dear Hale:

At the suggestion of Professor Russell, I am sending you the attached "plan for a motion-picture of the 200-inch telescope." The plan has benefited from his criticism, and he heartily approves the idea of making such a record of at least the chief technical features involved in the construction of the new telescope.

The idea may already have occurred to you of depicting in motion-pictures the building of this instrument. I hope that in any case it may receive your careful consideration.

Dean Trowbridge thinks well of the scheme, in principle, and has promised to bring it to the attention of Dr. Mason and Dr. Millikan.

The idea could, of course, be carried out in any one of a variety of ways. My thought would be to combine a series of careful records of scientific and engineering phases of the design, construction, and use of the instrument with motion-pictures of some of the dramatic incidents involved, even though many of these lack scientific significance.

It will be obvious that if this plan is to be carried out action should be initiated at once.

Yours sincerely,

JQS/HY

JQS
John Q. Stewart

PLAN FOR
A MOTION PICTURE OF THE TWO-HUNDRED INCH TELESCOPE

1. Urgency.-

It will be obvious that if this plan is to be carried out action should be initiated at once.

2. Purposes and nature of the picture.-

a) To afford teachers and students of astronomy pictorial studies of the many interesting technical processes involved in the design, construction, testing, and use of the new telescope. For example, the casting, grinding, polishing, testing, and silvering of the mirror (so far as trade policies and expediency permit.) A ruling-engine could be shown as if at work making a grating. There will be a great number of processes of this sort which should be depicted.

b) I would suggest broadening the field to include non-astronomical technical features: scenes sketching the diverse contributions of the industry of the world to the making of the telescope. Pictures of the transportation of the mirror to the mountain-top would be shown.

c) I would further suggest the photographing of some of the dramatic incidents associated with the new instrument. For example, views of expeditions at work searching for a suitable site, of the formal dedication of the telescope, and, so far as policy and personal considerations permit, pictures of all significant events in the development of the telescope from idea to realization. By careful attention, the inherent dramatic elements can properly be exploited without loss of technical value.

d) If pictures of the type (c) are included, the whole film will have a significance broader than the abstractly technical. It will indeed stand as an "industrial-astronomical epic," a concrete record of a major historical event, as history is reckoned nowadays. As such it could successfully be shown to the general public - an inclusive picture, of definite validity, the usefulness of which we cannot now gauge.

e) The climax will be the presentation of views taken through the completed instrument. I would suggest, for example, a motion-picture of sunrise on Mare Crisium; and another of star-clouds and nebulae crowding across the shifting field of view as the telescope searches the Milky Way. (This latter might be accomplished by rephotographing through a moving circular aperture a series of plates of adjoining regions actually made with the 200-inch -- a technical trick that seems justifiable.) Professor Russell, however, is of the opinion that only such views should be taken with the 200-inch as will not require interference with the scientific program.

3. Cost and control.-

The cost of taking such a picture will be very considerable, even though most of the actors will require no salaries. In order to eliminate danger of distortions introduced for commercial ends the initial costs would require to be covered by special funds. Title and complete control of the films should, of course, be vested in the owners of the telescope.

Professional camera men should be hired (with experience as news photographers, preferably.) Perhaps a professional scenario-writer should be employed as consultant.

John Q. ^{JS}Stewart

Department of Astronomy
Princeton University

November 1, 1928