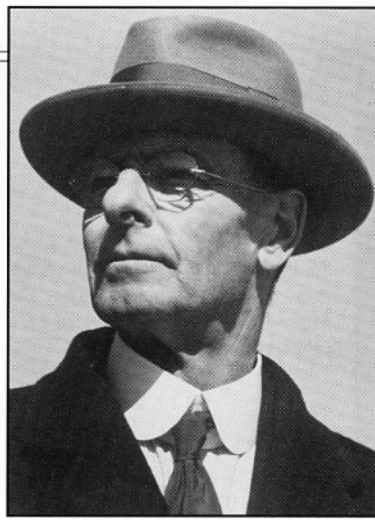


James Stokley in 1983, the year he was awarded the Society's Klumpke-Roberts award. (A.S.P. archives.)



Charles H. Adams. Adams was a most vigorous and dedicated member of the A.S.P., serving as its secretary for a quarter of a century. (Photograph by his son Ansel, courtesy of the Ansel Adams Publishing Rights Trust, all rights reserved.)

the great photographers of the twentieth century. When Charles died in 1951, Ansel and other family members requested that memorial gifts be made to the A.S.P., and the Charles H. Adams Fund was set up, to help support the Society's various publications.

Another concern of the Society in the 1920's was its library. The collection had been rebuilt after the destruction of the 1906 fire; by 1911 it contained about 300 bound volumes and 3,000 periodicals and miscellaneous items. It was housed in the A.S.P. rooms in the Phelan Building in San Francisco; but it was getting very little use, and by 1916 the Directors were wondering how to make the library more useful. In 1917 they voted to move it to the Sutro Branch of the California State Library, in the hopes that it would be more accessible. By 1920 the collection had nearly doubled in size, to 635 bound volumes and 6000 others, all indexed and shelved in the Sutro Branch. In 1924 it was moved again, to the San Francisco Public Library.

By 1927 the Society was in a quandary: it could not afford to rent quarters for the collection, which continued to grow as many observatories sent their publications in exchange for the *P.A.S.P.* In 1929 the library was moved to the Students' Observatory at the University of California in Berkeley. Eventually, the A.S.P.'s collection was merged with the University's, and by today the normal culling process at the University has apparently led to the discarding of most of the A.S.P.'s books.

With the purchase of the Society's own building in 1988, a new effort is being made to build up the library as the A.S.P. begins its second century. A number of members have already donated books and older magazines to the Society's collection and other such contributions are being sought from members, other libraries, and book collectors.

Robert G. Aitken at the micrometer eyepiece of the Lick 36-inch refractor. Aitken was one of the most distinguished and active Society members; he served twice as President, held several other offices and was on the Board of Directors, and was awarded the Bruce Medal in 1926 for his work on double stars — much of which was done with this instrument. (Photograph courtesy of the Mary Lea Shane Archives of Lick Observatory.)

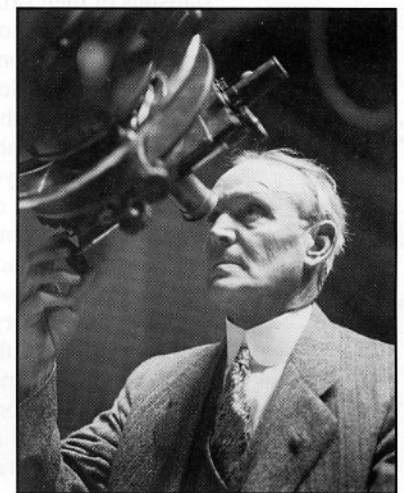
Chapter 11:

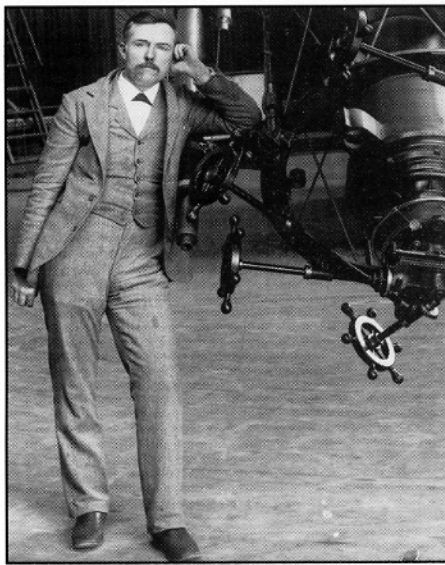
Anniversaries

The *P.A.S.P.* for February 1929 marked the fortieth anniversary of the founding of the Society. Robert Aitken wrote to the six surviving founders asking for their recollections of the event, and three responded with letters which were published in that issue. James H. Johnson had been secretary of the PCAPA in 1889; he wrote: "From a modest band of novices led by a few earnest astronomers [the A.S.P.] has evolved into an institution commanding international esteem... And the good work still goes on under capable hands." He also had high praise for Holden at the founding meeting: "I still remember his inspiring zeal... His ideals were high yet practical... Much wise counsel did he give us, and the meeting closed with faith and mighty resolve."

Alfred P. Redington, another charter member, wrote that "In the forty years that have elapsed since that memorable evening it has been a satisfaction to note the growth and progress the Society has attained throughout the world, and the Certificate of Charter Membership, issued to the writer over the signatures of Dr. Holden and Professor Schaeberle, is regarded by him as one of his most valued possessions."

Ten years later, at the annual meeting in 1939, Aitken gave an address on the fiftieth anniversary.





Edward E. Barnard in 1893 at the 36-inch telescope at Lick Observatory. (Photograph courtesy of the Mary Lea Shane Archives of Lick Observatory.)

sary of the A.S.P. He described the 1889 eclipse and the formation of the Society, paid tribute to James H. Johnson, by then the only surviving charter member (Johnson died in 1946), and outlined the Society's activities from the Bruce and Comet Medals to the Montgomery library gift, the *P.A.S.P.*, and the *Leaflets*. He emphasized the importance of amateurs and of public education in astronomy. A salute to the three long-term secretaries — Ziel, Richardson, and Adams — concluded the talk. He might well have saluted his own service to the Society, the importance of which could not be overestimated.

Indeed, Robert Aitken was one of the pillars of the A.S.P. for 57 years. Born in the gold rush country of California in 1864, he received his A.B. and A.M. degrees from Williams College in Massachusetts. From 1891-1895 he taught mathematics at the College of the Pacific, and then joined the staff of Lick Observatory as an assistant. For ten years he served there as assistant astronomer, then as astronomer from 1907-1935, associate director 1923-1930, and director 1930-1935. He retired July 1, 1935, but spent the night of June 30 at the 36-inch telescope, observing double stars as usual.

Aitken's research on double stars earned him the Society's Bruce Medal in 1926, and resulted in the publication (in 1932) of a catalogue of 17,000 double stars, giving the results of years of observations and the statistics of their orbits. This catalogue is still a major reference for astronomers. Aitken had joined the A.S.P. in 1894, and was on the Board several times between 1898 and 1951. He was president in 1898 and 1915, Lick secretary of the Society from 1902-1914 (when that position was abolished), and vice-president nine times. For fifty years he was on the Publications Committee, and he edited the *P.A.S.P.* for most of that time. He wrote numerous *Leaflets* and popular articles for the *P.A.S.P.*, and was famed for his lectures to the public. For all these services the Board elected him a Patron of the Society in 1943. Aitken's son and grandson still live in Northern California, and they were able to attend the Centennial Banquet of the Society, where they heard astronomer Frank Edmondson announce that he had named an asteroid after Robert Aitken in memory of his services to astronomy and the A.S.P.

In his fiftieth anniversary talk, Aitken also outlined some of the advances in astronomy during the half century since 1889. At Lick Observatory, E. E. Barnard had cultivated the wide-angle photography of the Milky Way and its great star clouds. Also at Lick, Campbell had developed a spectrograph for use on the 36-inch telescope, which made possible the accurate measurement of the speeds of stars towards or away from us. These observations had provided information on the rotation of our galactic system and had revealed the existence of hundreds of previously unknown binary stars. In addition, as Aitken wrote, they had also "provided a wealth of data for the solution of astrophysical problems, relating to the luminosity, mass, and other properties of stars."

James Keeler's photographs at Lick in the 1890's had showed structural detail in some of the spiral nebulae, and had demonstrated that large numbers of these intriguing objects existed. Keeler predicted that this would be very important in theories of cosmology. Edwin Hubble followed up on this work, showing by 1939 that there were thousands of these galaxies, far outside our Milky Way, and all apparently rushing away from us at great speeds. Aitken pointed to the growth of other western observatories besides Lick (Mount Wilson, Lowell in Arizona, the Dominion Astrophysical Observatory at Victoria (B.C.), the Steward Observatory at the University of Arizona, and the 200-inch telescope then under construction at Mount Palomar) as evidence of the superiority of the Pacific region for astronomical observation. Aitken could proudly point to the fact that in most of these institutions and discoveries, A.S.P. members had played a significant role.

James Keeler, noted astronomer, founding member of the A.S.P., and the Society's President in 1900. (Photograph courtesy of the Mary Lea Shane Archives of Lick Observatory.)

