

CHESTER TIMES – May 25, 1910

THE NEW SPROUL OBSERVATORY AT SWARTHMORE COLLEGE

The new observatory at Swarthmore College, in which is to be housed the great telescope which is to be housed the great telescope which is the gift of Honorable William C. Sproul, of Chester, is under construction and will be completed during the present season and ready to receive the great equatorial telescope when it is completed. The present site of the President's house at the southwest corner of Parrish Hall has been chosen for the observatory. The front part of the new building will contain a lecture room with seats for seventy-five students, a computing room, a library, an office, and a dark room. Back of this will be the great circular building with a revolving dome forty-five feet in diameter, framed in steel and sheathed with copper. The telescope will be set up on a pier built up from the foundations set deep in the ground, and underneath it will be a solid floor beneath which will be a repair shop and storage room, a photographic storage room and other apartments.

The new twenty-four inch telescope which will be one of the largest in the eastern section of the United States, is now being constructed by the John A. Brashear Company of Allegheny. The principal lens, which is twenty-four inches in diameter, has been made in Germany. A great deal of difficulty was encountered in getting the lens, and nearly two years have been required in its making and finishing. The lens, flawed or roughness makes it useless for astronomical purposes, and as a rule several attempts must be made before a successful lens is found.

The old observatory on the eastern side of the campus is particularly equipped for the purposes of instruction. It contains a smaller telescope of six inches aperture, with a spectroscope and a transit telescope; a mean time and sidereal clock, a chronograph and a reference library, together with the new photographic telescope of nine inches aperture, which is the first of the Sproul equipment to be completed and with which a great deal of very successful photographic work has already been done in the heavens. There is also connected with the observatory a signal service station of the Weather Bureau, and a fine seismograph, an instrument for the detection of earth tremors and with which earthquakes are noted.

William Provoost, Jr., of Chester, is building the new Sproul Observatory for the College, so that Chester artisans under the direction of a Chester contractor are doing the work of housing this gift of a Chester citizen.

The Times is indebted to the Swarthmore Republican, the bright and energetic local newspaper in Swarthmore borough, for the use of the above excellent picture of the new observatory.