

Who attended the Washington meeting in 1910?

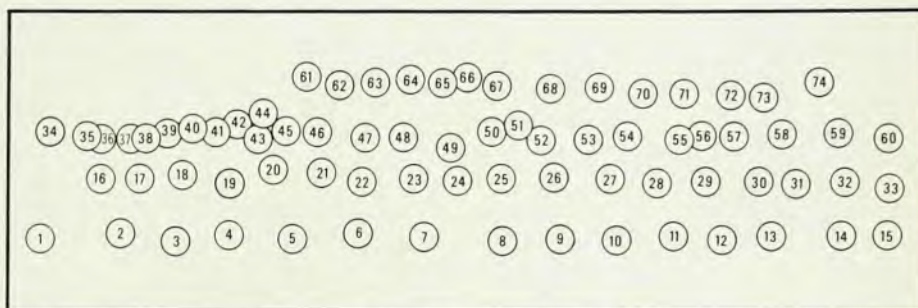


During the 75th Anniversary session, held on 22 April as part of the 1974 Spring Meeting of The American Physical Society, I had the honor to represent the National Bureau of Standards in a ceremony in which a commemorative plaque was presented to Wolfgang K. H. Panofsky, who accepted on behalf of the APS. Besides congratulating the Physical Society on the occasion of its anniversary, the citation on the plaque recalled the close and continuous interaction between APS and NBS in the past and looked forward "... to many more years of successful and productive collaboration."

This letter is by way of a footnote to that ceremony, indicating briefly some of the history of the relations between the two organizations. I am also sending you a copy of the photograph, found in the NBS archives, of participants in the 1910 APS meeting in Washington, which I presented to Panofsky at the time of the above-mentioned ceremony. Of the 74 persons in the photograph, which was taken on the NBS campus, we have been able to identify only 16 with some degree of certainty. Perhaps readers of PHYSICS TODAY can help in identifying the others.

Friendly relations between the APS and NBS got off to a good start at the turn of the century when APS, in one of its first official acts, joined with other scientific groups in strongly endorsing the establishment of NBS. And, indeed, the "Bureau of Standards," as it was first known, was established soon afterwards, in 1910, making it only two years junior to the APS.

In those early years, NBS was unique as a scientific center in Washington and it played a large part in the total na-



The 1910 meeting of The American Physical Society, held in Washington. Only a few of the participants have been identified; readers are invited to add to the list given on page 11.

tional effort in physics, especially as reflected in the APS Washington meetings. Thus, at the first Washington meeting of the APS, held at the Cosmos Club in the spring of 1904 (and since then always held in the spring), more than half of the 20 papers presented were by NBS authors. I note that the number of papers listed for this year's Washington meeting is 1240. The meetings are, of course, much more cosmopolitan now, the great preponderance of papers originating outside of Washington, including some from outside the country.

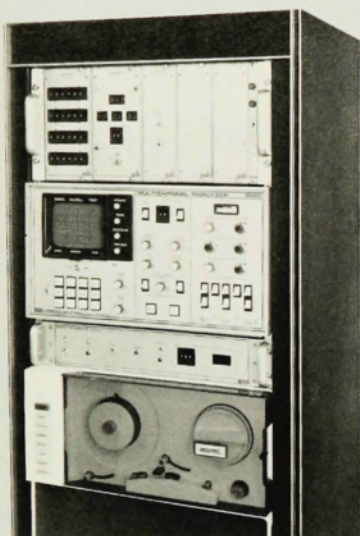
However, NBS scientists have always been active in contributing to the technical substance of the meetings and to the work of the various APS committees. A considerable number have been named Fellows of the Society, have been elected to the governing council or have filled its highest offices. In particular, former NBS Directors Lyman J. Briggs and Edward U. Condon, and physicist Paul D. Foote are among the past Presidents of APS, and Edward B. Rosa, former chief of the

NBS Electricity Division, was a Vice-President.

NBS has been host to most of the past APS Washington meetings and continues to take part in the preparatory arrangements required for the smooth running of the meetings.

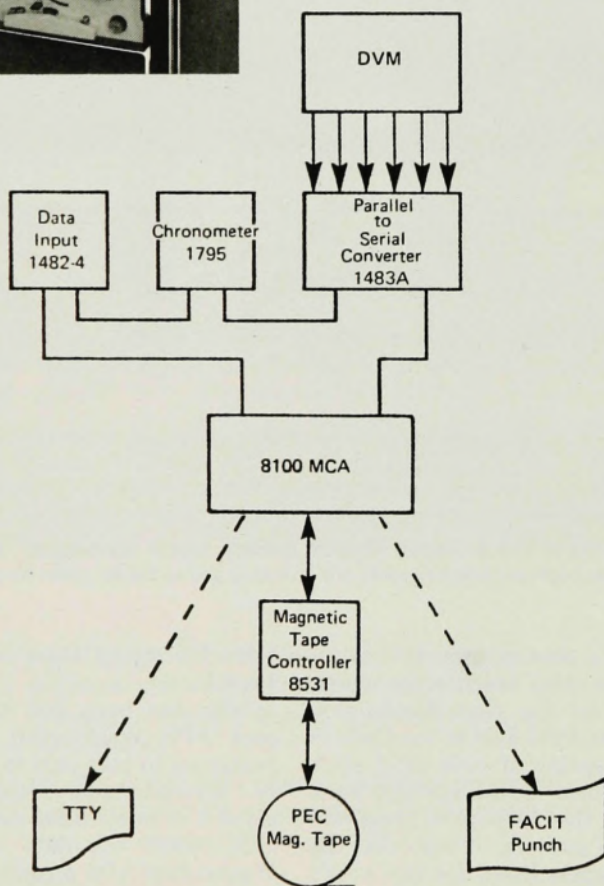
By 1907, the date of the second Washington APS meeting, construction of NBS's first permanent home at Connecticut Avenue and Van Ness Street was far enough along to provide the locale for at least some of the APS sessions. A familiar sight at the early meetings was the cluster of tents pitched by APS delegates on the NBS campus. NBS was then on the outskirts of town, and hotels were not so easily reached. Starting in 1914, by which time the Spring Meeting was an annual event, all sessions were held at NBS until World War II.

Then, for several years after 1941, wartime conditions kept the meetings away from Washington. With the great expansion of science and the corresponding growth of the APS, the meetings became too large for the NBS facil-



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letters

ities; and the sessions had to be shared with local universities and various government agencies. But some of the sessions continued to be held at NBS from 1948 through 1965.

A new era began in 1966, after NBS had moved to its new headquarters in Gaithersburg, Maryland, 20 miles north of Washington. In the APS Bulletin on the 1966 Washington meeting, the Society's secretary noted that "owing to the departure of the National Bureau of Standards for a rural locality, we have lost one of the most ancient shrines of the Society, the East Building Lecture Room, in which hitherto the Society has been holding sessions for so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary."

This did not, of course, mark the end of substantial interaction between the two institutions, which naturally complement and reinforce each other. NBS, especially its Institute for Basic Standards, is an actively contributing part of the physics community, and its role as central coordinator of the nation's physical measurements is in many respects unique. Yet a concern for standards and measurement is no monopoly of NBS, but an inseparable part of all physical research. As in the past, most of the new ideas that directly or indirectly bear on improved standards and measurements will continue to come to NBS from outside. It is obviously indispensable to NBS that it maintain the closest ties with all parts

of the physics community and with the APS as its major organizational expression.

Turning now to the 1910 photograph, we are indebted to two former NBS scientists, Harold F. Stimson and Carl S. Cragoe, for the following list of identifications, which includes the 16 mentioned previously plus another five, indicated by question marks, that are more uncertain:

(3) George W. Vinal (?), (8) Charles W. Waidner, (10) Wilhelm (?), (13) Richard F. Jackson, (20), W. F. White, (21) Edward B. Rosa, (22) L. A. Bauer, (24) Samuel W. Stratton, (25) Joseph S. Ames (?), (28) Louis A. Fisher, (29) Albert A. Michelson (?), (30) George K. Burgess, (31) Frank A. Wolff, (50) Edgar Buckingham, (52) Arthur T. Pienkowski, (53) William W. Coblentz, (54) H. E. Ives, (55), Eugene C. Crittenden (?), (61) Paul G. Agnew, (64) Harvey L. Curtis, (65) Herbert B. Brooks.

The problem of completing the identification of persons in the photograph "is left as an exercise for the reader" of PHYSICS TODAY!

ERNEST AMBLER
National Bureau of Standards
Washington, D.C.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Readers are asked to send their identifications to the editor. PHYSICS TODAY will send a physics book as a prize to the reader identifying the most people in the picture.

Detente criticized

Your editorial of May entitled "Detente in Science" (page 96) closes on a note of cheery optimism, which I should heartily welcome were it warranted. Unfortunately, I can find little in my own reading of recent Soviet history and in my personal experience of scientific cooperation with the Soviet Union to support your positive attitudes.

Soviet cooperation in science is fostered by the Soviet government when it perceives clearly discernible near-term benefits to the Soviet Union. Such cooperation implies nothing whatsoever about the behavior of the Soviet Union towards what it chooses to regard as threats to its stability. I refer to what you characterize as "reported mistreatments of prominent Soviet Physicists and other scientists by their own government." "Reported mistreatments," indeed! How quickly you appear to dismiss eyewitness accounts, direct telephone contacts, and the testimony of those who were allowed to emigrate.

The mistreatments are real. They

must be ended before any scientific cooperation takes place. Indeed, the Soviet desire for "Detente in science" should be seized as a lever with which to end the mistreatments.

MORREL H. COHEN
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

The editorial in the May issue depended on two very pleasant implicit assumptions. The first: cooperative agreements in science between the governments of the US and USSR will help to "diminish any present sources of tension between scientists in the two countries." The other: Such agreements are mutually beneficial. For example, the terms of one recent agreement "encourage the visiting country to contribute sizeable capital investments adding to the experimental facilities of the host country."

Unfortunately, close examination shows these assumptions to be invalid. "Cooperation" with the USSR has amounted to one-sided assistance. The

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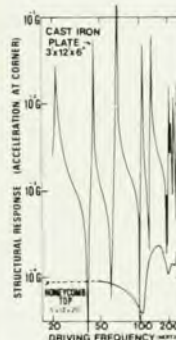


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