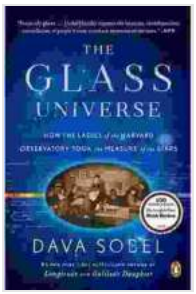
How The Ladies Of The Harvard Observatory Took The Measure Of The Stars

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a group of women made significant contributions to astronomy at the Harvard Observatory. These women, known as "computers," were responsible for analyzing and classifying millions of stars. Their work helped to create a more accurate understanding of the universe.



The Glass Universe: How the Ladies of the Harvard Observatory Took the Measure of the Stars by Dava Sobel

4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 16759 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 332 pages
Screen Reader	: Supported

The Early Years

The Harvard Observatory was founded in 1839 by William Cranch Bond, who served as its first director. Bond's daughter, Mary Quincy Bond, was one of the first women to work at the observatory. She began her career as a computer in 1857 and quickly became one of the most skilled and respected members of the staff.

In 1877, Edward Pickering became the director of the Harvard Observatory. Pickering was a strong supporter of women in astronomy and hired a number of female computers. These women included Annie Jump Cannon, Henrietta Swan Leavitt, and Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin. Cannon eventually became the head of the Harvard Observatory's photographic department and made significant contributions to the classification of stars.

The Computers' Work

The computers at the Harvard Observatory were responsible for analyzing and classifying millions of stars. They used a variety of techniques, including photometry, spectroscopy, and astrometry. Photometry is the measurement of the brightness of stars. Spectroscopy is the study of the light emitted by stars. Astrometry is the measurement of the positions of stars.

The computers' work was painstaking and time-consuming. They would often spend hours poring over photographic plates, identifying and classifying stars. However, their work was essential to the advancement of astronomy. The data they collected helped to create a more accurate understanding of the universe.

The Legacy of the Computers

The computers of the Harvard Observatory made a significant contribution to astronomy. Their work helped to create a more accurate understanding of the universe. They also paved the way for other women to enter the field of astronomy.

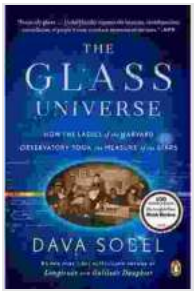
Today, the legacy of the computers of the Harvard Observatory lives on. The observatory continues to be a leading center for astronomical

research. And women continue to play a vital role in astronomy. In fact, the current director of the Harvard Observatory is a woman, Avi Loeb.

The ladies of the Harvard Observatory were pioneers in the field of astronomy. Their work helped to create a more accurate understanding of the universe. They also paved the way for other women to enter the field of astronomy. Their legacy continues to inspire women and girls today.

Further Reading

- The Harvard Observatory website
- The Women of the Harvard Observatory
- Variable star



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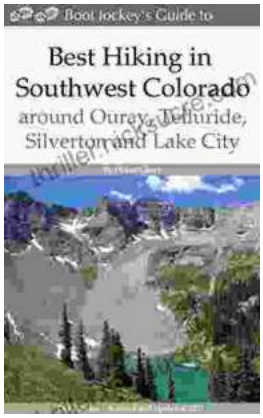

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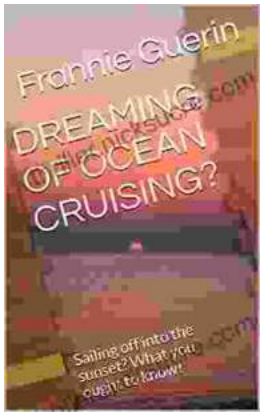

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