

Nov. 25. 1966

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Dear Mr. Harris:

Your letter of the 17th. was forwarded to me here and it just arrived. I am very glad to hear from you and I have been trying to get over there to see all the wonders of those new wonderful telescopes but have had many things keep me busy and did not get aroud (sic) to it yet but now that your letter is here it gives me more interest in visiting those wonderful instruments than ever.

I am going to visit Cave also on my next trip to the south.

Carpenter was very much interested in the craters on Mars being shown on the satelite (sic) pictures because I had told him of my seeing them in 1915 and as no one else had ever seen them, most people thought I must have been mistaken. Carpenter had been telling many people in the past 20 or 30 years about my seeing the craters in 1915 and some of the people thought I must have been mistaken.

There are some drawings of Mars that I will show you when I come that may be of real value in the next serries (sic) of pictures of Mars taken with future satelites. (sic)

One thing that I am stuck on is that the morning I saw all those craters and mountains I saw very plainly , one crater 200 miles or about that diameter and very deep . It looked to me as if it were three or four miles deep and it was very circular.

Some of the mountain peaks had white on top as if they were covered on the tips with snow. or lime, or quartz. at least some white bright substance.

I had the position of that large crater marked on my map but it got burned up in a fire that burned down my shop and put me put (sic) of business completely. Which I am not sorry about as I am 81 and do not need to work any more.

I was very sorry to loose my drawings of Mars that gave the location of that large deep crater but when I get there we may be able to locate it from my drawings I do have.

Another interesting thing is that in 1913 I made some mirrors and filters for R.W. Wood of John Hopkins university with which he xxxxxxxx photographed deposits of sulphur on the moon and I had prints of the pictures. He tested the sulphur deposits by sprinkling sulphur on rocks and photographing them and got the same results as the pictures of patches of the same hue on the moon by using the same filters.

I can not tell now just where the large craters on Mars is but I am sure we can get its location figured when I get there.

When I dhowed (sic) Barnard my drawings he showed me the ones he made of Mars in 1892-3 when mars was close but he did not see any craters as craters but he did have circular patches which we took to be areas of woods or some kind of vegetation.

When I saw those craters Mars was very far from the earth and very high in the sky and it was after sun rise but the light gathering (*sic*) power of the 40" refractor was so great that Mars was very bright with the Sun an hour or more above the horizon.

I believe the date was Nov. 13. 1915 but I am not sure of it and that is why I want to have some one like you take an interest in trying to find the exact date so we can get its exact position for further pictures of Mars.

When the pictures showed craters on Mars they called me on the phone to tell me I had been proven true after 50 years.

The so called canals on Mars have been a very much disputed subject and in the early 1940s I showed Porter and three others a very dark so-called canal on mars and it was so very straight and dark it was very distinct and no one ever seen one before.

Now with what we know of Mars I am wondering what it was we saw. This was with a 16" reflector. power 460. and 650/

My best views of Mars was from Nov. 1st. to Dec. 15th. but my records were lost and I can not tell what date gave the best view of the craters.

Of course the best time to see those craters would be when Mars is north of the sun so it would be as high as possible in the sky at sunrise or sunset. and as far from opposition as possible.

It seems to me that mars must have been ignored by all observers when it was situated favorably for the craters to be seen.

I used to observe Mars very carefully (*sic*) whenever it was in a favorable position for many years. from 1923 to 1956 when I sold my 16" reflecting telescope and was just getting ready to make myself a 30" or some such size and then my house and shop burned and I lost everything I had. I had lived and worked in fireproff (*sic*) buildingd (*sic*) for over 50 years and had forgotten that there was any danger of fire.

I got the insurance but considered I was too old to start over from scratch ,making tools and everything and I just retired.

In the years from 1934 to 1950 I used to spend quite a lot of time in the mountains south east of Tucson just rambling around and ofyen (*sic*) thought it would be a wonderful place for a telescope. And I had a 5" refractor with me.

Sincerely yours.

John E. Mellish  
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