

Galactic Gazette

a blog from the staff of the Wolbach Library



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Even More Ways to Help Librarians and Archivists From Home

As long as we're all cooped-up, here are six digital projects that could use your curiosity.

BY JESSICA LEIGH HESTER • APRIL 7, 2020



HISTORY NEWS

Harvard Computers features on Atlas Obscura

Sam Correia • Updated on August 24, 2022 • [Leave a Comment](#)

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Article on Atlas Obscura

On April 7th, 2020, the Wolbach Library at the Center for Astrophysics | Harvard & Smithsonian was featured in an article on the travel website Atlas Obscura. The article, [“Even More Ways to Help Librarians and Archivists From Home”](#) by Jessica Leigh Hester, features six different transcription and citizen science projects that people can do from home. Given the current COVID-19 situation, many people who find themselves at home might be looking to contribute virtually to a project or add to a science curriculum. There was an [original article](#) detailing ways to help librarians and archivists, as well as a [community forum](#) for people to post other transcription/citizen science projects.

[Atlas Obscura](#) is a travel website dedicated to showing “hidden wonders” around the globe. Their website includes unique travel locations, recipes, and videos about the obscure, the unexpected, and the unknown. The article also features the Harvard Computers at the Harvard College Observatory as the header image.

[Project PHaEDRA](#) (Preserving Harvard’s Early Data and Research in Astronomy) is an initiative by the Wolbach Library and various partners to catalog, digitize, and transcribe over 2500 notebooks produced by early Harvard astronomers. Readers of the Atlas Obscura article are invited to “gaze into celestial notebooks” by browsing through the digitized notebook finding aid and by volunteering to transcribe pages of the notebooks.

Project PHaEDRA currently has two opportunities for volunteers to engage with the notebooks. The first is a project on the [Smithsonian Transcription Center Website](#). Volunteers can transcribe each page from uploaded notebooks. This project has been on the Smithsonian Transcription Center for a few years and many dedicated volunteers have helped with this project.

The second and most recent initiative from Project PHaEDRA, is [Star Notes](#), a project on the Zooniverse citizen science platform. Star Notes launched in January of 2020 and has over 2,000 registered volunteers. The Star Notes project asks volunteers to search through the notebook pages and identify plate numbers. The data collected from this project will allow staff and researchers to connect the plate numbers with the digitized astronomical photographic glass plate collection from [DASCH](#) (Digital Access to a Sky Century @ Harvard).

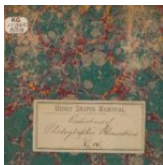
These glass plates depict the first ever pictures of the visible universe, with calculations by Harvard Computers such as Annie Jump Cannon, Henrietta Swan Leavitt, and Williamina Fleming. The information from Star Notes and the Smithsonian Transcription project will allow individuals from any background to learn about women in science and the history of astronomy. Project PHaEDRA will eventually allow researchers in Time Domain Astrophysics to better understand how the Universe is evolving. This article in Atlas Obscura will hopefully get people interested in Project PHaEDRA and help them learn about the work of early astronomers at the Harvard College Observatory.

Author

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Sam Correia



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