From the San Jose Mercury News
1881, 11 September

The Lick Observatory. The Circular Pier for the Telescope Almost Completed

The work at Mount Hamilton is progressing splendidly under the active supertendency of Mr. Thos. E. Fraser. The brick layers are just finishing the circular pier for the twelve inch telescope, which is soon to arrive from Alvan Clark & Son’s. The pier is circular, twenty-four feet high to the observing floor, and is to be surmounted by the smaller pier to support the telescope. It is built of the best hard burnt bricks, and has a diameter of thirteen feet five inches at the bottom, and eight feet at the top. The foundation was laid four and one-half feet below surface level, the excavation having been blasted out three feet in depth, then picked out one and one-half feet, and then swept and washed and the brick cemented on the solid mountain rock. Sixty barrels of Portland cement and thirty-two thousand bricks were used in this pier, and it stands a monument of symmetry and strength. The surrounding walls (for small dome) are now being laid, and the masons commenced laying foundation of Transit House yesterday. Mr. Fraser’s transit instruments stand ready to observe the North Star at meridian tonight, for the purpose of getting the true direction for the walls of this building. The work of blasting the rock uon the summit has been completed without a scratch of injury or hurt to any one during the work of grading, and Mount Hamilton Observatory Peak to-night shows a *level head* to all the world around!

From The New York Times
(Taken from the San Francisco Bulletin, 17 October 1881)
1881, 25 October

Work at the Lick Observatory.

The 12-inch equatorial telescope and the accompanying transit instrument purchased some time ago for the Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton have arrived here and are now being set up. The work is being done under the direction and supervision of Prof. Edward S. Holden, lately of the Washington Naval Observatory, who is astronomer in charge of the Madison (Wis.) Observatory. Prof. Holden is accompanied and assisted by Prof. S. W. Burnham, Assistant Observer at Madison Observatory. The telescope will be in position in time for an observation of the transit of Mercury, which will occur on the 8th of next month. If the weather happens to be clear on the day of the transit, it is expected that a far better observation will be obtained from the summit of Mount Hamilton through the 12-inch telescope than is possible in an Eastern atmosphere through the much larger equatorials mounted in Eastern observatories.

The Transit of Mercury
1881, 7 November

San Jose. The transit of Mercury was observed today at Mount Hamilton, by Professor E.S. Holden of Washburne Observatory and Professor Burnham of Dearborn Observatory. The instrument used was a 12-inch equatorial and a transit instrument. Both professors are delighted at the perfect success of the observation and the excellence of the instruments. The day is described as wonderfully clear. The professors say they have no official statement to make at present, more than that the observation made is of great importance to science and in every way a complete success.