



William Parsons, also known as the 3rd Earl of Rosse KP (June 17, 1800 – October 31, 1867), was born in the English town of York.

Extremely intelligent, he studied at Trinity College in, Dublin, and graduated from Oxford University's Magdalen College, in 1822, with first-class honors in math.

From the time he was about seven years old, and throughout his university years, Parsons was also known as "Baron Oxmantown." He kept that title until the death of his father.

When his father Lawrence, the 2nd Earl of Rosse, died in 1841, William inherited both an earldom and a large estate in King's County (known today as County Offaly) in Ireland.

Shortly thereafter, Parsons—who was an avid astronomer—had several optical reflecting telescopes built. One of them—which measured 72-inches—was the largest telescope in the world, for the time, and was often called the "Leviathan of Parsonstown." It was completed in 1845.

Thomas Langlois Lefroy, who was greatly impressed by Parsons' telescope, said this about his observations through the gigantic sixteen-ton "monster" (which remained the largest telescope of the 19th Century):

*The planet Jupiter, which through an ordinary glass is no larger than a good star, is seen twice as large as the moon appears to the naked eye ... But the genius displayed in all the contrivances for wielding this mighty monster even surpasses the design and execution of it.*

*The telescope weighs sixteen tons, and yet Lord Rosse raised it single-handed off its resting place, and two men with ease raised it to any height. (See Memoir of Chief Justice Lefroy, by Thomas Lefroy, at [page 242](#).)*

Parsons, who died in 1867, discovered 226 NGC objects.

His son published those findings in "Observations of Nebulae and Clusters of Stars Made With the Six-foot and Three-foot Reflectors at Birr Castle From the Year 1848 up to the Year 1878," in *Scientific Transactions of the Royal Dublin Society* Vol. II, during 1878.

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