

Cosmic Brush Paints Chicago Sky with Light

For the second successive night Chicagoans saw a vast curtain of shimmering pale green light against the northern sky last evening. Upward from the banks of light streamed trailers, splashed as suddenly on the darkness as if they had been shot from a paint gun, to fade finally in the vault of night.

The aurora borealis, or northern lights, was playing one of its performances, rare to Chicago. The last time the display was visible here was several months ago, but last night's was one of the most brilliant spectacles within memory. The first show, just before dawn yesterday, was seen by only a few persons. The return engagement was hardly missed by any one.

Believe Sun Particles Are Cause.

The aurora borealis apparently is caused by stray electrified particles, thrown off by the sun, which are drawn into the earth's atmosphere by the magnetic field. The upper regions of the atmosphere become negatively charged and a considerable voltage is set up. It is the discharge of this electricity thru the rarefied air that produces the aurora.

The light given off has been split up into its individual wave lengths, which have been identified as characteristic emissions of the various gases that make up the air.

Most scientists believe the aurora borealis is a manifestation of sun spots which cause the magnetic storm. Altho Chicagoans witnessed the spectacle with curiosity, awe, and delight, communications companies were not so pleased.

Blacks Out Radio, Telephone.

Wireless and telephone facilities from Europe and Asia were badly disrupted. A broadcast of the Dodger-Pirates baseball game was blacked out for 15 minutes as land lines were hit.

Telegraph companies said their service was affected seriously north of the Ohio river and east of the Mississippi. Telephone service in Chicago appeared to be normal, if the calls that flowed into the Tribune switchboard are a criterion. Most callers told of the display or asked what it was.

Suburban police reported roads tied up in many areas because of thousands of motorists who drove out of the city and parked in the highways to get a clearer view of the sky display.

According to scientific reckoning, the maximum of the current sun spot cycle should have been passed three years ago. The cycles come in periods of eleven years.