Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin Encyclopedia Article

Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin

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Cecilia Payne-Gaposchkin

1900-1979

English-American astronomer who analyzed the universe's composition. After Payne-Gaposchkin graduated from Cambridge University, she moved to the United States to study at the Harvard College Observatory. Earning a doctorate from Radcliffe College, she accepted an appointment at the observatory. Payne-Gaposchkin studied galactic structures, variable stars, and stellar atmospheres. Her research revealed that most celestial bodies are formed from hydrogen and helium. Payne-Gaposchkin's classification of stars by varying brightness advanced the study of stellar evolution.