

What this project means to me – a personal note

For the most part I am a visual observer with some photography of eclipses, comets or perhaps a conjunction or two. But I was immediately intrigued by Dr. Svalgaard's program which he announced at the Antique Telescope Society meeting at Lick Observatory in 2015. I am an Amateur Telescope Maker so that added more interest to the project. I do get a great deal of pleasure from building my own telescopes, so the idea of a 1750's era reproduction was exciting and was easy to build. Do not be intimidated by my fancy woodworking, but if you like, build something like John Briggs' telescope - A singlet lens, glued to a washer, glued to a cardboard tube at one end. No focuser is needed so the eyepiece can be fastened in place at the other end of the tube because there is no need to have any other focus than infinity, and no one is going to look through your instrument. I used an alt-azimuth mount, and simple versions of that style can be easily fabricated. I would be more than happy to talk to anyone who wants to build their scope, if they would like some help or suggestions.

I found it so rewarding to take my telescope outside on clear days and to look for sunspots and then draw simple dots with a pencil on the paper. Nothing elaborate is required. What was a rich experience for me, was to feel a part of a small group consisting of John Briggs in New Mexico and Walter Stephani in Germany, all working together to record the Sun's activity. It was also very satisfying, to be a disciplined observer, having never done anything like this before.

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March 4, 2021