



NATIONAL RADIO ASTRONOMY OBSERVATORY

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December 19, 1980

Alan Bridle
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Dear Allen:

Well we did it! We turned ideas, theory, design, hardware, scrap and hard work into the world's best, biggest and most sophisticated radio telescope. We did it within 3.4% of the original Congressional cost estimate of \$76,000,000 made in March 1971 while the All Industrial Commodity Index rose 144% and the Construction Materials Index rose 350%. And we did it one year ahead of the November 1972 construction schedule.

President Carter in his message for the dedication said:

"Great credit is due to the organizations and individuals whose ideas and efforts have made the VLA possible.....
I know that Americans everywhere join me in congratulating all those associated with the VLA and in wishing them every future success."

1980 was another good year for the VLA. We accomplished almost all our goals but managed to leave some odds and ends to finish up early in 1981. It was a pleasure to welcome Ron Ekers and to work with him in the transition to full operations.

The termination of the VLA construction organization on December thirty-first will be a very sad event for me, but I am glad that I was a part of it, and its memories and friendships will live on. Phyl and I will be in the area until my retirement March thirty-first, writing a Completion Report and cleaning up some remaining items.

You might like the enclosed pictures to add to your collection. Again, my sincere thanks go to each of you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John H. Lancaster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

John H. Lancaster