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BENDING AND SHEAR STRESSES DEVELOPED BY THE

INSTANTANEOUS ARREST OF THE ROOT OF A

CANTILEVER BEAM WITH A MASS AT ITS TIP

By Elbridge Z. Stowell, Edward B. Schwartz,  
John C. Houbolt, and Albert K. Schmieder

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## NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR AERONAUTICS

MEMORANDUM REPORT

for the

Army Air Forces, Air Technical Service Command

BENDING AND SHEAR STRESSES DEVELOPED BY THE

INSTANTANEOUS ARREST OF THE ROOT OF A

CANTILEVER BEAM WITH A MASS AT ITS TIP

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## SUMMARY

A theoretical and experimental investigation has been made of the behavior of a cantilever beam in transverse motion with a mass at its tip when the root is suddenly brought to rest. Equations are given for determining the stresses, the deflections, and the accelerations that arise in the beam as a result of the impact. The theoretical equations, which have been confirmed experimentally, reveal that for a beam with a given cross section and velocity at impact and for a given ratio of tip mass to beam mass, the bending stresses for a particular mode at a given percentage of the distance from root to tip are independent of the length of the beam; whereas, the shear stresses vary inversely with the length.

The addition of a mass to the tip of a cantilever beam increases appreciably the stresses produced by the first mode of vibration but changes only slightly the stresses contributed by the higher modes. The tip mass increases the maximum bending stress much less than might be expected on the basis of experience with the static action of structures. For practical engineering analysis the maximum bending stress developed in a suddenly arrested cantilever beam can be found by a simple addition of stress amplitudes in the first few modes without regard to phase relations between modes.

## INTRODUCTION

When an airplane lands, the vertical component of the velocity is rapidly reduced to zero. The shock of the sudden change in motion gives rise to vibratory stresses in the airplane. As a beginning in the study of these stresses a previous report (reference 1) discussed in detail the behavior of a cantilever beam in translational motion when its root is suddenly brought to rest. In that paper equations are given for determining the stresses, the deflections, and the accelerations that arise throughout the beam as a result of the impact. The present report extends the basic problem of reference 1 to include the effect of a concentrated mass at the tip of the cantilever beam.

As in reference 1, the present paper is based on the usual engineering beam theory. In this theory the deflections are considered to be the result of bending alone, shear deflections neglected. The theory as applied to ordinary beams gives reasonably good results so long as the distance between inflection points is greater than a few times the depth of the beam. When this theory for beam action is used in vibration problems, such as that in the present paper, the results are satisfactory for those modes of vibration for which the nodes are not too close together.

This report summarizes the results of a theoretical solution given in appendix A and presents an experimental verification of these results. A numerical example for the calculation of the maximum stresses near the root of the cantilever beam is given in appendix B.

## SYMBOLS

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| E         | modulus of elasticity                                    |
| $\gamma$  | weight density of material                               |
| $\lambda$ | coefficient of equivalent viscous damping of material    |
| c         | velocity of sound in material $\sqrt{\frac{Eg}{\gamma}}$ |

- g acceleration of gravity
- L length of beam
- I moment of inertia of cross section of beam about neutral axis
- A cross-sectional area of beam
- $\rho$  radius of gyration of cross section of beam  $\left(\sqrt{\frac{I}{A}}\right)$
- x coordinate along beam measured from root
- y distance from neutral axis of beam to any fiber
- t time, zero at impact
- p operator  $\frac{\partial}{\partial t}$
- n integers 1, 2, 3, etc., designating a particular mode of vibration
- $\theta_n$  nth positive root of equation  $1 + \cos \theta \cosh \theta + r\theta (\sinh \theta \cos \theta - \cosh \theta \sin \theta) = 0$
- r ratio of tip mass to beam mass  $\frac{M}{m}$
- $\omega_n$  undamped natural angular frequency of nth mode, radians per second  $\left(\rho c \frac{\theta_n^2}{L^2}\right)$
- $\omega_n'$  damped natural angular frequency of nth mode, radians per second  $\left(\omega_n \sqrt{1 - \frac{\lambda^2 \omega_n^2}{4E^2}}\right)$
- $\left(\text{where } \frac{\lambda^2 \omega_n^2}{4E^2} > 1, \text{ the "frequency" is defined by } \omega_n' = \omega_n \sqrt{\frac{\lambda^2 \omega_n^2}{4E^2} - 1}\right)$
- v velocity of beam prior to impact

- $w(x,t)$  deflection of beam at station  $x$  and time  $t$
- $w_n(x,t)$  deflection of beam at station  $x$  and time  $t$   
for the  $n$ th mode of vibration
- $a(x,t)$  acceleration of beam at station  $x$  and time  $t$
- $a_n(x,t)$  acceleration of beam at station  $x$  and time  $t$   
for  $n$ th mode of vibration
- $\sigma(x,y,t)$  bending stress in beam at station  $x$ , distance  
from neutral axis  $y$ , and time  $t$
- $\sigma_n(x,y,t)$  bending stress in beam at station  $x$ , distance  
from neutral axis  $y$ , and time  $t$  for  $n$ th mode  
of vibration
- $\bar{\tau}(x,t)$  average shear stress over cross section of beam  
at station  $x$  and time  $t$
- $\bar{\tau}_n(x,t)$  average shear stress over cross section of beam  
at station  $x$  and time  $t$  for  $n$ th mode of  
vibration
- $A_n$  bending-stress coefficient for  $n$ th mode of  
vibration
- $B_n$  shear-stress coefficient for  $n$ th mode of vibration
- $C_n$  deflection coefficient for  $n$ th mode of vibration

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

### Theoretical

When a cantilever beam with a mass at its tip is under uniform translation in a direction perpendicular to its length there is excited a theoretically infinite number of modes of vibration when its root is instantaneously brought to rest. With each successive mode, damping has an increasing influence upon the frequencies and amplitudes of vibration and, for sufficiently high modes, even changes the type of motion from oscillatory to nonoscillatory motion. In the lower modes, however, damping has little effect and only terms of the first order in damping need be included in the equations. Only the equations applicable











properties do not appreciably affect the frequencies, which are associated with the over-all action of the beam, and since frequencies are easy to measure, it is reasonable to expect the observed good agreement between theoretical and experimental frequencies. (See fig. 9.) When consideration is given to the fact that stresses are directly affected by the local variations in the beam properties and are not readily susceptible to instantaneous accurate measurement the observed agreement between the experimental and theoretical stresses is also considered to be satisfactory. (See fig. 10.)

The contribution of the first mode to the total stress was estimated from the records. (See fig. 8.) It is clear from figure 10 that the first mode contributes more than half of the total stress. It is also clear from figure 10 that for practical engineering analysis the maximum bending stress developed in a suddenly arrested cantilever beam can be found by a simple addition of stress amplitudes in the first few modes (in this case 3) without regard to phase relations between the modes.

Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory  
National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics  
Langley Field, Va., November 30, 1944





With the application of the boundary conditions to equation (A4), the operational solution for the velocity (that induced by  $-v\mathbf{1}$ ) is found to be

$$pw = \frac{-v\mathbf{1}}{2} \frac{f\left(\theta \frac{x}{L}\right)}{1 + \cos \theta \cosh \theta + r\theta (\sinh \theta \cos \theta - \cosh \theta \sin \theta)} \quad (\text{A5})$$

where

$$\begin{aligned} f\left(\theta \frac{x}{L}\right) &= (1 + \cos \theta \cosh \theta) \left( \cosh \theta \frac{x}{L} + \cos \theta \frac{x}{L} \right) \\ &+ \sin \theta \sinh \theta \left( \cosh \theta \frac{x}{L} - \cos \theta \frac{x}{L} \right) \\ &+ (\sinh \theta \cos \theta + \cosh \theta \sin \theta) \left( \sin \theta \frac{x}{L} - \sinh \theta \frac{x}{L} \right) \\ &+ 2r\theta \left[ \sinh \theta \cos \theta \cosh \theta \frac{x}{L} - \cosh \theta \sin \theta \cos \theta \frac{x}{L} \right. \\ &\left. + \cos \theta \cosh \theta \left( \sin \theta \frac{x}{L} - \sinh \theta \frac{x}{L} \right) \right] \end{aligned}$$

and  $r$  is the ratio  $\frac{M}{m} = \frac{\text{Tip mass}}{\text{Beam mass}}$ . Interpretation of this operational expression and addition of the constant velocity  $v$  gives for the total velocity

$$\frac{\partial w(x, t)}{\partial t} = v - v\mathbf{1} + 2v \sum_{n=1}^{\infty} F\left(\theta \frac{x}{L}\right) e^{-\frac{\lambda \omega_n^2}{2E} t} \left( \cos \omega_n' t - \frac{\frac{\lambda \omega_n}{2E}}{\sqrt{1 - \frac{\lambda^2 \omega_n^2}{4E^2}}} \sin \omega_n' t \right) \mathbf{1} \quad (\text{A6})$$











Comparison with the expression for  $w_n(x,t)$  (equation (A8)) shows that the acceleration of each mode is out of phase with the deflection. When damping is sufficiently small, however, the relation between the acceleration and the deflection reduces to the well known result for undamped vibration

$$a_n(x,t) = -\omega_n^2 w_n(x,t)$$



| Mode, n                              | A <sub>n</sub> | B <sub>n</sub> | $\sigma$<br>(psi)        | $\tau$<br>(psi)          |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|                                      |                |                | (4500 × A <sub>n</sub> ) | (35.8 × B <sub>n</sub> ) |
| 1                                    | 2.18           | 2.40           | 9800                     | 86                       |
| 2                                    | .89            | 4.1            | 4010                     | 144                      |
| 3                                    | .48            | 4.0            | 2160                     | 143                      |
| Sum of first three stress amplitudes |                |                | 15,970                   | 373                      |

An approximation of the maximum total stresses can be obtained by adding the stress amplitudes for the first several modes as indicated.

#### REFERENCE

1. Stowell, Elbridge Z., Schwartz, Edward B., and Houbolt, John C.: Bending and Shear Stresses Developed by the Instantaneous Arrest of the Root of a Moving Cantilever Beam. NACA ARR No. L4I27, 1944.























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- (23) \* Stress Analysis  
Bending Stress  
Shear stresses  
Cantilever Beams