

# THE COLLECTION OF HENRY DRAPER MEMORABILIA IN THE NEW YORK UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

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## INTRODUCTION

When Henry Draper died in 1882, his major instruments, together with a number of smaller pieces from his observatory at Hastings-on-Hudson, were transferred to the Harvard College Observatory, where the great volumes of the Memorial and the Henry Draper Catalogue were produced. Numerous items from his laboratory in New York, including many photographic plates, were presented to New York University by Mrs. Antonia Dixon, Draper's sister. Originally at the Heights campus, they were eventually transferred to Washington Square and into the care of Prof. Bayrd Still, the University Archivist. It is a substantial collection and, along with that at the Smithsonian, provides an important footnote to Henry Draper's research.

During the summer of 1981, the material from the Archives was studied and organized. In the fall, the most important pieces, with the addition of some memorabilia on loan, were on exhibit in the Bobst Library of the University, remaining on display for the rest of the academic year. On the occasion of the Orion Nebula Symposium it seems appropriate to give a short description, though not a catalogue, of the collection.

The material divides naturally into the following classes: early lunar photographs, photographs of stellar spectra, materials relating to research for the paper on solar oxygen, and material connected with the Harvard College Observatory.

## LUNAR PHOTOGRAPHY

A series of 34 plates, original negatives of lunar photographs taken in 1863-64, illustrates Draper's earliest program of celestial photography. The images are about 4 cm in diameter and, although some of the plates show signs of deteriorating emulsion, most negatives are still in good condition, as shown by the example reproduced in FIGURE 1.

According to Plotkin,<sup>2</sup> Draper had taken some 1500 negatives of the moon in the early 1860s. Most of this material is lost, but this group of 34 plates is a significant witness to the early activity at Hastings-on-Hudson.