

4CF07-2007-000046

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the 4CF07 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Lowell Observatory: Past and Present

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Founded in 1894, Lowell Observatory was one of the earliest research institutions established in the Arizona Territory. Funded and led by Percival Lowell, the Observatory soon established itself as a significant center for astronomical research. While Percival's early ideas about intelligent life on Mars were not correct, other investigations he initiated resulted in fundamentally important discoveries. First among these is the discovery by Vesto Slipher, in the second decade of the twentieth century, of the large redshifts of external galaxies. Perhaps better known to the public, is the 1930 discovery of Pluto. Today, the Lowell Observatory employs a staff of 80, of whom 21 hold Ph.D.s in astronomy, planetary science, or physics. The Observatory operates research facilities at 4 sites, with a new 4.2-meter telescope - the Discovery Channel Telescope - under construction at a fifth. Lowell astronomers use these facilities, in addition to national facilities around the globe, in the air, and in space, to conduct a diverse program of research. Lowell remains today an institution true to the vision of its founder- independent, private, closely connected to the Lowell family, and welcoming to the public.