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The Highest Energy Cosmic Rays: Some Historical Thoughts

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Abstract content

This lecture honors the discoverer of cosmic rays nearly 100 years ago. Research on cosmic rays spawned the entire field of particle physics which in the early 50's shifted to accelerators as marked by the famous conference at Bagnères de Bigorres. Remaining to investigate were all the astrophysical aspects of cosmic rays which has been the principal subject of the ICRC meetings ever since. One of the most fascinating and least understood topics is the existence of cosmic rays of enormous energy. Pierre Auger in 1938 demonstrated the existence of cosmic rays with energies in excess of 10^{15} eV. In 1962 John Linsley observed a cosmic ray with an energy of 10^{20} eV. In this lecture I will trace the efforts to understand how Nature produces this extraordinary phenomenon. Having only recently joined this effort I approach the subject with great humility. In reviewing the past one is impressed with the ingenuity and courage of all individuals who have participated in this adventure.

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Summary

Reference

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