

# Maria Mitchell Encyclopedia Article

## Maria Mitchell

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# Maria Mitchell

**1818-1889**

The first female astronomer in America. She grew up helping her father make astronomical observations for New England whaling ships. In 1847 she discovered a new comet. From 1849-1868 she worked at the U.S. Nautical Almanac Office to calculate the ephemerides of Venus before resigning to devote all of her time to her job as professor of astronomy and director of the college observatory at Vassar Female College. She was the first woman to be elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.