

October 31, 1960

Dr. John B. Irwin,  
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Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana

Dear Dr. Irwin:

Many thanks for your good letter of the twelfth. I am indeed flattered to be asked a second time to give the Russell Lecture.

Last February, when this matter was brought up, I was in Australia. At that time I expected to make a quick trip to America, straighten up my affairs in Hawaii and Green Bank, and then return to Australia in June. However, upon my arrival at Green Bank, I found that it had been decided to go ahead with rehabilitating and reconstructing my Wheaton, Illinois radio telescope. Circumstances at NRAO being what they are, it seemed imperative that I stay and supervise the job. In this way I would be relieved of having to spend the rest of my life explaining how it ought to have been done and why it wasn't. As of ten days ago, the instrument is complete in working order, a very close reproduction of its original shape. If anything, it is better now than in 1937. I am proud to have it on the left side of the entrance at NRAO. When my overtures to Bell Laboratories take form there will be a full-scale reproduction of the rotating antenna used by Jansky on the right side of the entrance. Incidentally, the giant instrument being constructed at Sugar Grove is a blown-up version of my Wheaton radio telescope. There is an old saying that "Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery"!

I explain the above in some detail as you can see that it was possible for me to be in Mexico City last August. Such did not appear to be the case last February. Please rest assured that no slight to the Society was intended. It is just an example of the way things turn out when I do not have control over situations.

Dr. John B. Irwin

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As a result of the above, my future in Australia has been delayed six months or more. Presently, I have several tons of equipment scheduled to leave Newark on the first boat. I will be on the way by plane in ten days or so. Summer is coming down under and a lot of work is to be done. While I would like to accept the appointment for June in Nantucket, it seems best that I postpone this honor one more year. By 1962 I will be making a trip back to America and should have new and interesting results in hand. If I may impose on the good nature of the Committee once more, please put me down for a sure thing during northern summer of 1962. Thanking you again for your kind consideration, I am

Sincerely yours,

Grote Reber

GR:E