TRACING OF INTERNAL LAYERS IN RADAR ECHOGRAMS
FROM A GREENLAND STUDY REGION

A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science

by
XIN GAO

Dr. Justin Legarsky, Thesis Supervisor

AUGUST 2006
The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

TRACING OF INTERNAL LAYERS IN RADAR ECHOGRAMS
FROM A GREENLAND STUDY REGION

Presented by Xin Gao

A candidate for the degree of Master of Science

And hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

______________________________
Dr. Justin Legarsky

______________________________
Dr. Dominic Ho

______________________________
Dr. Kathleen Trauth
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thanks to my advisor Dr. Legarsky for his guidance, supervision and valuable suggestions. He was always available to answer my questions, teach me the research skill, and share his invaluable ideas with me. Moreover, I cannot thank him enough for the time and patience he spent on revising my thesis. Without his support, I could not have accomplished this.

I would like to thank Dr. Trauth and Dr. Ho for being on my thesis committee and for their effort in reviewing my thesis. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Trauth for the valuable suggestions on my thesis writing and really appreciate the comments Dr. Ho made on my thesis.

I am greatly thankful to my friends, Yonghong Li and Heng Huang for their help during my study.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my loving parents as well as my husband for their constant support and encouragement.
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TRACING OF INTERNAL LAYERS IN RADAR ECHOGRAMS FROM A GREENLAND STUDY REGION

Xin Gao

Dr. Justin Legarsky, Thesis Supervisor

ABSTRACT

Signs of long-term glaciological processes and past ice sheet structure are preserved in the internal layer signatures of the Greenland ice sheet. Internal layer data have been collected over a considerable portion of the Greenland ice sheet using ice-sounding radar. We traced these layers along thousands of kilometers of flight lines from the ice divide toward Jakobshavn, which is the most active glacier in Greenland. We determined the traced-radar layers age at the GRIP site using the GRIP core age-depth relationship. Since the depth varies spatially for a layer of a specific dated age, an age-depth relationship for each position along the flight lines of this study can be found using the traced layers. We analyzed 31 points where flight lines crossover one another. From the flight line crossover analysis, we found a 9 m maximum difference, which is less than a 1% difference.
Chapter 1 Introduction

1.0 Polar Ice Sheets

Ice sheets were mainly formed from layers of snow that were compressed together for many thousands of years. They cover about 10 percent of the Earth's land area, and interact with the Earth’s atmosphere and oceans to influence the global climate system. Therefore, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) started a polar research project in support of a global climate study in 1991. About 70 percent of the earth’s surface is covered with water and the remaining parts are covered by the continental landmasses. Water exists in the natural environment in many forms, such as snow and ice. At high elevations and/or high latitudes, snow that falls to the ground can gradually condense to form thick consolidated ice masses called glaciers. Glaciers, large, thickened masses of ice, accumulate from snowfall over long periods of time. Rising temperatures can shrink polar glaciers and lead to sea level rise. Worldwide measurements from tidal gauges indicate that global mean sea level has risen between 10 and 25 cm (18 cm average) during the last 100 years [Dahl-Jensen, 2000]. The estimated rate of sea level rise over the last century has been on the order of 1-2 mm/yr [Church, 2001]. The contribution of all mountain glaciers to rising sea levels during the last century is estimated to be 0.2 to 0.4 mm/year [Meier, 1984; Zuo et al., 1997; Dyurgerov et al., 1997].
Even small amounts of sea-level rise would have substantial societal and economic impacts through coastal flooding, increased susceptibility to storm surges, groundwater contamination by salt intrusion, and other effects. A 50-cm sea-level rise could inundate up to 50% of North American coastal wetlands [Shriner and Street, 1998]. The costs of responding to it are estimated at between $20 and $200 billion in the United States alone [Shriner and Street, 1998]. Therefore, finding the changing information of current ice sheets is important for the overall picture of their role in sea level rise.

The Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets are the largest ice sheets on the earth. The Greenland and Antarctica ice sheets cover 10% of the Earth’s land area and contain 77% of the world’s freshwater [Khazenie and Price, 1994]. The ice sheets comprise 99% of all the glacier ice on earth [Glacier, 2006]. A significant portion of recent sea-level rise is attributed to thermal expansion of the oceans and the melt of the earth’s ice. Both ice sheets contain enough ice to raise sea levels approximately 80 m [Williams and Hall, 1993] (see Table 1-1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ice sheet</th>
<th>Volume (km$^3$)</th>
<th>Percent of world ice (%)</th>
<th>Maximum surface elevations (m)</th>
<th>Potential maximum sea level rise (m)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antarctica</td>
<td>30,109,800</td>
<td>91.5</td>
<td>&gt;4200</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenland</td>
<td>2,600,000</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>&gt;3000</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1-1. Estimated potential maximum sea-level rise from the total melting of the current Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets**
1.1 Ice Sheet Mass Balance

An ice sheet gains mass through snow and ice accumulation, and loses mass from glacier discharge and melting of surface ice and floating ice shelves. The difference between the ice gain and loss is called the mass balance. A negative balance contributes to global sea-level rise and vice versa. Mass balance may vary seasonally and annually due to different loss and gain. It is determined by the annual precipitation, ablation, drainage at the edges, and iceberg calving. Each year about 8 mm (0.3 inches) of water from the entire surface of the oceans goes into the Antarctica and Greenland ice sheets as snowfall [Legates, 2006]. The changing mass of the great ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica represents the largest unknown in predictions of global sea-level rise over the coming decades.

1.1.1 Greenland Ice Sheet

The Greenland ice sheet would raise global sea level by about 7 m if it melted completely [Gregory et al., 2004]. It gains mass through snowfall and loses it by surface melting and runoff to the sea, together with the production of icebergs and melting at the base of its floating ice shelves. In recent years, some important changes of the Greenland glaciers have been observed. First, the floating ice shelves of several outlet glaciers have broken up [Joughin et al., 2004]. Second, the flow rates of a number of glaciers have approximately doubled over the past 5 years or so [Joughin et al., 2004]. These effects cause more ice discharge, which increases the mass deficit of the ice sheet from a little
more than 50 km³/year to in excess of 150 km³/year [Rignot, 2006]. The behavior of these outlet glaciers influences the mass balance of the ice sheet.

Jakobshavn (pronounced “yah-cub-SA-H-ven”) glacier is a fast moving glacier, draining 6.5 percent of Greenland's ice sheet area [Allen et al., 1997]. Its discharge of ice has nearly doubled since late 2000. The ice stream's speed-up and near-doubling of ice flow from land into the ocean has increased the rate of sea level rise by about 0.06 millimeters (about .002 inches) per year, or roughly 4 percent of the 20th century rate of sea level increase [Joughin et al., 2004]. Therefore, the ice sheets can respond rather dramatically and quickly to climate changes.

1.1.2 PARCA

To determine whether the Greenland ice sheet mass is increasing or decreasing and how this will affect the global sea level, Program for Arctic Regional Climate Assessment (PARCA) was started in 1991 and formally initiated by NASA to measure the elevation and thickness of the Greenland ice sheet [Gogineni et al., 2001].

PARCA conducts a variety of tasks including [Thomas et al., 2001]:

1. Ice thickness and ice surface motion measurements along the same flight lines using Airborne Radar Measurements;

2. Periodic airborne laser-altimetry surveys along precise repeat tracks across all major ice drainage basins;
3. Deducing recent climate history, atmospheric chemistry, and inter annual variability of snow-accumulation rates by detecting shallow ice cores (10 - 200 meters) at many locations;

4. Investigating individual glaciers and ice streams responsible for much of the outflow from the ice sheet; and,

5. Continuously monitoring of crustal motion using Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers at coastal sites.

1.2 Past Climate Record from Ice Cores

The Greenland ice sheet provides a record of the climate covering the previous tens of thousands of years, both chemically (e.g., isotope and particle data) and physically (e.g., in the layering structure of the ice) [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. Layers of snow different in chemistry and texture, fall over the ice sheets throughout each year. Inasmuch the ice forms from the incremental buildup of annual layers of snow, lower layers are older than upper layers. Each layer gives scientists a great amount of useful information about the climate each year. The properties of the ice can then be used to reconstruct a climatic record [Fahnestock et al., 2001].

1.2.1 Ice Core and Internal Layers

The ice cores can provide an annual record of temperature, precipitation, atmospheric composition, volcanic activity, and wind patterns. The thickness of each annual layer is
an indicator of how much snow accumulated at that location during the year. More importantly, the make-up of the snow itself can tell scientists about past temperatures [Fahnestock et al., 2001].

The climate history may be recovered by drilling deep cores in the ice [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. An ice core is a core sample of ice removed from an ice sheet, most commonly from the polar ice caps of Antarctica, Greenland or from high mountain glaciers elsewhere. As a deep ice core may contain ice formed hundreds of thousands of years ago, it provides a vertical timeline of past climates stored in ice sheets and mountain glaciers. Ice cores have been drilled in many locations around the world. Deep cores from Greenland and Antarctica and shorter cores from minor ice caps and glaciers have recorded annual and decadal climate change back to the last interglacial. The Greenland Ice Core Project (GRIP) and Greenland Ice Sheet Project (GISP) cores, each about 3000 m long, were drilled by European and US teams, respectively on the summit of Greenland. Ice cores provide chemical and isotopic records that can be used to determine the age-depth relationship. Many different approaches may be used such as chemical analysis, physical analysis and ice flow modeling [Dansgaard and Johnsen, 1969; Johnsen et al., 1997]. The isochronous nature of internal ice-sheet layers in radar data can be used to correlate age-depth relationships between ice-core sites [Siegert et al., 1998].

A modern ice-sounding radar (ISR) system has been widely accepted and used as an effective technique to determine ice thickness and the depth distribution of internal ice
layers [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. ISR has been flown over Greenland to collected ice-sounding data for the NASA PARCA Program [Tee et al., 1998]. A large amount of flight tracks (more than 100,000 km) were collected by the University of Kansas (KU) ISR from 1993 to 2002 [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. The internal layers in the ice sheet detected from ISR have been observed to be isochronous and relatively coherent along hundreds of kilometers [Jacobel and Hodge, 1995]. A recent method including cross-correlation and peak-following techniques [Fahnestock et al., 2001] has been developed to trace internal ice layers starting from the flight line through the GRIP site and across the ice sheet. Knowledge of the age-depth relationship over large spatial area can be established using GRIP ice core age-depth relationship.

1.3 Study Focus

This study analyzed the internal ice layers measured by ISR from the ice divide toward the Jakobshavn region. The Fahnestock et al. [2001] method is used to trace the internal layers from about 4000 km worth of flight lines. The ages of these layers are determined according to information from the GRIP ice core site. These ages are extended along the flight lines in the study area.
1.4 References


Chapter 2 Radar and Ice Core Data

2.0 Introduction

In our study, internal ice sheet layers were traced and dated using radar sounding data and ice core data from Greenland. The radar data were collected by the University of Kansas using the coherent radar depth sounder [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. The ice core data were collected and analyzed by the GRIP participants [Johnsen et al., 1997].

2.1 Coherent Ice Sounding Radar

Since 1991, the NASA PARCA has sought to accurately estimate the mass balance of the Greenland ice sheet using ground, airborne, and spaceborne measurements. The initial airborne program consisted of a laser altimeter for measuring surface elevation of the ice sheet along selected flight lines. In 1993, the airborne instrumentation suite was expanded to include a radar depth sounder to collect the ice thickness data [Gogineni et al., 2001]. The radar uses pulse compression techniques and coherent integration to obtain the high sensitivity required to measure the thickness of more than 4 km of cold ice [Gogineni et al., 2001]. These systems have been used to collect radar data over the interior and margins of the ice sheet and several outlet glaciers. Advanced signal processing techniques are applied to the radar data. Synthetic-aperture radar (SAR) processing for depth sounding radars [Legarsky et al., 2001] improves the along-track resolution and allows the measurement of ice thickness (> 4 km in cold ice).

The radar system operates at a center frequency of 150 MHz. The radar characteristics and coherent processing system result in a depth resolution of about 4.5 m,
assuming a value of 1.78 for the ice index of refraction [Gogineni et al., 2001; Tee et al., 1999; Fletcher, 1970]. Separate transmit and receive antennas are mounted beneath the left and right wings of the P-3 aircraft platform, with each antenna being a four-element, half-dipole array. The transmitter generates a frequency modulated (chirped) pulse over a bandwidth of 17 MHz with duration of 1.6 \( \mu \)s, using a surface acoustic wave (SAW) expander. It has a peak power of 200 W. The receiver, protected by a blanking switch during transmits events, compresses the received signal using a SAW filter to a pulse about 60 ns wide. The radar transmitter and receiver are mounted in a rack inside the aircraft and connected to their respective antennas with 20 m-long RF cables and a feed network with a combined loss of about 3 dB. The effective transmit power at the antenna is about 100 W [Gogineni et al., 2001].

The received signal is filtered, amplified, compressed and detected by a low-noise receiver with an overall gain of about 100 dB. The coherent system converts the received signal to baseband in-phase (I) and quadrature (Q) analog outputs. I and Q components of the return signal from the coherent detector are digitized and integrated by two 12-bit A/D converters sampling at a rate of 18.75 MHz. The hardware digital signal processor (DSP) allows for averaging of complex amplitudes (I + j Q) and/or averaging of power (\( I^2 + Q^2 \)) before storing on a computer hard disk. Also, the on-board GPS receiver collects aircraft positional data [Gogineni et al., 1998; Gogineni et al., 2001].

2.2 Parameters Associated with PARCA Radar

Table 2-1 lists a summary of the KU ISR system parameters.
Table 2-1. A summary of the KU ISR system parameters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Parameter</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Radar center frequency</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>MHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmitted bandwidth</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>MHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal aircraft altitude</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radar type</td>
<td>Pulse Compression</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transmitted pulse duration</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>μs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed pulse duration, $t_{pw}$</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/D sampling rate, $f_{AD}$</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>MHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak transmit power</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulse repetition frequency (PRF)</td>
<td>Selectable</td>
<td>Hz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/D dynamic range</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>dB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index of refraction for ice, $\eta_{ice}$</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antenna type</td>
<td>4-element dipoles array</td>
<td>- -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range sample spacing (per pixel in ice)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.1 Radar Center Frequency

The radar system is designed to operate at a center frequency of 150 MHz. The choice of an appropriate frequency is constrained by the absorption of the electromagnetic waves in ice. VHF frequencies are preferred since the absorption is smaller at these frequencies than microwaves, whereas antennas are smaller and resolution can be better than for lower frequencies [Raju et al., 1990].

2.2.2 Dielectric Constant for Ice

The dielectric constant is the ratio of the electrical conductivity of a dielectric material to free space. The dielectric constant for ice depends on the composition and...
structure of the ice. Figure 2-1 schematically shows the dielectric constant of pure ice as a function of frequency. The dielectric constant \( \varepsilon_{\text{ice}} \) is approximately 3.17 over a large frequency range from 10 MHz to 1000 GHz [Lamb and Turney, 1949; Fletcher, 1970]. The index of refraction, \( n_{\text{ice}} \), is related to the dielectric constant over the microwave region as \( \varepsilon_{\text{ice}} = n_{\text{ice}}^2 \). Thus, the index of refraction for ice would be about 1.78 [Fletcher, 1970] with an \( \varepsilon_{\text{ice}} \) value of 3.17.

![Figure 2-1. Dielectric constant of ice frequency dependence at -10°C [Fletcher, 1970].](image)

### 2.2.3 Depth Resolution in Ice

The depth resolution in ice is given by [Raju et al., 1990]

\[
R_{r,\text{ice}} = \frac{ct_{\text{pw}}}{2n_{\text{ice}}} 
\]

(2-1)
where \( c \) is the speed of light in a vacuum (~ \( 3 \times 10^8 \) m/s), \( t_{pw} \) is the compressed pulse width, and \( n_{ice} \) is the ice index of refraction. Thus, the depth resolution is about 5 m.

### 2.2.4 Range Sample Spacing

The range sample spacing corresponds to the distance traveled in ice depth from one pixel to the next pixel. It is given by

\[
R_s = \frac{c}{2n_{ice}f_{AD}}
\]

where \( c \) is the speed of light in a vacuum (~ \( 3 \times 10^8 \) m/s), and \( f_{AD} \) is the A/D sampling frequency. Thus, the range sample spacing is about 4.5 m.

### 2.2.5 Radar Data Collection

The PARCA radar system is typically mounted on a NASA P-3 aircraft, which is equipped with a laser altimeter and GPS receiver. As part of PARCA, the NASA P-3 aircraft has flown over the Greenland ice sheet to collect the ice-sounding radar data [Gogineni et al., 2001; Joughin et al., 1996]. The aircraft is usually flown at a 500 m altitude at a speed of about 130 m/s.

Data have been collected over 100,000 km worth of flight lines (see Figure 2-2) [Fahnestock et al., 2001], which covered all major drainage basins and the interior regions in Greenland (e.g., along Greenland’s 2000-m elevation contour and the ice sheet summits around 3200 m thick ice). An extensive data set was also obtained for the Jakobshavn outlet glacier, which is considered to have the highest iceberg production of all Greenland glaciers and is a major drainage outlet for a large portion of the western side of the ice sheet [Joughin et al., 2004]. For this study, we analyzed ISR data from the
ice divide toward Jakobshavn, Greenland. Figure 2-3 illustrates on a Greenland map the flight lines used in this study. The GRIP site is denoted as an asterisk on the map.

Figure 2-2. PARCA flight lines with KU ISR data are illustrated on the Greenland map.
Figure 2-3. Greenland map illustrating the flight lines from the ice divide towards Jakobshavn, Greenland. The location of the Greenland Ice Core Project (GRIP) site is denoted as an asterisk on the map.
2.2.6 Archive Radar Data Format

From the Greenland PARCA missions, radar echograms and ice thickness information are archived on the KU server [Tee et al., 1999]. Figure 2-4 illustrates an example radio echogram. Table 2-2 summarizes the available parameters stored in the archived files.

Figure 2-4. A radio echogram example from the vicinity of the GRIP deep drilling site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File Variable</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Radar Echogram</td>
<td>α Volts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lon</td>
<td>Longitude Coordinate for each radar sample</td>
<td>°W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lat</td>
<td>Latitude Coordinate for each radar sample</td>
<td>°N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>top</td>
<td>Ice surface location for each radar sample</td>
<td>Pixels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bot</td>
<td>Bedrock location for each radar sample</td>
<td>Pixels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Each archive file typically consists of 1000 records (or 1000 stacked A-scopes). The location (i.e., latitude and longitude from GPS) at the time of collection is given for each record. Figure 2-5 shows an example of an A-scope signal. The ice thickness is calculated by multiplying the difference in pixels (between the bottom pixel and top pixel locations) by the range sample spacing (i.e., 4.5 m).

Figure 2-5. An archive A-scope example. The ice thickness is the difference between the ice bottom return value and the ice top return value on the scale shown.

2.3 Ice Core Data

Polar ice cores contain a record of the past atmosphere (e.g., temperature, precipitation, gas content, chemical composition, and other properties). Deep cores from the Greenland ice sheet provide information about the past climate conditions and past environmental conditions. Annual layers from snow deposition can be counted along the
length of the ice core. As snow is compressed to ice near the surface, samples of atmospheric air are trapped as tiny bubbles in the ice. Ancient atmospheres may therefore be studied by analyzing the air in the bubbles. Other characteristics from the past (e.g. temperature, precipitation and storminess) can be estimated by studying the ice and its impurities [Dahl-Jensen et al., 1997; Andersen et al., 2006].

2.3.1 GRIP Ice Core Introduction

The GRIP drilled a 3029 m long ice core from Central Greenland Summit from 1989 to 1992 at the coordinates 72° 35' N, 37° 38' W [Dahl-Jensen et al., 1997]. The GRIP site is denoted as an asterisk in Fig. 2-3. The age of the ice is estimated to be greater than 200,000 years.

2.3.2 GRIP Ice-core Relationship

The GRIP researchers published the age-depth relationship of the GRIP ice core [Johnsen et al., 1997]. Parameters used to date the core include electrical conductivity measurements (ECM), dust, nitrate and ammonium, which all give excellent annual layers. The age-depth relationship data for the ice core are also archived at the National Snow and Ice Date Center in Boulder, Colorado. Figure 2-6 illustrates the age-depth relationship for the GRIP ice core. The timescale is in years before present (yr BP) where year 0 BP refers to the northern hemisphere summer of the year 1950 A.D. Using the ice-layer tracing techniques discussed in the next chapter, we can trace internal layers in the radar data along flight lines in Greenland. Inasmuch as the internal layers are isochronal nature, each internal layer in the radar data at GRIP can be dated using the GRIP ice core age-depth relationship.
Figure 2-6. An age-depth relation plot for the GRIP ice core. Years BP is years before 1950.

2.4 References


Chapter 3 Layer Tracing Methods

3.0 Method Introduction

The internal layering in the ice sheet has been shown to be mainly isochronous and relatively coherent along hundreds of kilometers [Jacobel and Hodge, 1995]. By tracing the layers away from the GRIP site with its reported age-depth relationship, the ages of the layers can be determined far from the GRIP site. The layer tracing process is semi-automatic [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. We traced the internal layers along thousands of kilometers of flight lines from the ice divide towards Jakobshavn. The first step of the processing is the enhancement of each echogram to visually optimize the radio image display. Then, cross-correlation and peak-following techniques are used to trace the internal layers. A diagram of the overall approach (i.e., layer tracing and age identification) is illustrated in Figure 3-1. In this chapter, we mainly discuss the layer tracing methods, which include image preprocessing, layer tracing by peak following, and cross-correlation layer tracing. The typical parameters used in the study is shown in Table 3-1. This chapter also include a discussion of the analysis of flightline crossover points. The ages of the layers are discussed in Chapter 4.

Figure 3-1. A diagram of the layer tracing and layer age identification approach.
Table 3-1. Typical Parameters Used in Study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ice index of refraction</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum no. of bits used in the A/D converter</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>bits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling rate of A/D converter</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>MHz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower pixel in threshold computation window, $x_{nl}$</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>pixels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper pixel in threshold computation window, $x_{nh}$</td>
<td>1024</td>
<td>pixels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peak parameter search pixels about center</td>
<td>+/-2</td>
<td>pixels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation parameter search pixels about center</td>
<td>+/-9</td>
<td>pixels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation parameter reference pattern</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>pixels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1 Image Preprocessing

The purpose of image preprocessing in this study is to optimize the radio image display by applying an exponential normalization [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. Since the strength of the radar return signal diminishes near exponentially with depth due to beam divergence and energy losses in the medium, the return signals from the deeper ice are often weaker than those from the shallower regions. To visually enhance the deeper layers, the image preprocessing consists of three main steps: 1) find an average of the columns of the input image; 2) apply an exponential fit over the desired depth range in ice to the average of all columns; and, 3) normalize the radar echogram using the exponential fit to values above a threshold.

3.1.1 Average of Columns from Input Image

To help identify the layers, which may not be clearly seen, normalized average values of columns from the input image are calculated at the beginning of preprocessing. A radar echogram, $A$, can be described by an $m$ rows by $n$ columns matrix (typically $m$ is 1024 and $n$ is 1024), which is the amplitude of the complex signal (i.e., $A$ equal $\sqrt{I^2 + Q^2}$) where $I$ is the in-phase component and $Q$ is the quadrature component).
A_i is the \textit{i}th column of \( A \), that is

\[
A = \begin{bmatrix}
    a_{1i} & a_{12} & \cdots & a_{1n} \\
    a_{2i} & a_{22} & \cdots & a_{2n} \\
    \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\
    a_{mi} & a_{m2} & \cdots & a_{mn}
\end{bmatrix}.
\] (3-1)

First, \( A_i \) is normalized by the max possible value (e.g., \( 2^{12} \) based on 12-bit analog to digital converter for each channel, \( I \) and \( Q \)) [Gogineni et al., 1998] based on the number of A/D converter bits per channel, \( \text{numbits} \). Thus, each column of the normalized radar echogram is given by

\[
A_{i \text{nor}} = \frac{A_i}{\sqrt{\left(2^{\text{numbits}}\right)^2 + \left(2^{\text{numbits}}\right)^2}}.
\] (3-3)

The normalized average values, \( A_{i \text{na}} \), of \( A_i \) are calculated as

\[
A_{i \text{na}} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^{n} A_{i \text{nor}}.
\] (3-4)

### 3.1.2 Exponential Fit to Average of All Columns

An exponential function is applied to each column of the normalized radar echogram, \( A_{i \text{nor}} \), to visually enhance the deeper layers. An exponential function is fit to the normalized average values, \( A_{i \text{na}} \), over a window of depths (i.e. lowest depth value, \( d_1 \), to the highest depth value, \( d_2 \)). For our study, the depth values of \( d_1 \) and \( d_2 \) are 400 m (89 pixels) and 2000 m (445 pixels), respectively [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. Since the ice surface is not normally at a row 1 or a constant row, the ice surface reference is determined by calculating the average value of the top pixel locations \( x_{\text{top avg}} \) in the
image. Thus, the exponential fit is determined from the windowed values between the lowest pixel number, \( x_{lf} \), and highest pixel number, \( x_{hf} \), in relationship to the surface as

\[
x_{lf} = x_{top\ avg} + \frac{d_1}{4.5},
\]

\[
x_{hf} = x_{top\ avg} + \frac{d_2}{4.5}.
\]

Thus, the exponential fit will be applied to windowed values over the pixel range,

\[
x_f = x_{lf}, x_{lf} + 1, \ldots, x_{hf} - 1, x_{hf}.
\]

The exponential and natural logarithm forms are given by the following equations:

\[
A_{\text{exp}}(x_f) = ae^{hx_f},
\]

\[
\ln(A_{\text{lna}}(x_f)) = bx_f + \ln(a).
\]

where \( a \) is the exponential fit amplitude factor and \( b \) is the exponential fit exponent factor.

Inasmuch as the natural logarithm form (Eq 3-9) can be expressed in the slope-intercept form of a line, its slope is \( b \) and its intercept is \( \ln(a) \). Given \( A_{\text{lna}}(x_f) \) and \( x_f \), the exponential fit variables (i.e. \( a \) and \( b \)) are calculated from the slope (i.e., slope equals \( b \)) and intercept (i.e., \( a \) equals \( e^{\text{intercept}} \)).

After expressing indices, \( V_x \), for each column as a vector,

\[
V_x = \begin{bmatrix}
1 \\
2 \\
3 \\
\vdots \\
m
\end{bmatrix}, 
\]

the fit for an average column using the exponential function may be written as,

\[
V_{\text{exp}} = ae^{hv}. 
\]
To remove the average exponential fit from each column, $A_{\text{nor}}$, that is above a threshold, $N_{\text{threshold}}$, the column is divided (i.e. element by element manner) by the $V_{\text{exp}}$; therefore, the normalized and exponential removed radar echogram columns are found as

$$D = A_{\text{nor exp}} = \begin{cases} A_{\text{nor}} & \text{for elements } > N_{\text{threshold}} \\ \frac{A_{\text{nor}}}{V_{\text{exp}}} & \text{for elements } \leq N_{\text{threshold}} \end{cases}$$

(3-12)

where the threshold is defined by the average of the values in the threshold computation window multiplied by $\sqrt{2}$ (i.e., $20 \times \log_{10}(\sqrt{2})$ is about a 3 dB signal-to-noise ratio (SNR))

$$N_{\text{threshold}} = \frac{\sqrt{2}}{(x_{nh} - x_{nl} + 1)} \sum_{x_{nl}}^{x_{nh}} A_{\text{nor}}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (3-13)

Figure 3-2 shows an example of an exponential fit superimposed on a single column. Figure 3-3 illustrates the column with the exponential function applied as in (Eq 3-12) to visually enhance the deeper layers.

Figure 3-2. An example of an exponential fit superimposed on a single column.
3.2 Peak-following Method for Layer Tracing

A reflecting internal layer often manifests as a peak in the vertical profile (i.e. column) from a radar echogram. A layer in a vertical profile is traced horizontally (i.e. along the flightline) throughout the radar echogram. The preprocessing output radar echogram, $D$, may be written as

$$D = \begin{bmatrix}
  d_{11} & d_{12} & \cdots & d_{1n} \\
  d_{21} & d_{22} & \cdots & d_{2n} \\
  \vdots & \vdots & \ddots & \vdots \\
  d_{m1} & d_{m2} & \cdots & d_{mn}
\end{bmatrix}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (3-14)

To begin a layer tracing, we select a point by placing and clicking the cursor on or near a visually observable peak [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. The peaking-following
method is used to search the nearby coordinates in the same column and identify the maximum value (i.e., usually within ±2 pixels). The coordinates \((m, n)\) of the selected point are recorded in position 1 for a peak layer \(p\) (i.e., \(L_{p1}\)) in the peak layer vector, \(L_p\). For the next column, the coordinates \((m, n)\) of the previous selected point are used as the initial guess; moreover, the coordinates for the current column (i.e., \(L_{p2}\)) are found by searching the nearby coordinates in the same column and identifying the maximum value (i.e. usually within ±2 pixels). The same procedure is continued until the coordinates of \(n\)th column (i.e., \(L_{pn}\)) are found. Thus, the peak layer vector, \(L_p\), may be written as

\[
L_p = [L_{p1} \ L_{p2} \ \cdots \ L_{p(n-1)} \ L_{pn}], \tag{3-15}
\]

### 3.3 Cross-correlation Method

To begin a layer tracing, we select a point by placing and clicking the cursor on or near a visually observable peak [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. The cross-correlation method is used to search the nearby coordinates with a window (typically within ±1 pixel of the peak) in the same column and identify the maximum cross-correlation value (i.e., usually within a Hanning multiplied larger window of ±9 pixels). The coordinates \((m, n)\) of the selected point are recorded in position 1 for a cross-correlation layer \(p\) (i.e., \(C_{p1}\)) in the cross-correlation layer vector, \(C_p\). For the next column, the coordinates \((m, n)\) of the previously selected point are used as the initial guess; moreover, the coordinates for the current column (i.e., \(C_{p2}\)) are found by searching the nearby coordinates in the same column and identifying the maximum cross-correlation value (i.e., usually within ±9 pixels).
pixels. The same procedure is continued until the coordinates of \( n \)th column (i.e. \( C_{pn} \)) are found. Thus, the cross-correlation layer vector, \( C_p \), may be written as

\[
C_p = [C_{p1} \ C_{p2} \ \cdots \ C_{p(n-1)} \ C_{pn}].
\]  

(3-16)

Figure 3-4 illustrates an example of a traced layer, in which blue and red lines denote the results using the peak-following and cross-correlation methods, respectively. We visually inspect and choose which one appears to better trace the layer [Fahnestock et al., 2001].

For layer tracing, the peak-following technique is straightforward and effective in areas where a peak is distinctly visible. The correlation technique is more appropriate in situations where the peak fades, but the overall layer pattern still remains preserved [Fahnestock et al., 2001].

---

Figure 3-4. A radio diagram with a traced layer. The blue line and the red line illustrate the result using peak-following and cross-correlation methods, respectively.
3.4 Layer Tracing Implementation

The layer tracing methods were implemented in Matlab. A flow chart of the Matlab implementation is shown in Figure 3-5.

![Flow chart of layer tracing process](image)

**Figure 3-5. Flow chart of layer tracing process**
Graphical-interface-driven Matlab routine software is used to implement the layer tracing process. At the beginning of layer tracing, an image file is loaded and preprocessed. The exponential fit is applied to enhance the deeper layer for layer tracing. The normalized average values of columns from the input image are calculated [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. Each layer is processed horizontally throughout the echogram. The software processes the radio echogram of each file along the flight line using peak-following and cross-correlation techniques.

The layer tracing results are visually inspected to insure the layer trace actually lies on a layer in the radar echogram. An incorrect layer trace can occur for a number of reasons [Fahnestock et al., 2001] (e.g., warmer ice [i.e., increased signal absorption in ice] makes it harder to distinguish the layer from its surrounding environment). If the layer can be seen visually and the layer tracing produces incorrect results, then layer locations are picked by hand (i.e., using the mouse input and spline function in Matlab). Once the layer results reasonably match the visible layer line, the results are saved. Additional visual inspections are discussed in the next section. Figure 3-6 shows an image with five layers, the ice surface and the bedrock in the vicinity of the GRIP deep drilling site.
Figure 3-6. Five internal ice layers of radio echogram from the vicinity of the GRIP deep drilling site are superimposed on a radar echogram along with the locations of the ice surface and bedrock.

3.5 Crossover Point Inspection

A crossover point occurs when flight lines intersect each other. At a crossover point, the top and bottom pixel values may differ for each flight for various reasons (e.g. the aircraft altitude may slightly differ or the time delay is different before the first A/D sample is collected). To inspect the layer tracing results, the radar images at crossover points are shifted such that the ice surfaces for both images are at the same row. The user visually inspects the shifted images to insure that the layer in one image has been traced to the corresponding layer in the second image. An example inspection of the layers at a
crossover point can be seen in Figure 3-7. The yellow line denotes the location of crossover point #1 (37.406°W, 71.704°N).

![Crossover Point 1](image)

**Figure 3-7.** Five ice layers superimposed on radar echogram are shown at crossover point #1.

### 3.6 Flight Line Nearest to GRIP Site

The isochronous nature of the layers and the dating results provided by the GRIP ice core allow us to determine the age-depth relationship in our study area [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. The flight line nearest to the GRIP site is found by calculating the shortest distance between GRIP ice core and each point on the nearby flight lines. To calculate the distance between two points on the earth, the points of spherical coordinate arrays should be transformed to the corresponding points of Cartesian or xyz coordinates. For example, P1 (θ₁, φ₁, R) and P2 (θ₂, φ₂, R) are two points on the earth. θ₁ and θ₂ are longitudes of the corresponding points and φ₁, φ₂, are the latitudes. The unit of the angles is radians.
The Earth is a rough sphere with the average radius of about 6370 km. Figure 3-8 shows $\theta_1$, $\varphi_1$ and $R$ of $P_1$.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3-8.** The mapping from spherical coordinates to three-dimensional Cartesian coordinates is shown.

The xyz coordinates of $P_1$ are found as follows

\[
x_1 = R \cos(\varphi_1) \cos(\theta_1),
\]

(3-17)

\[
y_1 = R \cos(\varphi_1) \sin(\theta_1),
\]

(3-18)

\[
z_1 = R \sin(\varphi_1).
\]

(3-19)

Also, the xyz coordinates of $P_2$ are found as follows

\[
x_2 = R \cos(\varphi_2) \cos(\theta_2),
\]

(3-20)

\[
y_2 = R \cos(\varphi_2) \sin(\theta_2),
\]

(3-21)

\[
z_2 = R \sin(\varphi_2).
\]

(3-22)

The distance, $d_{12}$, between $P_1$ and $P_2$ in the xyz coordinates can be obtained by the following equation.

\[
d_{12} = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2 + (z_2 - z_1)^2}.
\]

(3-23)
The flight line of May 23, 2001 is the closest to the GRIP site. Beginning from this line, the age-depth relationship of all the flight lines in our study area may be found. The total ISR data covers more than 4000 km of flight lines over this region. All these flight lines form an interconnected web over the study area. The flight lines have a total of 31 crossover points. The filenames of the flight lines are listed in Appendix A. The longitudes and latitudes of crossover points can be found in Chapter 4 (see Table 4-1).

3.7 Internal Layer Continuity

To graphically check the internal layer continuity throughout the entire study area, the traced layers are connected with each other based on 11 different long lines. The line numbers are denoted as L1, L2, L3…and L11 as shown in Figure 3-9. The internal layers of L3 are superimposed on the radar echogram given in Figure 3-10. The ice layers are continuously extended from the ice divide to the Jakobshavn region. Based on the continuity of the traced layers and the consistency at the crossover points, the age-depth relationship of these layers can be defined according to the GRIP age-depth relationship discussed in Chapter 2.
Figure 3-9. Long flight lines of study area.
3.8 References


Chapter 4 Processing Results and Discussion

4.0 Introduction

Our study area spans from the Greenland ice divide line toward the Jakobshavn region in order to provide the layer information needed for ice modeler about the Jakobshavn fast-moving outlet. Using a semi-automated software system including preprocessing, cross-correlation and peak-following techniques, the internal layers of these flight lines are traced along the flight line through the GRIP site located at the summit of Greenland, on the ice divide line. The layer continuity and the consistency at the crossover points are checked. The age-depth relationship of internal layers is found using the GRIP age-depth relationship.

4.1 Traced Layers

Figure 4-1 illustrates the larger view of our study area, in which the dotted line and the circle mark denote the ice divide and the GRIP site respectively. The red asterisks denote the crossover points.

We chose to trace five internal layers that are spaced about 1000 yrs in time over study region. They are traceable over the majority of the study site. Using the method discussed in the last chapter, five layers are traced and illustrated in Figure 4-2. The vertical yellow line denotes the GRIP ice core. The ice surface, bedrock, and the five traced internal
layers, are shown on the radar image. The archived files are traced one by one along the flight lines. After the layers of one whole flight line are found, we begin to trace the layers of next flight line from the corresponding crossover points. The traced layers for each flight line can be seen in Appendix B.

Figure 4-1. A portion of Greenland map illustrating the flight line of the study area. The location of the GRIP ice core is denotes as a yellow circle mark. The diamond dotted line illustrates a portion of ice divide. The crossover points are shown as red asterisks on the map.
Figure 4-2. Five internal layers are shown on a radar echogram from nearby GRIP.

4.2 Crossover Point Analysis

We analyzed the 31 flight line crossover points that are found within our study region. The difference in each layer thickness for each crossover location is shown in Table 4-1. Closer to the Jakobshavn region, the deeper layers may become not readily discernable mainly by signal absorption loss through relatively warm ice or melt conditions and by clutter from the crevassed surfaces [Braaten et al., 2002]; therefore, the crossover difference for a number of entries is listed in Table 4-1 as ‘-‘. As the flight lines crossover at many points, we verified the layers consistency at each crossover point. Since the layers
are known to be isochronal in nature, the consistency at the crossover points is an important check on the tracing process and the temporal variation of the flight lines (e.g. collected between 1993 to 2002). Moreover, analysis of the layer thickness at the crossover points agrees to within 4.5 m (one range bin) for most cases, and 9 m (two range bins) for a few of the worst cases. The high consistency over the crossover points supports the claim, which indicates that once dated, that these layers can define the age-depth relationship throughout much of the study region [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. It is notable that differences were zero for more than 68% of the entries in the crossover Table 4-2.

4.3 The Age-depth Relationship of Traced Layers

Since the GRIP core provides an age estimate for each of the traced layers, the five traced-radar layers ages are determined at the GRIP site using the GRIP core age-depth relationship [Johnsen et al., 1997], which is also described in Chapter 2. No correction was made for the accumulation rate, because the present accumulation rate at GRIP is about 0.22 m ice equivalent/yr [Braaten et al., 2002] or up to 1 radar range bin for the radar data set collected over ten years.

To compare the radar-measured depth to the depth in the ice core, an 8 m correction is added to the radar-measured depth to account for the higher radar velocity in the firm than in ice [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. After correction, the radar-based values correspond to true depth for comparison to the GRIP core. The age-depth relationship of each traced layer at
GRIP is given in Table 4-2. The age range of the traced layers covers a period of 4657 years.

Table 4-1. Crossover Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crossover Site</th>
<th>Latitude (° N)</th>
<th>Longitude (° W)</th>
<th>Difference (m)</th>
<th>Layer1</th>
<th>Layer2</th>
<th>Layer3</th>
<th>Layer4</th>
<th>Layer5</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>71.704</td>
<td>37.406</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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Table 4-2. Age-Depth Relationship

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<th>Age (yrs BP*)</th>
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</table>

The northeast portion of our study area partially overlaps with the flight line used by Fahnestock et al. [Fahnestock et al., 2001]. The overlap covers about 300 km of flight line (i.e. from crossover point 7 to 6 to 1 as shown in Figure 4-1). Our layers 1, 2, and 4 are also shown in the previous study. Over the overlapping line, the corresponding layer thickness values appear to be consistent with each other. At GRIP, these layers are within 1 range bin (4.5 m) for each independent study.

4.4 Radar Internal Layer Tracing Results

To visually describe how the ice thickness changes over our study area, we plotted the each layer thickness (color coded) values (~5 km averages) on a map of the flight lines as shown in Figures 4-3 to 4-7. A portion of the ice divide is illustrated on each map using diamond dotted lines. Each layer is traced over the majority of the study area; however, some layers were not easily traceable, as discussed in the crossover analysis, in the southwest portion of our study area.

Radar-detected thickness values for layers 1 through 5 are shown in Figures 4-3 to 4-7,
respectively. For each layer thickness, the trend is increasing layer thickness from the northeast corner towards the southwest corner of the study area. Since layer thickness and long-term accumulation rate are strongly related [Dahl-Jensen et al., 1997], the layer thickness increases in large part due to increases in the long-term accumulation rate [Fahnestock et al., 2001], which increases towards the Jakobshavn Isbrae in our study area. The increasing layer thickness trend is similar to the increasing long-term accumulation rate trend reported [Bales et al., 2001] over our study area. The thicker layer values are observed in the catchment basin of Jakobshavn Isbrae. In Figures 4-3 to 4-7, this area of thicker layer values corresponds to the higher long-term accumulation rates reported by Bales et al. [Bales et al., 2001] in our study area. The thickness to the bedrock is shown in Figure 4-8. The bedrock thickness trend from the ice divide toward Jakobshavn region is decreasing thickness from about 3100 m down to 1500 m.
Figure 4-3. Thickness of Layer 1.
Figure 4-4. Thickness of Layer 2.
Figure 4-5. Thickness of Layer 3.
Figure 4-6. Thickness of Layer 4.
Figure 4-7. Thickness of Layer 5.
Figure 4-8. Thickness to the Bedrock.
4.5 References


Chapter 5 Conclusions

5.0 Summary

We demonstrated internal layers could be traced over our study region, which is from the ice divide toward the Jakobshavn outlet glacier region, and areas to the south. We successfully traced layers over multiple flight lines and multiple dates for our study region. These layers are dated using GRIP ice core data. Additionally, the internal layer tracing method has a high degree of consistency based on the crossover point analysis. The traceable internal layers from the ice divide toward Jakobshavn, Greenland maintain their structure over a large area. The age-depth relationships of these known isochronal layers from the ice divide towards the Jakobshavn region can be useful in modeling ice sheet flow far away from the GRIP core site.

5.1 Future Work

This study traced 5 internal layers in radar data from more than 4000 km worth of flight lines, which was a significant accomplishment for this area of high interest. In the future, additional layers beyond 5 could be traced. With additional resources, layers could be traced in the radar data from the entire PARCA Greenland radar data set (> 100,000 km) for archiving in the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC).
Appendix

Appendix Overview

We processed 45 archive files for our study. Appendix A gives the list of these files. The locations of corresponding line numbers can be found in Figure 3-9. Appendix B includes the results of traced internal layers for each archive file. Appendix C lists the file formats for the archive results.

Appendix A  The List of Filenames in Our Study Area

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<th>Filename</th>
<th>Page number</th>
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Appendix B  The Results of Traced Internal Layers

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Range Bins

jun24_93.004-jun24_93.005.mat

70.0564N   70.0912N   70.1250N   70.1579N   70.1903N   70.2224N   70.2540N   70.2848N   70.3152N   70.3451N   70.3741N
0km        12.62km      25.29km       37.61km      50.04km       62.65km     75.20km      87.62km      100.15km     112.75km    125.03km

jun24_93.004-jun24_93.005.mat

70
Range Bins

68.2344N  68.1798N  68.1243N  68.0678N  68.0111N  67.9531N  67.8951N  67.8364N  67.7763N  67.7157N  67.6820N
41.4497W  41.8341W  42.2151W  42.5960W  42.9706W  43.3458W  43.7142W  44.0787W  44.4458W  44.8091W  45.1865W
0km       17.00km    33.93km    50.93km    67.74km    84.66km    101.36km   117.96km   134.77km   151.49km   167.67km
may18_99.021-may18_99.025.mat

Range Bins

100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

0km 16.26km 32.33km 48.41km 64.57km 80.54km 94.88km 93.53km 87.28km 86.39km 91.61km
Range Bins

72.2072N     72.0890N     71.9679N     71.8484N     71.7321N    71.6163N     71.4999N     71.3852N     71.2667N     71.1476N     71.0310N


0km        15.06km      30.47km      45.64km        60.37km      75.02km      89.72km      104.30km    119.06km    134.05km     148.66km
Appendix C  Layer Tracing File Formats

C.1 Files with extension *.mat

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</table>

C.2 Files with extension *.pdf

Each *.pdf file contains two images per radar echogram file for quick perusal purposes. The first image has the ice surface, layer 1, layer 2, layer 3, layer 4, layer 5 and the bedrock location superimposed on the radar echogram. The second image has the ice surface, layer 1, layer 2, layer 3, layer 4, layer 5 and the bedrock location plotted.

C.3 Files with extension *.ht

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Note: NaN values correspond to locations where the variables were not determined. Thickness values do not include the firm velocity correction as described in Ch. 4.