

Galactic Gazette

a blog from the staff of the Wolbach Library



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HISTORY NEWS

Learning Lab Collections

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



Today, the Wolbach Library has started [publishing online educational collections on the Smithsonian Learning Lab platform](#). Project PHaEDRA is an initiative by the Wolbach Library, in collaboration with partners, to catalog, digitize, transcribe, and develop the metadata of over 2500 logbooks and notebooks produced by the Harvard Computers and early Harvard astronomers. This is the third project from Project PHaEDRA, the first being a full text transcription project with the Smithsonian Transcription Center, and the second with Star Notes on Zooniverse.

By publishing collections on the Smithsonian Learning Lab, we will be able to connect resources about female astronomers to teachers and students. The first two collections that have been published focus on the [life](#) and [work](#) of Henrietta Swan Leavitt. As a 'computer' at the HCO, Leavitt discovered the relationship between luminosity and the period of brightening/dimming of Cepheid variables. Her discovery provided astronomers with the first 'standard candle' with which to measure the distance of galaxies.

Search the Smithsonian Learning Lab



Project PHaEDRA

Wolbach Library

Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics

Middle School (13 to 15 years old), High School (16 to 18 years old)

Science, Social Studies, Visual Arts, Arts

Project PHaEDRA's collections

Each published collection will contain resources about a specific female astronomer, with some future collections focusing on Annie Jump Cannon and Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin. These resources will include images, articles, and texts about the accomplishments of these women. While some of these resources are owned by Harvard or the Smithsonian, we will also be linking out to other articles and resources that students and teachers might find useful, such as articles published in *Air and Space* or texts available on the Internet Archive.

We appreciate feedback about these collections, especially from educators and students. We want to make sure that these collections are helpful students and teachers in any area of study, including art, science, and history. Our goal is to help teachers supplement activities and lesson plans while connecting to resources, whether teaching in person or online.



The Science of Henrietta Swan Leavitt

Created by:



Project PHaEDRA

This collection explores the discoveries and methods of American astronomer Henrietta Swan Leavitt in order to measure and catalog the brightness of stars. This work led her to discover the relationship between a star's brightness and its distance (stars that have a distinct brightness and dimming period). Her discovery provided astronomers with a new tool for measuring the distance to other stars and galaxies, which has helped modern astronomy's understanding of the structure and size of the universe.

Follow the steps throughout the collection to determine the ways that Leavitt and the other Harvard astronomers used their work to advance the field of astronomy.

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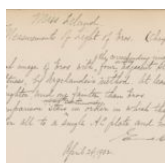


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