



A BISON ORIGINAL

Ambassadors from Earth

Pioneering Explorations
with Unmanned Spacecraft

JAY GALLENTINE

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Book Synopsis:

Ambassadors from Earth relates the story of the first unmanned space probes and planetary explorers—from the Sputnik and Explorer satellites launched in the late 1950s to the thrilling interstellar Voyager missions of the '70s—that yielded some of the most celebrated successes and spectacular failures of the space age.

OUTWARD ODYSSEY: A PEOPLE'S
HISTORY OF SPACEFLIGHT SERIES

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Book Description

Rewind to the 1950s and ponder: was America's first satellite really built by a college student? How did a small band of underappreciated Russian engineers get pictures of the moon's far side—using stolen American film? As the 1960s progressed, consider: how the heck did people learn to steer a spacecraft using nothing but gravity? And just how were humans able to goose a spaceship through a thirty-year journey to the literal edge of our solar system?

Ambassadors from Earth relates the story of the first unmanned space probes and planetary explorers—from the Sputnik and Explorer satellites launched in the late 1950s to the thrilling interstellar Voyager missions of the '70s—that yielded some of the most celebrated successes and spectacular failures of the space age. Keep in mind that our first mad scrambles to reach orbit, the moon, and the planets were littered with enough histrionics and cliffhanging turmoil to rival the most far-out sci-fi film. Utilizing original interviews with key players, bolstered by never-before-seen photographs, journal excerpts, and primary source documents, Jay Gallentine delivers a quirky and unforgettable look at the lives and legacy of the Americans and Soviets who conceived, built, and guided those unmanned missions to the planets and beyond. Of special note is his in-depth interview with James Van Allen, the discoverer of the rings of planetary radiation that now bear his name.

Ambassadors from Earth is an engaging bumper-car ride through a fog of head-banging uncertainty, bleeding-edge technology, personality clashes, organizational frustrations, brutal schedules, and the occasional bright spot. Confessed one participant, “We were making it up as we went along.”

Pre-Publication Praise

“Gallentine’s book weaves highly accessible and rich tales of the lives of some of the passionate pioneers behind these space machines. Flooded with details that reveal the contingent and fragile nature of these adventures, *Ambassadors from Earth* reminds us that behind the scenes in these exciting enterprises are genuine human beings who struggle to make something work. Read this and be inspired.”—Rob Manning, Jet Propulsion Laboratory Program chief engineer

“An exciting, engrossing tale of the early days of space flight—capturing the human drama with its inside look at the competitors in the space race reaching for the Moon, Venus, Mars and beyond. It’s like listening to the stories of the sailors on Captain Cook’s voyages as they discovered new worlds.”—Louis Friedman, executive director, the Planetary Society

Post-Publication Praise

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Author Biography

Jay Gallentine is a film and video engineer with a lifelong interest in space exploration.

Additional Information

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