

19th September 1977

A. C. Beck
398 Paulus Court, Paradise Palms
Boca Raton, Florida 33432

Dear Mr. Beck:

Perhaps you remember your visit for a few days to NRAO, Green Bank, W. Va. during summer of 1960. Your mission was to make recommendations about microwave technology which was unrelated to my presence. We did eat lunch together a couple of times. I was much interested in your comments about Jansky's merrygoround. The well known picture clearly shows pneumatic tires. Apparently the maintenance department at Holmdel got tired and replaced them with hard rubber tires by time you were using framework to test comb antennas (about 1936?).

Franklin and Burke discovered radio waves from Jupiter during 1955 at 22.2 megacycles. I immediately realized that Jansky's 20.5mc recordings may have a lot of Jupiter enhancements which Jansky probably passed over as unknown noise. Accordingly I wrote to Bell Labs at West Street and made inquiry. The reply stated Jansky's recordings could not be found. Early 1956 I talked to Southworth over fone and made a note of his reply; Jansky's recordings were stored in a Red Barn. Further inquiry failed to disclose any trace of red barn.

My mission at NRAO was to supervise reconstruction of my Wheaton Dish on left side of front entrance to NRAO. After you left I began thinking it would be nice to have a replica of Jansky's merry-go-round on right side of front entrance. I again wrote to Southworth and suggested this. If he agreed, perhaps he could take matter up with the authorities. My work was completed and I left NRAO autumn 1960. Southworth persisted and the replica was in place 1962. The front axles and wheels from model T Fords were secured locally thru ads in Marlinton, W.Va. newspaper. The tires and tubes were obtained from Sears Roebuck.

Recently I visited NRAO and examined the replica which is in quite good condition but not operable. The purpose of this rather chatty letter is to enquire about feed system used to extract energy from active front curtain. There is no break at center pipe or any part of frame to support such a break. Apparently the feed was some type of tap on Y; perhaps to a 600 ohm line. That day was long before coaxial lines were available for RF use. At center of frame is a very large sprocket driven by a chain from gear box. This box is only original piece of apparatus which could be found. On the center axle must have been a pair of slip rings, probably just below the large sprocket. The rings may have been attached to frame with stationary brushes (like an alternator); or the rings could have been attached to axle (fixed to concrete block) with moving brushes attached to frame. There is nothing on the replica or in Jansky's published papers to give any hint about the above.

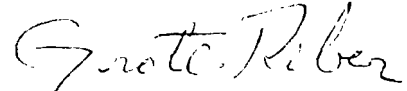
Next summer I will be back in this part of world and expect to spend a few weeks at NRAO. I intend to put the replica into operating condition, as it should be. Accordingly, I will be much obliged if you will consult with your memory about how the feed system was arranged on active curtain and how energy was brought out via center shaft and under the circular track to radio hut. Description and sketches will be most welcome. Also, perhaps you can enlighten me about what happened to Red Barn, Jansky's recordings

and your comb antenna recordings. After 25th October, my address will be

Grote Reber
Bothwell, Tasmania
Australia 7411

I find this historical stuff to be currently popular. We seem to be a few of active elements still around. Trusting you are enjoying good health and hoping our paths will meet again, I am

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grote Reber".

Grote Reber
411 West Colfax Street
Palatine, Illinois, 60067