THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

A Synopsis Covering the Destruction and Resurrection of an Amateur Astronomer's Private Observatory

By: Gary Barabino

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

As an amateur astronomer for over 40 years, I have witnessed many atmospheric anomalies. None of which surpassed the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina to the New Orleans area on August 29, 2005. Shortly before we evacuated our home to the state of Florida, it was only a day later that we found out our home was destroyed.

I am indeed very grateful that I am here to share with you my experience via this special presentation entitled, "The Vega Observatory - The Katrina Experience". This event has renewed an amateurs dreams, aspirations, and has resurrected my love of Astronomy; the rise of the new Vega Observatory!!!

Sincerely, and Clear Skies Forever!!!
Gary Barabino

The Calm Before the Storm

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Jason 4.5" f/8 Newtonian Reflector - Pre-Katrina Photo.

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY – THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

My son, Jeffrey A. Barabino, holding the 5" f/9 Apogee Inc. Refractor OTA.

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80mm f/11 Lafayette "Hybrid" Refractor with helical focuser. Attached to the Jason Equatorial Mount.

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60mm f/12 Scope Refractor. Obtained from a New Orleans Flea Market.

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Original 14.5" f/7 Coulter Optical primary mirror, obtained in March, 1982, from a former PAS member.

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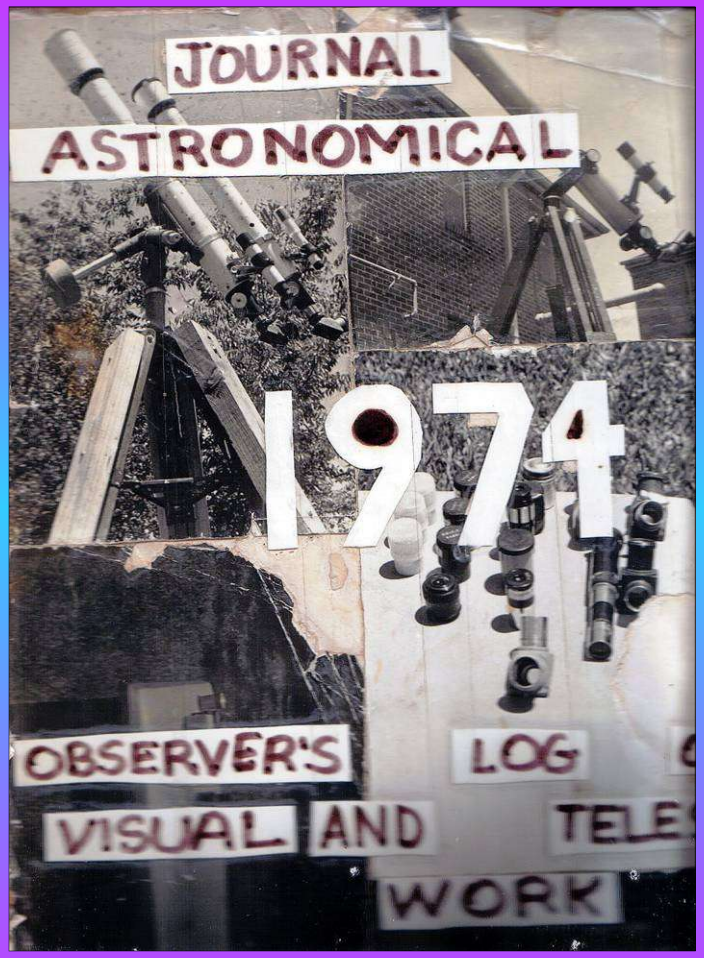

A picture of one of the Vega Observatory's Astronomical Journals - Pre-Katrina.

Katrina Floods the Ninth Ward

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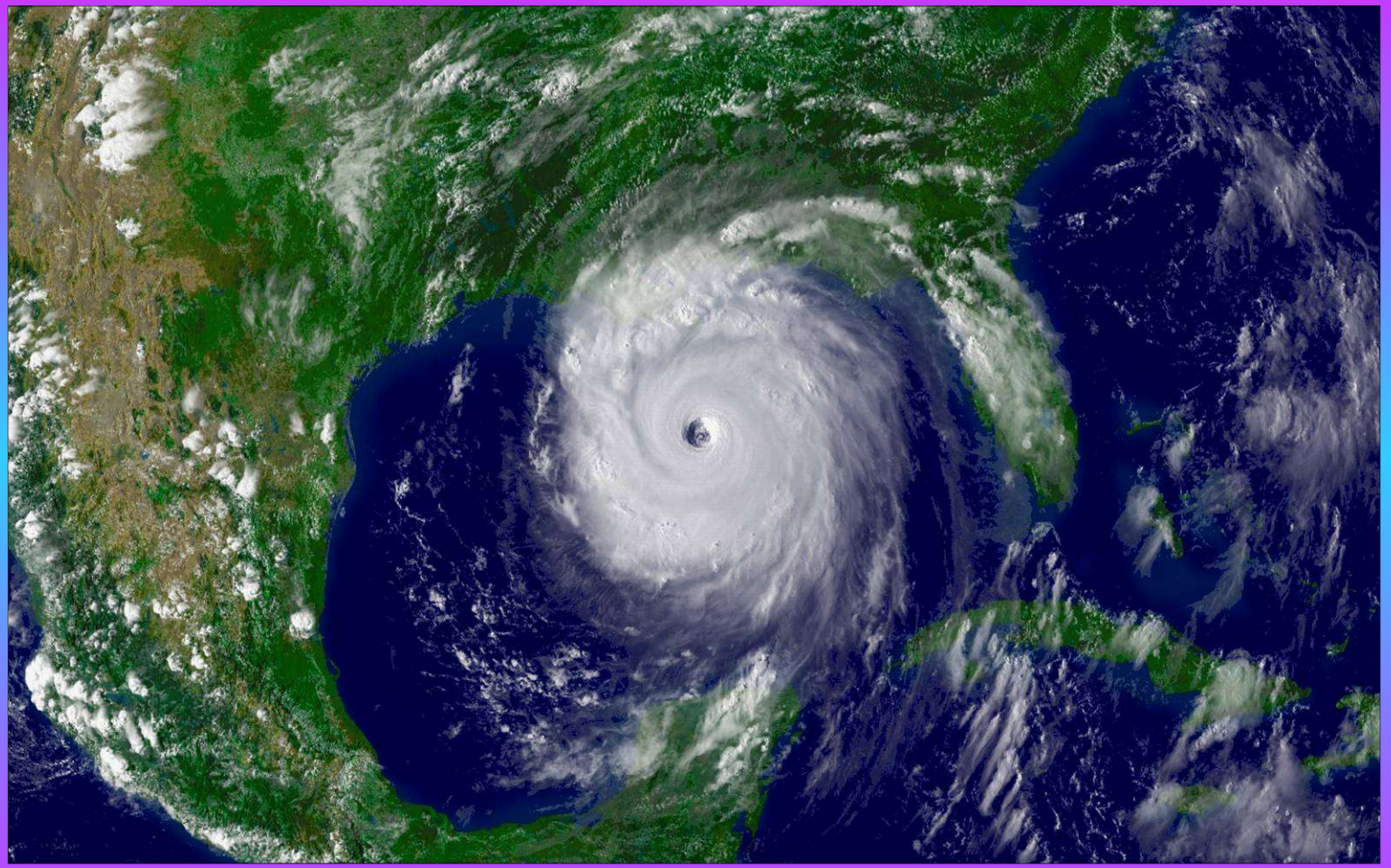

This is a NOAA satellite image of Hurricane Katrina a day before landfall.

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This is a view of my home with respect to the Surekote levee breech. My home is centered in the highlighted area.

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As Katrina evacuees, my family and I spent a week and a half at the Fairway Inn in Fort Walton Beach, FL.

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We then moved to the Wingate Inn in Destin, FL for a nearly three month stay.

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A New Beginning

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While living at the Wingate Inn, I obtained my first Post-Katrina telescope – a Tasco Luminova 4.5" f/8 Newtonian Reflector. This view was taken after we moved back to the New Orleans area residing at 16 Sarah Street in Waggaman, LA.

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Here I am in Mel Dawson's garage standing next to my newly acquired Konus 8" f/5 Newtonian Reflector.

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Putting the Konus telescopes to the test. Mel (left) with his 90mm f/11 Refractor, and I with my 8" f/5 Reflector.

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Viewing M8 The Lagoon through Mel Dawson's newly constructed 10" f/5.6 Newtonian Fork Mounted Reflector.

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Recipient of the
"Weakest Link Achievement Award"

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

This is our Post-Katrina home - 16 Sarah St., Waggaman, LA

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Almost all of New Orleans had re-opened after the storm, except for the Lower Ninth Ward.

The area that remained closed was bordered by the Industrial Canal, North Claiborne Ave., Caffin Ave., and Florida Ave.

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View of my storm ravaged home from the south southeast.

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The Vega Observatory 1975 Astronomical Journal ravaged by Hurricane Katrina.

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Badly damaged pages inside the 1975 Journal.
Restoration Begins!

A Joint Pontchartrain Astronomical Society/ Vega Sky Center Presentation – by Gary Barabino

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A key effort in the resurrection of the Vega Observatory is restoration of its astronomical journals.

Wherever possible I have used the original observations and data from each journal.

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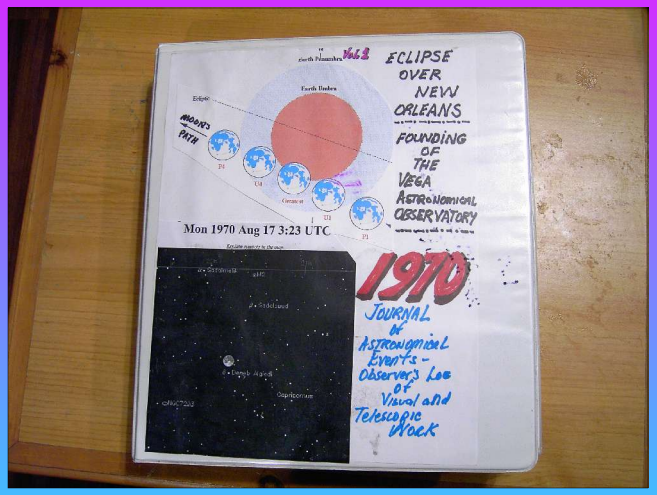

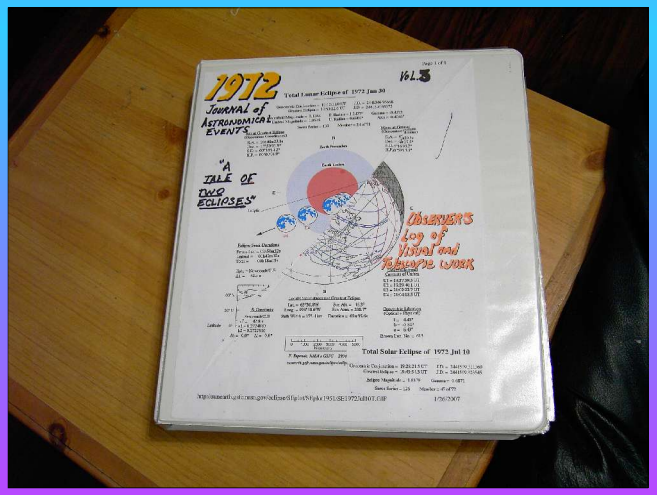

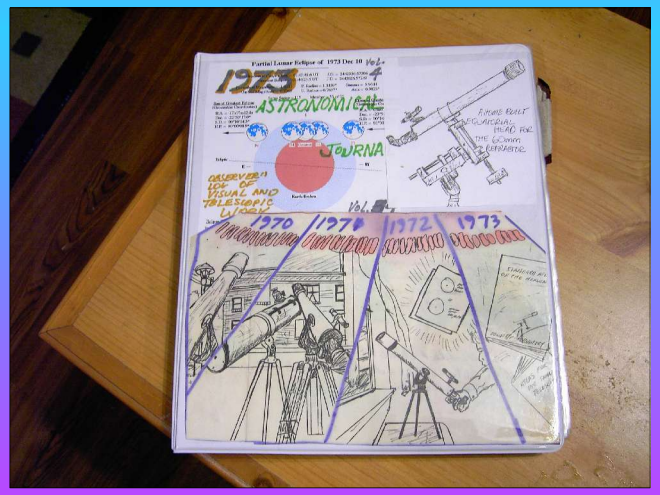

Four restored Vega Observatory Astronomical Journals.

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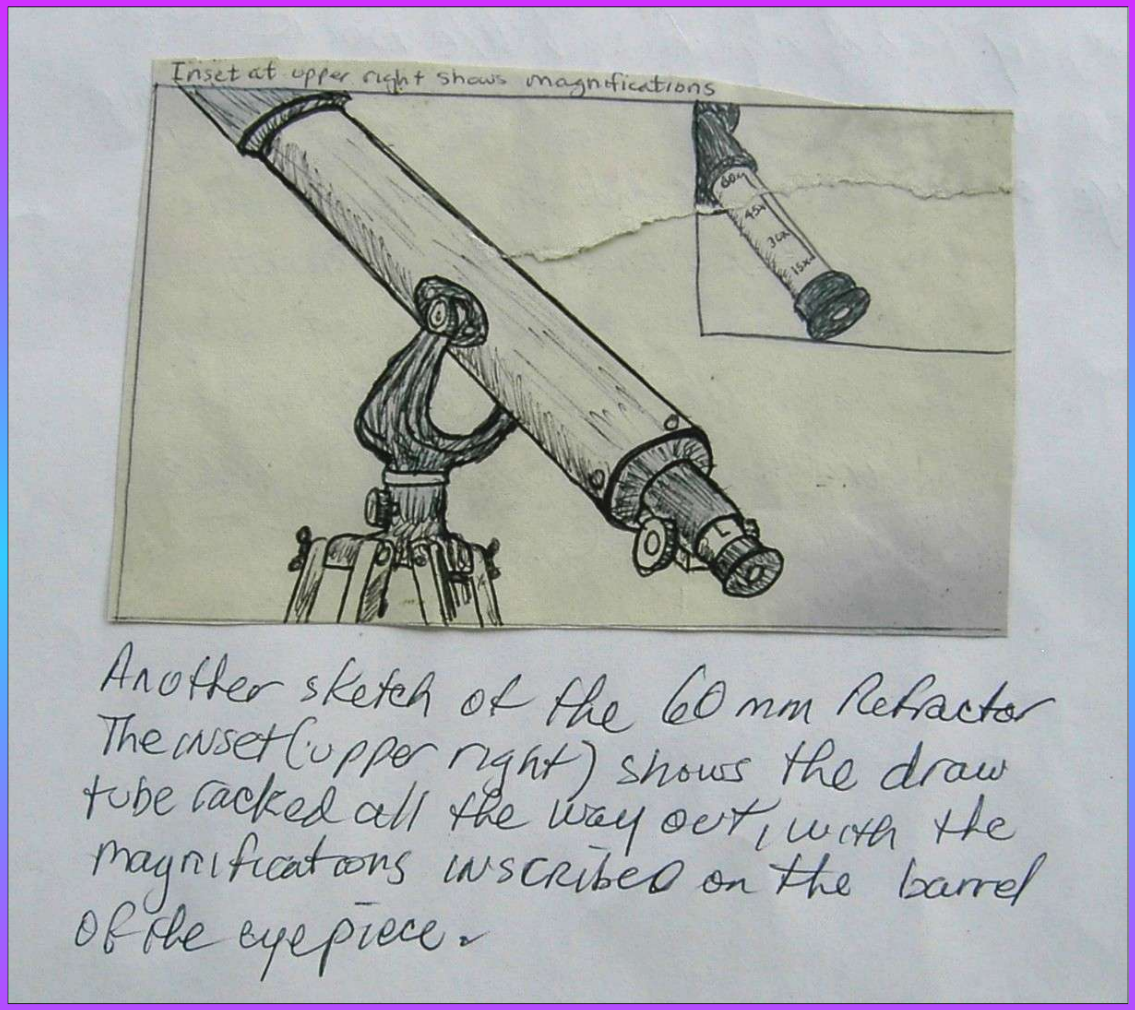

60mm Variable Power Refractor. This instrument was used in the founding of the Vega Observatory.

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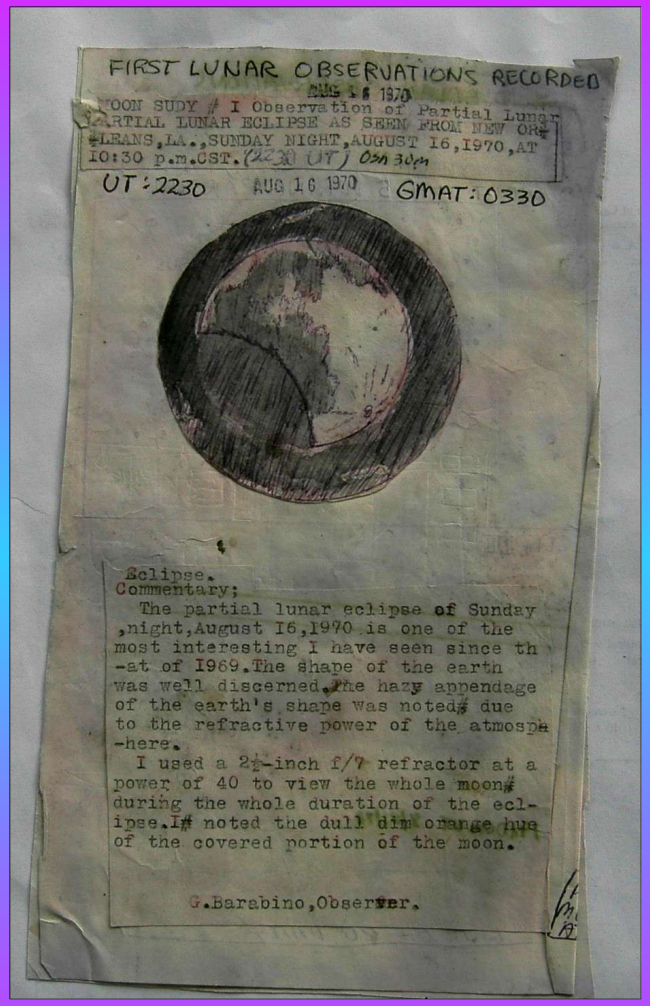

FIRST LUNAR OBSERVATIONS RECORDED

AUG 16 1970

MOON SUDY # I Observation of Partial Lunar
PARTIAL LUNAR ECLIPSE AS SEEN FROM NEW OR-
LEANS,LA.,SUNDAY NIGHT,AUGUST 16,1970,AT
10:30 p.m.CST. (22:30 UT) 05h 30m

UT:2230 AUG 16 1970 GMAT:0330

Eclipse.
Commentary;
The partial lunar eclipse of Sunday ,night,August 16,1970 is one of the most interesting I have seen since th-at of 1969.The shape of the earth was well discerned.The hazy appendage of the earth's shape was noted# due to the refractive power of the atmosph-here.
I used a 2½-inch f/7 refractor at a power of 40 to view the whole moon# during the whole duration of the ecl-ipse.I# noted the dull dim orange hue of the covered portion of the moon.

G.Barabino,Observer.

First observation opening date Vega Observatory.

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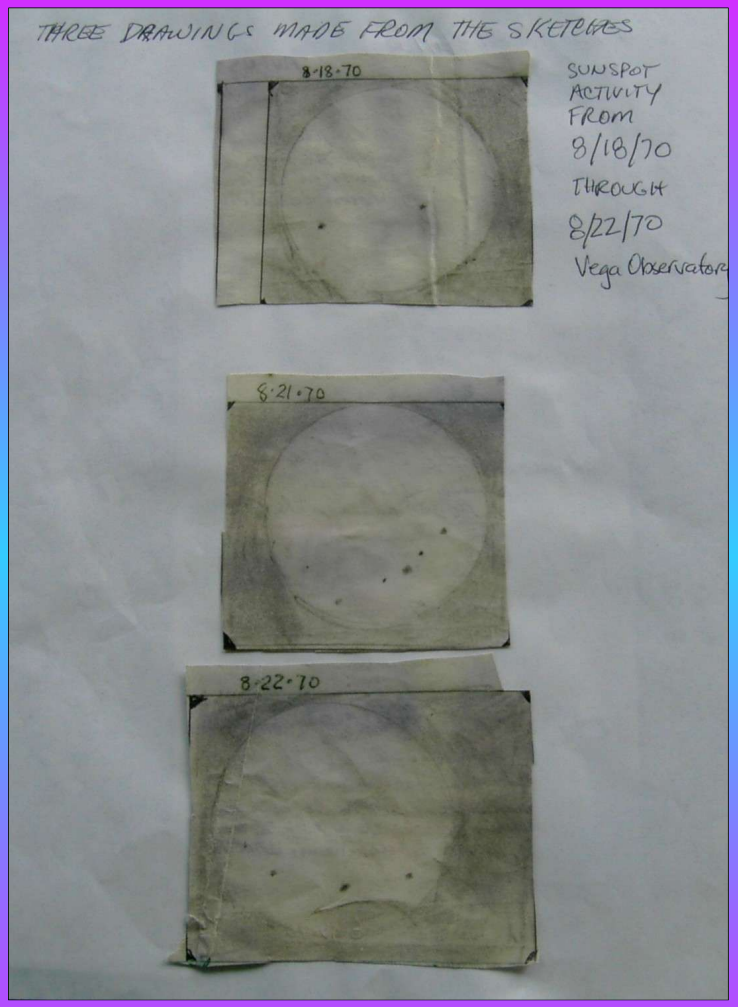

Sun sketches from the 1970 journal.

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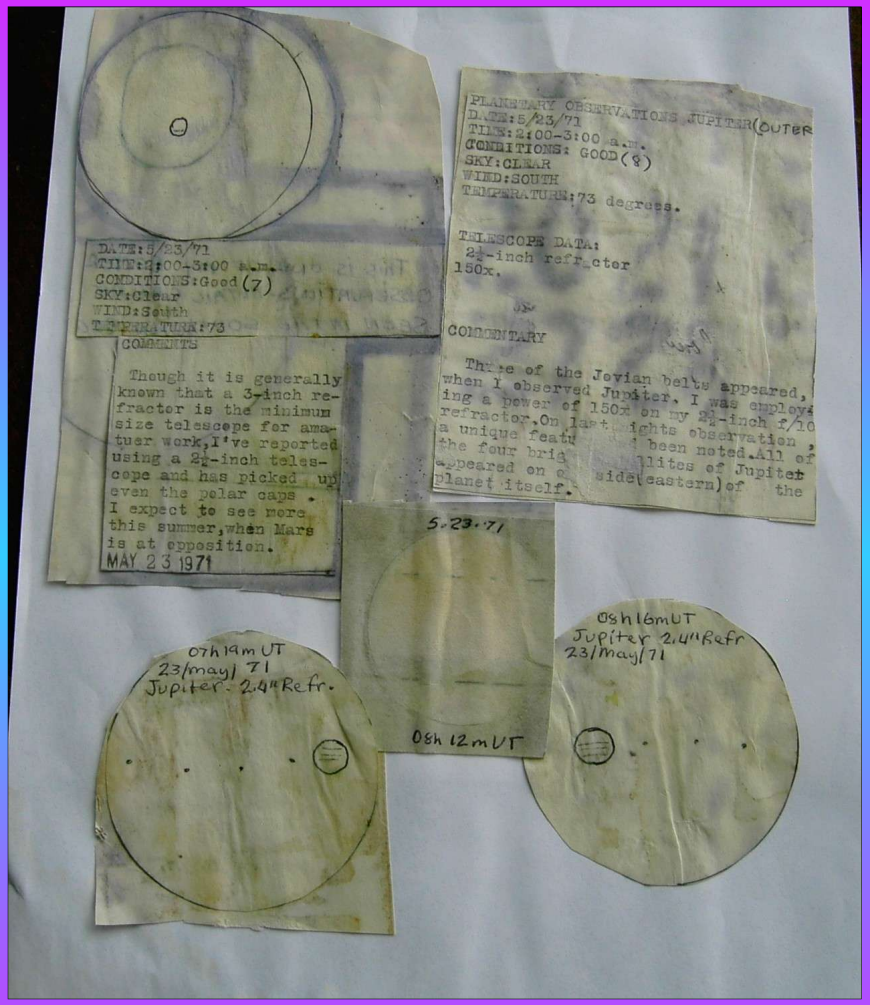

Jupiter and Mars Observations 1971.

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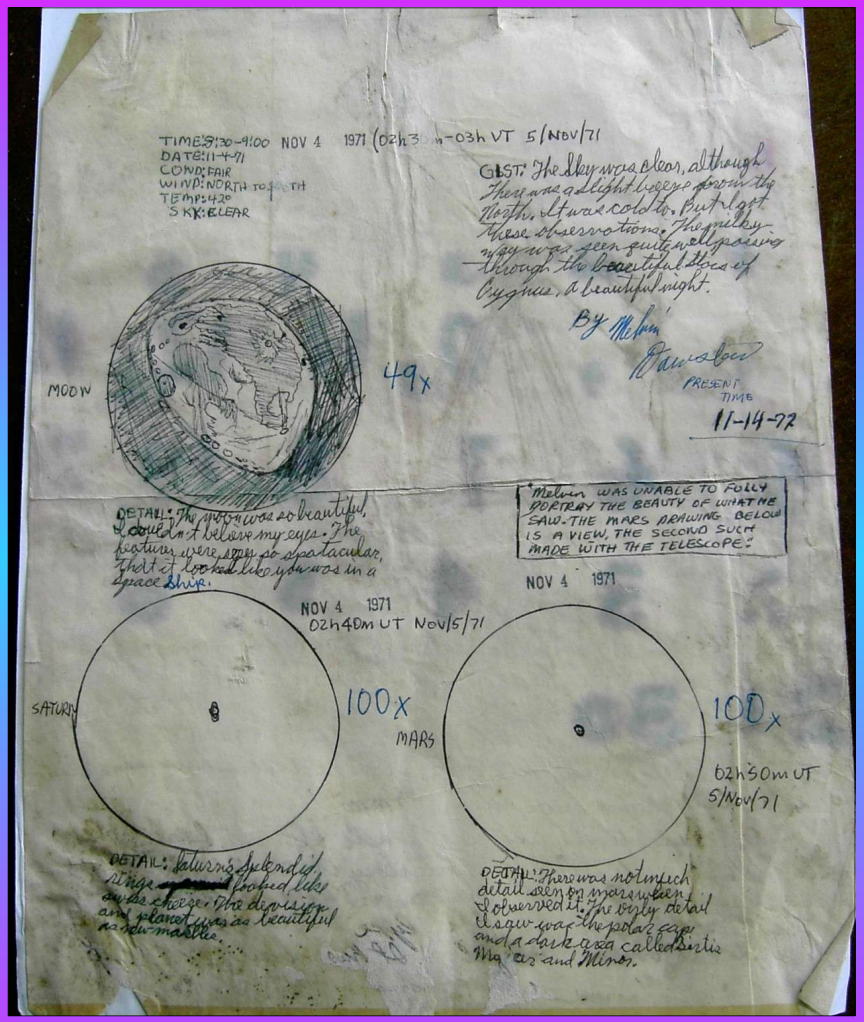

Moon, Saturn, and Mars 1971.

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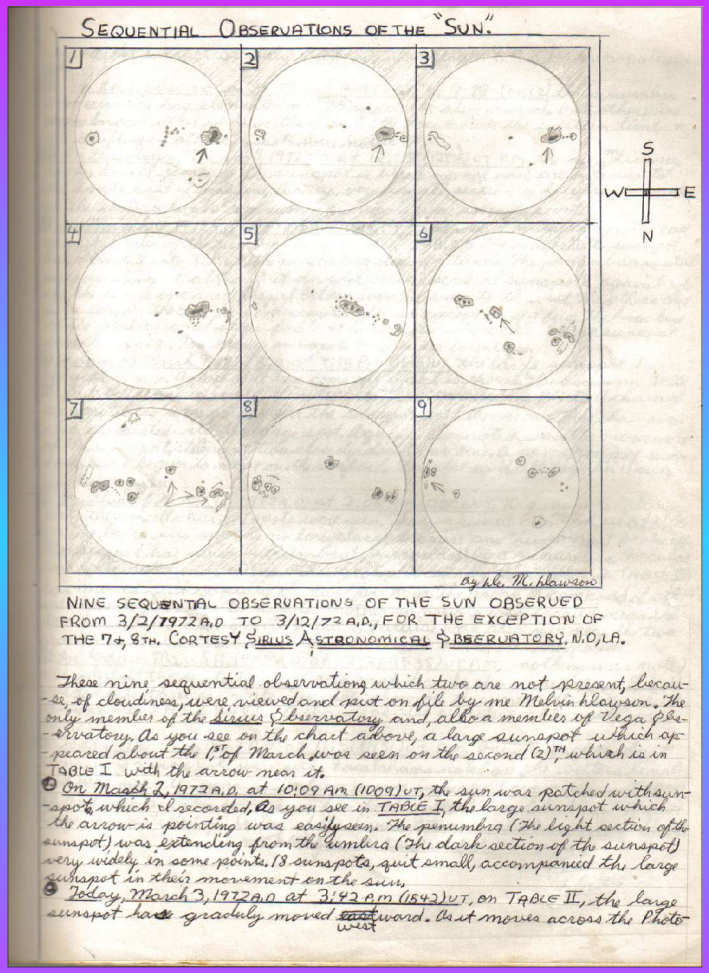

SEQUENTIAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE "SUN."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

S W E N

by Mr. M. Hawson

NINE SEQUENTIAL OBSERVATIONS OF THE SUN OBSERVED FROM 3/2/1972 A.D TO 3/12/72 A.D., FOR THE EXCEPTION OF THE 7TH, 8TH. CORTESY SIRIUS ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORY, N.O, LA.

These nine sequential observations which two are not present, because of cloudiness, were viewed and sketched on file by me Melvin Hawson. The only member of the Sirius Observatory and also a member of Vega Observatory. As you see on the chart above, a large sunspot which appeared about the 1st of March was seen on the second (2)TH which is in TABLE I with the arrow near it.

② On March 2, 1972 A.D at 10:09 A.M (1009) UT, the sun was spotted with sunspots which I recorded, As you see in TABLE I, the large sunspot which the arrow is pointing was easily seen. The penumbra (The light section of the sunspot) was extending from the umbra (The dark section of the sunspot) very widely, in some points. 18 sunspots, quit small, accompanied the large sunspot in their movement on the sun.

③ Today, March 3, 1972 A.D at 3:42 P.M (1542) UT, on TABLE II, the large sunspot has gradually moved ~~east~~ westward. As it moves across the Photosphere, the sunspot gradually stretches and spread out. 9 other sunspots were seen.

③ On this observation of March 4, 1972 A.D at 9:18 (0918) the penumbra and umbra has elongated a little most. It also moved. But otherwise ~~no~~ know other change than a little faculae on the western limb + the shifting of other sunspots were noted.

④ On this day of March 5, 1972 A.D at 12:05 (1205) UT P.M, the large one is very long, small parts of the sunspot is breaking off and are moving to the south west I presume. A very, very small section of faculae was noted on the eastern limb. Too many sunspots were seen to count.

⑤ On March 6, 1972 A.D at 4:01 P.M. (1601) UT, there was faculae seen on the east + west limbs of the sun. And as you see in TABLE 5 the umbra of the sunspot has divided into 3. But, the penumbra did not divide. The penumbra is still surrounding it, although it divided (UMBRA). Several sunspots again broke off the large one and they, I believe, were moving to the west. The others that were seen on the 5th, have dissipated, for an exception of a few. The breakage of the umbra and other facts I have noted above the large sunspot breaking up. Too many sunspots I saw were countless.

⑥ Today, on March 9, 1972 A.D at 4:15 P.M (1615) UT, the large sunspot has reduced in size. A piece of it has come off which is shown by the arrow in TABLE VI. But the umbra is still divided into three consecutive parts. A chain of sunspots also were noted near the sunspot with the arrow. This chain was also associated with the large spot. Again also noted was the movement of the sunspots that past five cloudy days (7TH + 8TH). A new group of sunspots have begun to move on the surface. Faculae and all together 11 sunspot were seen.

⑦ On this day of March 10, 1972 A.D at 2:06 P.M. (0206) UT, 10 sunspots plong with the small chain of spots were seen. The sun rise at 6:16 and set at 6:05 P.M. The large sunspot is no longer large because another sunspot broke off. The sunspot has now but 2 umbras, surrounded by a penumbra. Faculae was also noted near it. The other group (Locate by the arrows in TABLE VII) has moved quit rapidly the past few days. The group is composed of about three to five scattered spots. Another sunspots was located near the southwest limb along with faculae. Faculae was also seen near the two groups on the western and eastern limbs. 10 sunspots were noted.

⑧ On Today, March 11, 1972 A.D at 3:38 (1538) UT P.M., nothing was noted except that the one to be large sunspot, has broken again. Now it is divided into three separate sunspots shown on the or near the western limb of the sun on TABLE 8 on VIII. A chain was also seen. Several sunspots were seen.

⑨ Today March 12, 1972 A.D at 11:51 (1151) UT. A.M, only two of the last remaining 3 sunspots were seen. Faculae was noted on the western limb and was near the remains the large group, indicated by a arrow in TABLE IX. And now another new group has took over. I recorded at least 10 quit large sunspots today. Cortesy of the Sirius Astronomical Observatory Nunez in Chief Junior Amateur Astronomer

Melvin Hawson

Sequential Solar observations March1972, by Mel Dawson.

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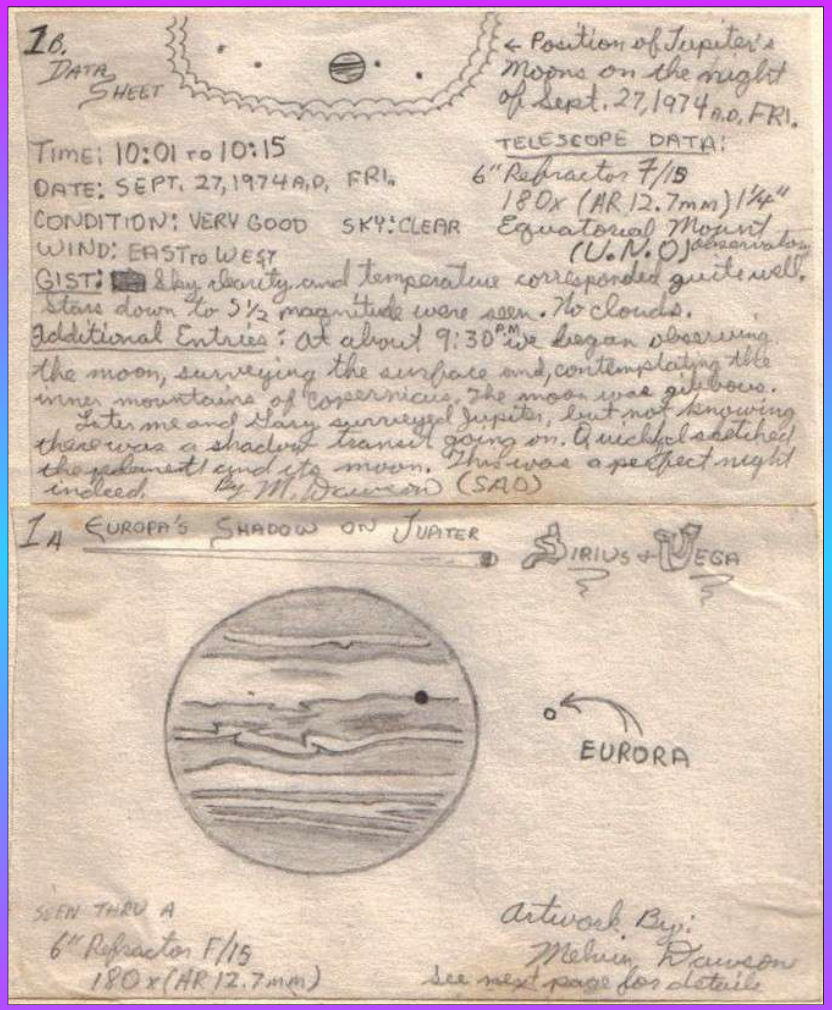

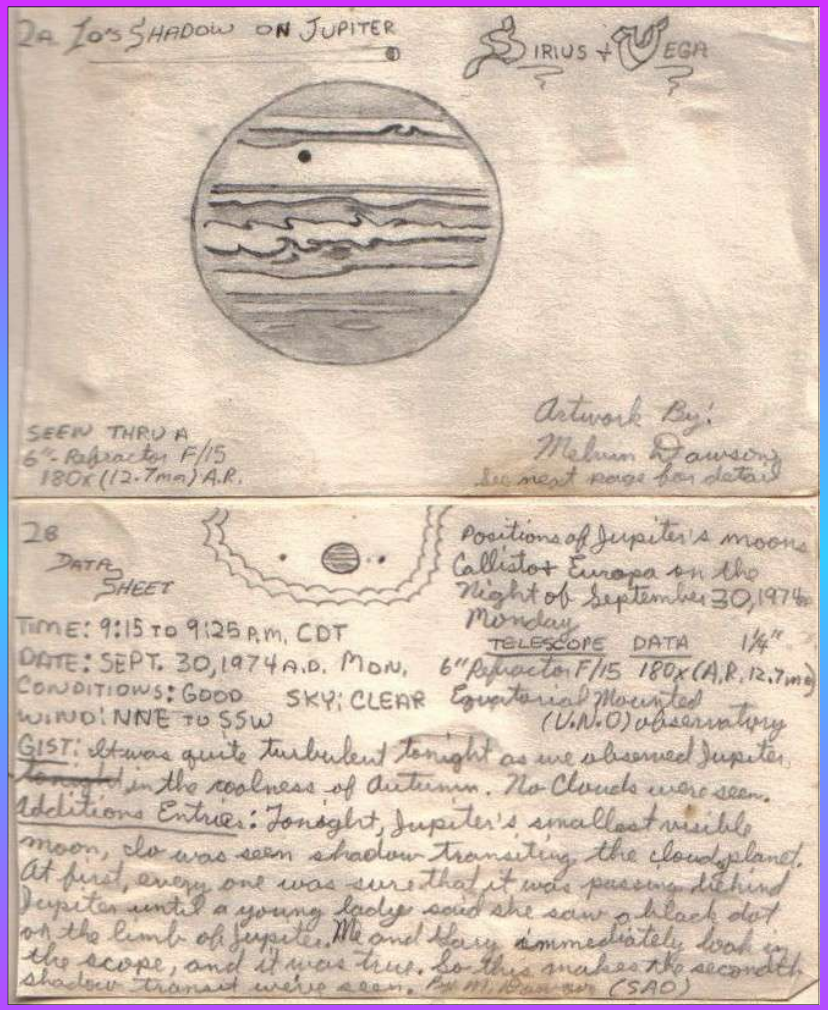

Observation sketches of Jupiter through the UNO 6" f/15 Refractor in September 1974, by Mel Dawson.

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A blast from the past. Photos scanned from Gary's Vega Astronomical Journals prior to Hurricane Katrina.

A Joint Pontchartrain Astronomical Society/ Vega Sky Center Presentation – by Gary Barabino

New VSC Equipment

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY – THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Antares 12” f/5 Dobsonian obtained December 20, 2005

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY – THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Konus 6" f/8 Refractor purchased May 5, 2006.

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8" Konus f/5 Newtonian Reflector and 80mm guidescope/ finder.

Future Projects

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Proposed Coulter 14.5" f/7 Newtonian on English Fork Mount.

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Fork Mount for future 8" f/5.5 Newtonian project.

The VSC's Observer's Data Sheet

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Vega Sky Center

OBSERVER'S DATA SHEET

© Vega Sky Center – November, 2006

DATE - LOCATION - TIME - OBSERVER

Date: 1/8/07 | Location/ Lat-Lon:

Time (UT): Start: | Stop: | Time (Standard/ Daylight): Start: 4:30P Stop: 4:45P.

Observer(s): G. Barabino

WEATHER

		Weather Notes
Temperature (Fahrenheit and/ or Celsius):	72°	
Wind Speed (0-None, 1-Light, 2-Moderate, 3-Brisk):	1	clear skies with light wind
Wind Direction:	N	
Sky Conditions (0-Clear, 1-Partly Cloudy, 2-Mostly Cloudy):	0	
Seeing (0-Excellent, 1-Very Good, 2-Good, 3-Fair, 4-Poor):	2	

OBSERVING EQUIPMENT

Telescope		Accessories	
Diameter: 80mm	Focal Ratio: F/ f/11	Barlow: X	Filter: BAADER (2")
Brand/ Model (if applicable): Cosmos		Other:	
Optical Design: Refractor		Photo Equipment	
Eyepiece		Make/ Model of Camera:	
Focal Length: 20mm	Size Diameter: H20mm	Type:	Film:
Brand: Celestron	Type: Huygenian	F/Stop: F/	Shutter Speed:
Power: 25 X	F.O.V: 45° Eye Relief: —	ISO:	Exposure:

OBJECT DATA

Name of Object: Sol | Classification of Object: Sun

Position (Constellation, RA and Dec):

Magnitude(s): -26.7 | Angular Diameter:

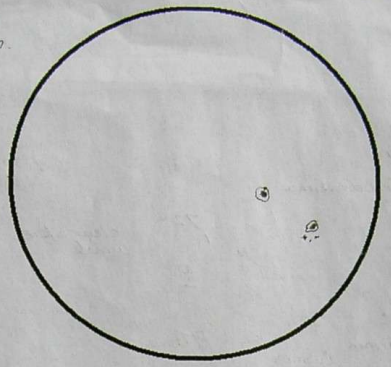
OBSERVER'S NOTES

Sun view on rear seam as sol was getting low; however, still saw good detail in the two spots. Doc Dawson says that these are like magnets one is positive the other is negative. Decent granulation detected, especially in and around the spots.

VSC – http://www.vega-sky-center.com - Telescopic and/ or Photographic Images to be place on back of this page. **Page 1 of 2**

DATE: 1/8/07
TIME: UT 21h45m COMPLETED

PAGE 2



TELESCOPIC OBSERVATION

3½" 80mm Cosmos Refractor H20mm then switched to OR 9mm. Very Nice view. Solar - BAADER FILTER USED - NO PROJECTION

PHOTOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION

The January 8th 2007 Sun observation by Gary Barabino using the new VSC Observer's Data Sheet.

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

Vega Sky Center

OBSERVER'S DATA SHEET

© Vega Sky Center – November, 2006

DATE - LOCATION - TIME - OBSERVER

Date: 11-08-2006 | Location/ Lat-Lon: Riverview, FL

Time (UT): Start: 10:09 PM Stop: 10:25 PM | Time (Standard/ Daylight): Start: 5:09PM Stop: 5:25 PM

Observer(s): Melvin Dawson, Trever Dawson, + Gelinda Dawson + Jarvis D

WEATHER

Temperature (Fahrenheit and/ or Celsius): 71° F	**Weather Notes**
Wind Speed (0-None, 1-Light, 2-Moderate, 4-Brisk): 3.0	Mild gusty wind periodically shook the telescope, which hampered a bit. Sun was setting with small cumulus clouds passing over it.
Wind Direction: WNW + NW	
Sky Conditions (0-Clear, 1-Partly Cloudy, 2-Mostly Cloudy): 1	
Seeing (0-Excellent, 1-Very Good, 2-Good, 3-Fair, 4-Poor): 1	

OBSERVING EQUIPMENT

Telescope		Accessories	
Diameter: 3.5" (90mm)	Focal Ratio: F/ 11.1	Barlow: — X	Filter: Baader AstroFilm
Brand/ Model (if applicable): Konus / Konusmotor 90		Other: —	
Optical Design: Refractor (Prime Focus)		**Photo Equipment**	
Eyepiece		Make/ Model of Camera: —	
Focal Length: 40mm	Size Diameter: 1.25"	Type: —	Film: —
Brand: Serie 5000	Type: Plossl	F/Stop: F/ —	Shutter Speed: —
Power: 25 X	F.O.V: 43° Eye Relief: 12mm	ISO: —	Exposure: —

OBJECT DATA

Name of Object: Transit of Mercury | Classification of Object: Sun (star) + Planet

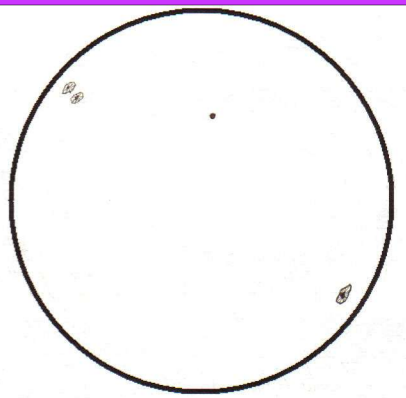
Position (Constellation, RA and Dec):

Magnitude(s): | Angular Diameter:

OBSERVER'S NOTES

"To Cominate the end of an awesome photographic session of the transit of mercury, I decided to sketch the rare occurrence thru my 90mm. The sun was about 5° degrees above the horizon and shimmered in the field of view. Mercury appeared strikingly well against the sun and had just past "Greatest Transit" as it continued its trek moving to the northwest. Also of noted was a decent sized sunspot at the north west edge of the sun, making its debut. There were also two other small sunspots near the southeast edge preparing to traverse to the other side of the sun. Periodic moments of stability allowed me to see the suns granulation along with splashes of faculae around the sunspots. Brief moments of fast moving clouds temporarily obscured the view - puffy.....
I only hope now that my photos came out well. An exposé of the best shots will be placed on the VSC's website for all to see. This was my first transit in over 36 years of observing the heaven. I only pray it isn't my last.

VSC http://www.vega-sky-center.com - Telescopic and/ or Photographic Images to be place on back of this page. **Page 1 of 2**



TELESCOPIC OBSERVATION

PHOTOGRAPHIC OBSERVATION

VSC – http:// www.vega-sky-center.com -- Telescopic and/ or Photographic Images to be place on back of this page. **Page 2 of 2**

The November 8th 2006 Mercury Transit observation by Mel Dawson using the new VSC Observer's Data Sheet.

A Joint Pontchartrain Astronomical Society/ Vega Sky Center Presentation – by Gary Barabino

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Mel Dawson with his 10" f/5.6 Fork Mounted Newtonian (featured in ATT) at the FarrOut Observatory in Dade City, FL. He also built a Afocal Digital Camera Adapter as used to capture this close-up moon photo through his 90mm f/11.1 Refractor.

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Website of the VSC

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

The home page of the Vega Sky Center's Astronomical Web Hub.
Mel Dawson is the Webmaster for the site.

http://www.vega-sky-center.com

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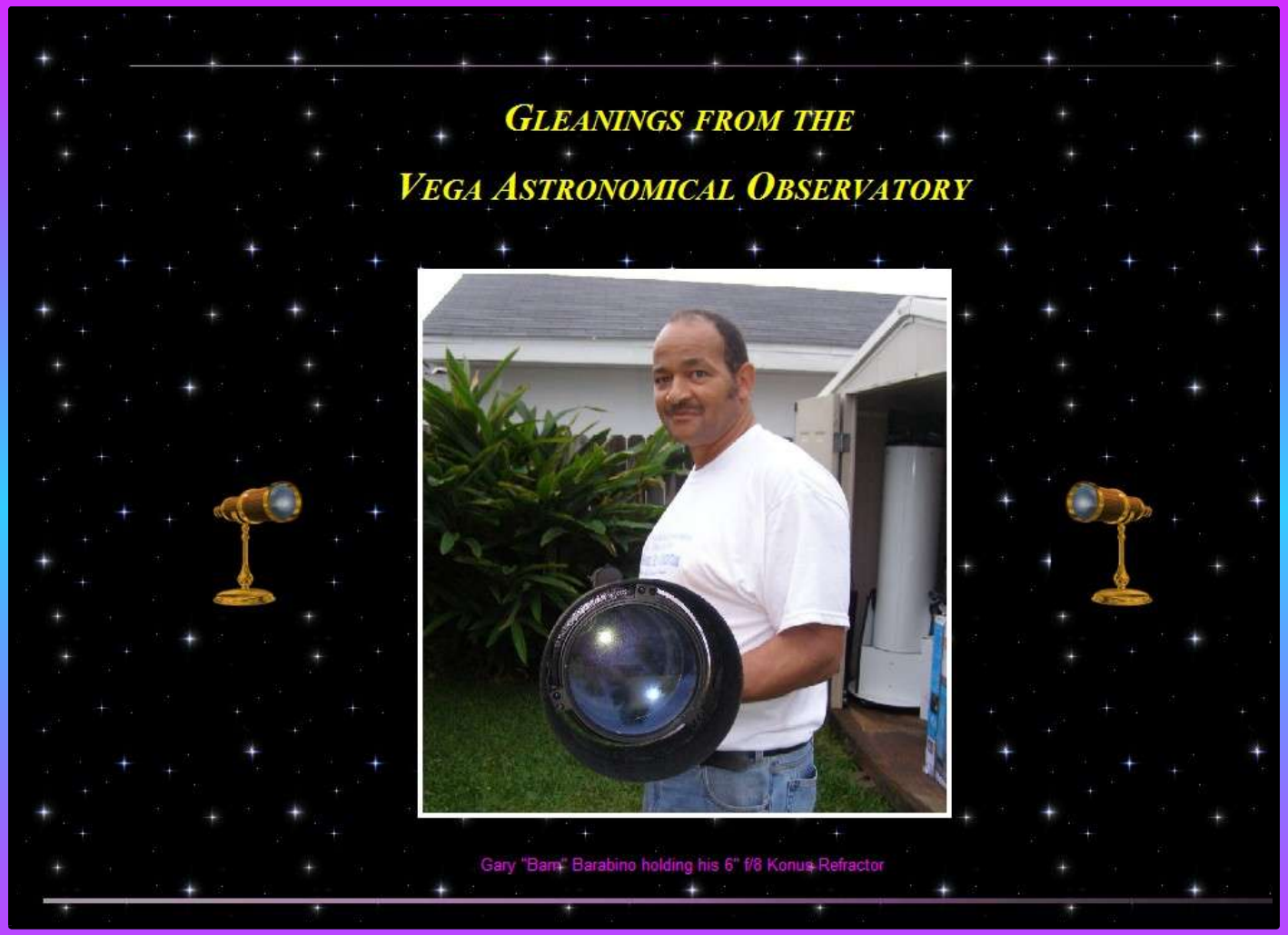

My webpage showing me with my Konus 6" f/8 Refractor.
http://www.vega-sky-center.com/index_vao.html

THE VEGA OBSERVATORY - THE KATRINA EXPERIENCE

I want to thank the PAS for giving me the privilege of delivering this presentation to our fellow members.

I also would like to acknowledge and give thanks to Mel Dawson of Riverview, FL for providing his assistance in putting this presentation together.

Please check out our Astronomical web hub at:

www.Vega-Sky-Center.com

Thank You, and Clear Skies, Forever !!!

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