



Unlocking the Secrets of White Dwarf Stars (Astronomers' Universe)

Hugh Van Horn

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White dwarfs, each containing about as much mass as our Sun but packed into a volume about the size of Earth, are the endpoints of evolution for most stars. Thousands of these faint objects have now been discovered, though only a century ago only three were known. They are among the most common stars in the Milky Way Galaxy, and they have become important tools in understanding the universe. Yet a century ago only three white dwarfs were known.

The existence of these stars completely baffled the scientists of the day, and solving the mysteries of these strange objects required revolutionary advances in science and technology, including the development of quantum physics, the construction and utilization of large telescopes, the invention of the digital computer, and the ability to make astronomical observations from space.

This book tells the story of the growth in our understanding of white dwarf stars, set within the context of the relevant scientific and technological advances. Part popular science, part historical narrative, this book is authored by one of the astrophysicists who participated directly in uncovering some of the secrets of white dwarf stars.

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