

ASTRONOMY

Most Used Telescope

Eleven-inch instrument, once largest in the U. S., to be featured in centenary celebration of University of Cincinnati Observatory.

► THE CENTENARY of the University of Cincinnati Observatory, possessor of a telescope once second largest in the world and largest in the U. S. A., will be celebrated in Cincinnati during the first week in November when the American Astronomical Society will hold its annual meeting.

The pioneer 11-inch glass is still in regular service and it is believed that it has been used by more thousands of stargazers than any other telescope in America. When it was built the telescope was exceeded in size only by the instrument of the Royal Imperial Observatory at Pulkovo, Russia.

The principal speaker at the centenary will be Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of Harvard Observatory and president of the American Astronomical Society.

Founded a century ago as the first observatory to be erected in the United States with public funds, the University of Cincinnati Observatory was as much of a national scientific showplace then as one of the large planetariums of today. The cornerstone was laid Nov. 9, 1843, by John Quincy Adams, sixth president of the United States, then 77 years of age. He made the two weeks' journey from his New England home by railroad, lake steamer, canal packet and stage coach.

Founder of the observatory, virtual builder of its original structure, and purchaser of this first telescope was Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel, professor of natural philosophy, mathematics and astronomy at Cincinnati College, founded in 1819 and forerunner of the University of Cincinnati. Professor Mitchel quarried his own stone, dug his own sand, burned his own lime, dammed a small stream of water, supervised construction of the building—then served without pay for two decades.

Ground on a Cincinnati hilltop was donated by Nicholas Longworth, grandfather of the late Speaker of the House, Nicholas Longworth. Since the laying of the cornerstone this site has been known as Mount Adams, in honor of John Quincy Adams' part in the city's history. Because of the increasing city haze, the

observatory was moved in 1873 to its present site on Mount Lookout, several miles farther from the downtown area.

Professor Mitchel was the observatory's first director, serving until the Civil War. He left to join the Union forces and died of yellow fever at Hilton Head, N. C. In 1846 he began the publication of the monthly *Sidereal Messenger*, first astronomical periodical in the United States.

He was succeeded by Prof. Cleveland Abbe, who inaugurated at the observatory a system of telegraphic weather reports which aroused such interest that the United States Weather Bureau was organized to offer the same service on a nationwide scale. Thus this observatory claims to be the mother of the U. S. Weather Bureau.

The present director is Dr. Everett I. Yowell, University of Cincinnati graduate, acting in a temporary capacity until a successor to the late Dr. Elliott

Smith, the Observatory's sixth director in 100 years, is named. Dr. Smith died Sept. 29 of this year.

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BACTERIOLOGY

Plague Germ Survives 20 Years in Test Tube

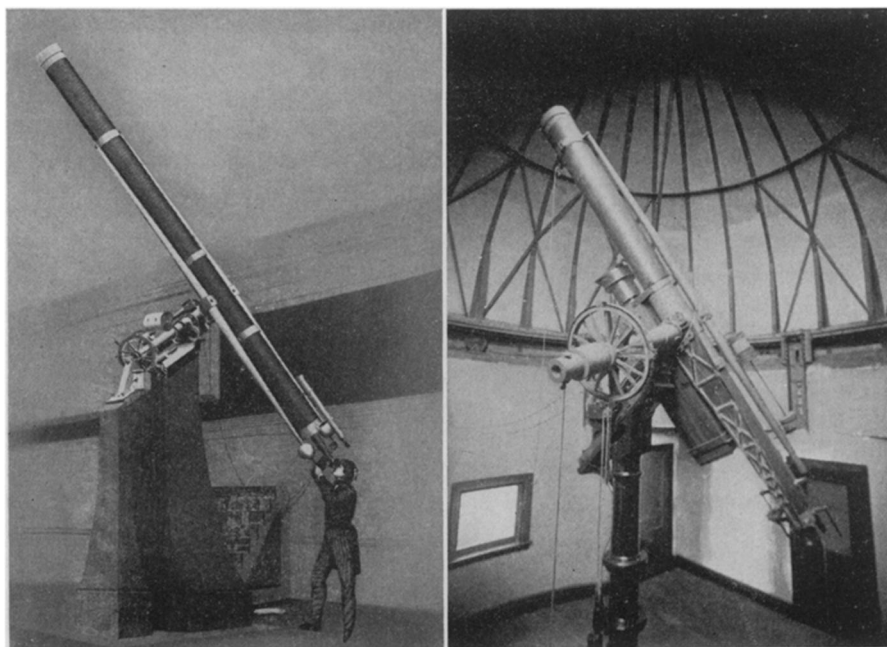
► AFTER 20 years' imprisonment in a test tube at a temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit, the *Bacillus pestis*, dread agent of the plague, emerged alive and as deadly an enemy as ever, the United States Public Health Service reveals.

In 1922, this public enemy was isolated from a California ground squirrel and subsequently passed through guinea pigs. From the guinea pig cultures, one series of tubes was prepared in 1923 in which the "killer" was isolated, and a similar series set up in 1924.

Showing no loss of its deadly strength as a result of the two decades of confinement, the plague germ, when released from the 1923 series and injected into guinea pigs, promptly infected them.

A series of tubes prepared in 1924 is to be opened at some future date. At that time the scientists may be able to determine how many years would approximate a term of "life imprisonment" for the microscopic killer, *Bacillus pestis*.

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THEN AND NOW—Prof. Ormsby MacKnight Mitchel, first director of the 100-year-old Cincinnati Observatory, is shown in a contemporary print (left) at the original 11-inch telescope. This instrument, the second largest in the world in 1843, is still in use today (right). Through its lenses have peered more stargazers than through any other American telescope.