

William Huggins Encyclopedia Article

William Huggins

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William Huggins

1824-1910

English astronomer whose observations of the spectra of celestial objects revolutionized astronomy and laid the groundwork for modern cosmology. Huggins and his wife Margaret used spectroscopy to prove that the elements in stars are the same as those in the sun and the earth. They proved that nebulae consist of gases, discovered hydrocarbons in comets, and measured stellar velocities using the Doppler shift of their spectra, providing data for theories concerning the origin and expansion of the universe.