



# Rocket Men: The Epic Story of the First Men on the Moon

*Craig Nelson*

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**"Celebrates a bold era when voyaging beyond the Earth was deemed crucial to national security and pride."**

*-The Wall Street Journal*

Restoring the drama, majesty, and sheer improbability of an American triumph, this is award-winning historian Craig Nelson's definitive and thrilling story of man's first trip to the moon. At 9:32 a.m. on July 16, 1969, the Apollo 11 rocket launched in the presence of more than a million spectators who had gathered to witness a truly historic event. Through interviews, 23,000 pages of NASA oral histories, and declassified CIA documents on the space race, *Rocket Men* presents a vivid narrative of the moon mission, taking readers on the journey to one of the last frontiers of the human imagination.

## Rocket Men: The Epic Story of the First Men on the Moon Details

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## From Reader Review Rocket Men: The Epic Story of the First Men on the Moon for online ebook

### Donna says

The author, Craig Nelson, did a fantastic job with this book. He assembled so many intimate jokes, stories, conversations, and underlying emotions of the first astronauts to walk on the moon. It was nice to have that view and not just a whole bunch of historical facts. But there were also plenty of facts that felt like an inside track to the whole space race.

I liked the part of this book that dealt with Apollo 11. Once they had rocketed off toward the moon, the book then detoured to WWII and to the 50's & 60's with trying to keep up with the Russians and describing the space race in great detail. Unfortunately, I didn't care much for that part. It was a little too political and "sciency" for me. I wanted the story of Buzz and Neil. So I kind of skimmed the middle until we were back to the original story. It was fascinating to read about these amazing men and this monumental time in world history.

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### Skyring says

I love reading the story of the moon race. It all seemed so easy on the diagrams printed in the paper. Just fly to the moon, descend to the surface, walk around a bit, fly back up, light the rocket and come home.

But every step of the long way there was difficult, once you begin to "drill down" into the details. Things like gimbal lock and Max-Q emerge from the murk of technology. Every tiny problem had to be solved, and solved in a way that didn't cause problems for anything else. Make a support member stronger and it makes it heavier, which means more fuel needed to lift it, which means more fuel needed to lift the extra fuel, which means bigger tanks, which leads to a point where you have to make compromises.

It's a fascinating tale of engineering and systems, let alone the people who gave up years of their lives to do it all. A whole generation of engineers and pilots barely got to share in their children's lives. Meetings were regularly scheduled for two in the morning.

You'd think after reading the same tale so many times, i'd know all the details, but no, every retelling adds fresh perspectives, fresh anecdotes. This book is no exception, drawing on political perspectives long suppressed for security reasons. We know a lot more about the Soviet effort now, for example.

And, despite those inspiring words which rang out in the early Sixties, JFK really had no great interest in spaceflight.

I enjoyed this book immensely. The oral history interviews, the memories freed up after decades, the embarrassing details of the German scientists running slave camps, the explanations of the reasons why certain things were done that way - it's all a great read for anyone with a passing interest.

I envy the reader coming in "cold". This book would seem like magic to the younger folk who have grown up with no direct experience of those great days. I saw the moonwalk at school, but for so many it's just a fuzzy, grainy video clip from the olden days.

The olden days when great deeds were done, when the curves all lined up to impel nations to do wondrous

things. Nowadays, we just go to war and try to pound the other guy flat.

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## Andy says

There are countless books and documentaries on the U.S. space program and many times more armchair experts on the subject, and so any new account of the space race is bound to encounter criticism. One online reader notes 150 “doozies” in Nelson's book, critical lapses like this: “Thor is an ICBM on pg. 113, but downgrades to an IRBM by pg. 117” and “GET is Ground Elapsed Time, NOT ‘General’.”

I, however, think that Nelson's book succeeds where it counts; it made me marvel at the sheer grandeur of Apollo 11's accomplishment: landing two men on the moon and returning them home safely. Nelson describes the vast manpower needed to engineer, build, and test the spacecraft, and he notes that while each component was designed for 99.9% reliability, the craft was constructed of over 5 million components. Statistically then, thousands of parts were expected to fail. On Apollo 11, system failure led to at least one hair-raising event, a malfunction of the guidance computer during the lunar landing, requiring Armstrong to manually target and land the LM.

No mere technophile, Nelson highlights the personalities in both the American and the Soviet space programs. On Apollo 11, I read with particular interest about the private lives and professional tensions between Armstrong and Aldrin (after all, there could be only one “first man on the moon.”) and, much later, Aldrin's decline into alcoholism and depression. (Aldrin has also published a book this year, covering some of the same territory but, presumably, in much greater detail.)

Whether you consider Apollo 11 to be the pinnacle of American technological achievement or merely an act of socio-political machismo (and an extremely expensive one at that), it will forever be remembered as one of the most spectacular outcomes of the Cold War era.

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## Nolan says

Neil Armstrong's death earlier this fall had a profound impact on me. It served as a stark wakeup call and reminder that even boyhood heroes who slip the surly bonds of Earth with such majesty and dignity cannot live forever. I remember thinking on the day Armstrong died that his death was “one giant loss” to mankind, and I still feel that today. I remember that Sunday afternoon when the lunar landing actually happened. I was in my dad's pickup, high in the Uinta mountains. My folks were packing the truck to come home from a successful weekend camping trip; I was too enthralled with the moon landing to help, and they were too wise and intelligent to force me out of that truck. Its windows were down, its doors were open, and the lunar landing feed was being pumped at me through the blow torch signal of KSL radio.

Even now, I remember vividly the dialogue between Armstrong and Aldrin as he, Aldrin, described what he could see as Armstrong manually piloted Eagle to a safe landing spot. It would be years before I would fully understand the comment from the ground “you have a bunch of guys down here about to turn blue” as a reference to the ship's perilously empty fuel tanks.

Craig Nelson's ability to so eloquently tell the story of the Apollo 11 success enabled me to relive the

magnificence of that one shining day in my boyhood as nothing has before. But that's only a tiny part of why this book matters and why you should read it.

I've read many of the books that deal with the space race, and this one will go down as my all-time favorite. Here's why:

First, it humanizes these astronauts in ways that left me constantly charmed and amazed. In fact, so enthused was I as I read this that my wife checked the print copy out from the local library and finished it as well this weekend. She found it a sheer pleasure to read, and remarked frequently as she read about some of the fascinating facts presented here that you simply don't get elsewhere and that force you to really think.

First, you should understand that this book is not an exhaustive treatise on the American space program. It pays brief attention to the Mercury program, even less so to Gemini, but it focuses heavily on the Apollo portion, particularly Apollo 11. There's nothing in this that smacks of boring names and dates. You go into the lives of these astronauts and their families. You agonize with NASA officials about budgetary decisions that can make all the difference in whether men come home alive or never come home at all. Did you know, for example, that President Nixon had, prior to the Apollo 11 flight, written a speech announcing to the American people that the two men of the lunar module were forever stranded and would die on the moon? He did indeed, and there is a brief excerpt from that speech in this book.

You'll read about how Aldrin and Armstrong debated as to which would actually be the first to step onto the lunar surface, with Aldrin strongly pushing for him to be the one, and Armstrong, in that laconic manner of his, ultimately putting an end to the debate. You will read with some wistful sadness of the fact that so few pictures of Armstrong were actually taken while on the moon. You'll read about how they handle floating vomit and how they defecate in zero-gravity. It's all in here.

You'll read about the young marine who, upon opening the capsule at splash-down is shaken—not by how the three men look, but by how they smelled after so long in space. You'll read about the mushy foods they had to eat, and you'll read about Michael Collins and his extreme isolation whenever the main module of Apollo 11 went around the side of the moon that prevented him from communicating with Earth or with his comrades on the moon.

In short, this is a beautiful story breathtakingly told. Perhaps you're one of those readers who is easily pushed away from a book where there might be long or detailed scientific explanations. That won't be a problem here. Where there is a need for scientific explanations, they are presented in wonderfully plain language that will in no way leave you confused or uninterested. How does all this impact the children of these astronauts? It's all in this book.

Nelson takes you skillfully through the early days of the space program when the Russians were succeeding time after time, leaving American shaken and wondering whether a dictatorship was indeed better than a democracy in terms of providing the talent and resources necessary to go into space. So acrimonious was the space race at one point that the Russians sent an unmanned rocket up at the same time as Apollo 11 was journeying to the moon. Russia's hope was that Apollo 11 would spectacularly fail and that its rocket would successfully land on the surface. Of course, history points out that just the opposite was true. This book, as no other has for me, points out with stark clarity that the space race may have been a massive factor in the prevention of nuclear war between the two super powers during the height of the cold war. The author postulates that had the two nations not sought to achieve astronomical supremacy, they might have poured even more of their energies into achieving nuclear supremacy, which could have ended badly for everyone concerned.

There's plenty in this book to smile about as well. There's a great story here about a Congressman who insisted, despite the pleas of NASA officials, on seeing the chimp training facility involved in gearing a

chimp up to go into space.

The Congressman's visit happened on a day on which a monkey had finished some arduous training which had frightened it. When it saw the Congressman, it apparently defecated, picked up its newly minted calling card, and hurled it dead center against the Congressman's chest. He belatedly understood why NASA officials had initially begged him not to enter the facility at that point.

To the degree that it can, this book even puts a human face on the more than 400,000 contract employees who made the moon landing possible. You'll read about what happened to some of the lunar mineral samples brought back, and you will experience real sorrow as you watch three men whose lives could never again be the same upon their return to Earth adjust to those new lives with varying degrees of success. Ironically enough, it seems to be Michael Collins whose life was the least marred by the Apollo 11 experience. But that's all in here, and there's a better explanation of what I mean by that if you decide to read this.

Nelson's writing style is as on-course and powerful as the Saturn V. rocket that launched the craft into space that July. His access to the astronauts and even to once-classified documents paid off handsomely in this book. In short, if you were too young to have meaningful memories of Apollo 11, this book will give you an accurate feel for what it was like to experience. If you remember it vividly, you will find in these pages not merely a reaffirmation of your memories but scores and scores of additional reasons to be impressed by the endeavor and thrilled that you lived during that time.

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## Jeff says

I loved every minute of this book. This is a very detailed look at the Apollo 11 mission, with a good overview of the entire Apollo program and even a decent history of the entire space race thrown in for good measure.

The book starts with a detailed look at the preparation and final countdown of Apollo 11. At launch, the book breaks, and gives a full history of the space race, starting with the development of rocket technology before WWII. Once the history catches up to Apollo 11 (with special detail on the Apollo project and the engineering that went into the program), the author continues the story of 11, and follows the mission through its completion.

The book is full of quotes and citations. From conversations among engineers, to memos between NASA and other contractor employees, to full sections of dialogue (with added descriptions) between astronauts and ground crew during missions.

The book shares a multitude of amazing facts about rockets, the technicalities of space flight, the moon, and the personal lives and accomplishments of many of the key people in the program.

If you have even a slight interest in space, NASA, history, rockets, engineering, or just about anything else, I HIGHLY recommend this book.

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## Sean O'Hara says

Rocket Men is a rather preposterous novel about the United States sending a space craft to the moon in 1969.

The story begins with the rocket on the launchpad, waiting for blast off, with brief flashbacks to the launch prep, as the administrators make last minute checks on mission readiness and the "astronauts" undergo final training.

(The astronauts are named -- and I swear I'm not making this up -- Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. And "Buzz" isn't a nickname -- that's the character's legal name. Thankfully the third astronaut isn't Al American. He's Michael Collins. Why Nelson would name a character after a prominent member of the Irish Republican Army is beyond me.)

Then, just before lift-off, the story goes into an extended flashback. First comes a big infodump on the history of rocketry, from Oberth, Goddard, and Tsiolkovsky, to the German development of the V2. And this is where the book goes off the rails, launching into an absurd conspiracy wherein the Nazi scientists flee from the Red Army and seek asylum in America, where they're welcomed with open arms. This introduces a bizarre subplot involving these former Nazis settling in a small town in Alabama, where they establish themselves as members of the community while working on new rocket systems.

At the same time, the Soviets launch a bit of tinfoil into space with a radio transmitter. They follow this up by launching a crockpot with a dog inside, and cooking it on reentry. These feats, combined with a perceived Soviet superiority in ballistic missiles, prompt a young American President to brashly promise that the US will place a man on the moon within ten years.

What follows would be, in a movie, a musical montage, as the American space agency perfects the technology necessary and locates the best-of-the-best to fly the ship. The book loops around on itself as we finally get back to the launch and the mission proceeds.

And what a bizarre mission. Instead of building a ship that can go from the Earth to the Moon, land, take-off and return to the Earth, the US has built a vessel that will go into lunar orbit and then launch a shuttle craft for the actual landing. Nelson offers some technobabble about why this is a better design, but it never entirely makes sense. To his credit, though, Nelson does make the engineers dubious of the idea when it's first proposed, having them point out all the flaws.

The upshot of this mission profile is that one of the astronauts -- Collins -- has to stay on the ship while the other two take the shuttle to the surface. Exactly what Collins does while they're gone is never explained. Sounds like the most boring job in the world -- the ship is too small for him to do much, and the computers are absurdly weak, so he can't even play chess or solitaire.

The best part of the novel is the landing sequence, which features several technical flaws that almost derail the mission. First, the flight computer has insufficient RAM to deal with the sensor input and keeps freezing up. Then, despite the best laid plans, the crew finds their pre-picked landing site covered with boulders. Armstrong has to use an enormous amount of fuel to stay aloft, only sighting a flat piece of ground when he's within seconds of having to abort. The scene strains credibility, but Nelson's writing makes it exciting despite itself.

The actual time on the moon is rather anti-climactic. You'd think something exciting would happen there, but no. No aliens, no disasters, no Great Discoveries that change the way we see the world. The biggest problem faced by the crew is that the touchdown was so soft that it didn't trigger the shock-absorbers and retract the landing struts. As such, there's a three foot gap between the ladder and lunar surface. This renders Armstrong's first words on the moon ironic -- "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." (That's the exact quote -- you'd think an editor would've caught the missing article in the first clause. As it stands, the sentence doesn't make a lot of sense.) The other challenges faced are pretty minor -- the top-soil (if you can call it that) is so thin the astronauts have a hard time getting the flag to stand up; Buzz describes a rock as looking like mica, which pisses off the geologists at mission control.

The crew lifts off and makes an unremarkable rendezvous with the mothership, followed by an uneventful return to Earth.

The characters are borderline cardboard -- everyone who works for this NASA organization is an uber-professional expert who seems to have stepped out of the 1950s. Nelson even mentions this, explaining that the scientists, engineers and astronauts are so focused on their jobs that they don't pay attention to the changing world outside. The only exception is the, uh, let's say "feisty," Buzz. One memorable scene has him arguing about whether he or Armstrong should be the first on the surface. Unfortunately for him, plot-logic dictates that the guy named Buzz must be the wacky sidekick and Armstrong the jut-jawed hero. You just know that in the movie, Armstrong would be played by Leslie Nielsen and Buzz by Earl Holliman. Too bad there's no room for Anne Francis.

The book does well enough in depicting what space might really be like, but this whole "mundane sci-fi" movement does nothing for me. No Robbie the Robot, no sale.

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### **Upom says**

The space race was probably one of the most fascinating periods in American history. It was a time the U.S. came together to do something both literally and figuratively out of this world. But because of political polarization, detente, and poor PR on the part of NASA and scientists alike, nothing like the space race has happened since. "Rocket Men" does a great job of chronicling this forgotten time. Covering everything from the origins of rockets to the end of the Apollo program, Nelson shows the personalities and working of the 1950-1970 U.S. space program that put a man on the moon. Full of interviews, interesting facts, and entertaining anecdotes, the book shows how politics and technology came together to push the program forward. The book really covers some interesting territory, including the effects of fame and accomplishment on the men who went to the moon. The book was not perfect, however. Nelson ordered the events in a way that felt awkward to me. He also used a lot of block quotes from interviews that often felt like they didn't really support his points all that well. I also wish the book was a little more comprehensive, as the author glossed over or totally skipped many of the Apollo missions and the Gemini program. Nonetheless, this book really did a good job of showing that if it can get past its squabbling and its infighting, America can do some really amazing things.

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### **Patrick Sprunger says**

*Rocket Men* is a study in missed opportunity. The author, snared in the spell of his subject, failed to see what he really had: A good book about the Cold War arms race.

At the center of this book is a close study of the rocket and missile science essential to Cold War policy on both sides of the iron curtain, most notably how the space race served as a demilitarized proxy for testing communist versus capitalist preeminence. Mr. Nelson explains the Cuban Missile Crisis and quiet agreement to forego development of anti-satellite weapons as well as any other author of recent memory. More importantly, he delivers it in an accessible style that casual readers will "fly" to (if you'll pardon the pun).

However, acts 1 and 3 deal almost exclusively with Apollo 11 and the engineering triumphs of the summer of 1969. The author went to great lengths to collect comprehensive oral accounts, and captured something of the culture of NASA in the 60s through unadorned preservation of the idioms and manner of speaking of those close to the action. But a little bit goes a long way. Mr. Nelson is too dependent on long quotations;

rather than flavor the narrative in a positive way, they bog it down.

Nelson also relies heavily on figures and technical information. This alone isn't a problem, except the author appears to lack academic discipline. Agencies are sometimes referred to by their acronyms before they are referred to by their proper names. Also, the alphabet soup of acronyms is a little heavy - a courteous writer should try to limit his dependence on them when writing to a casual audience.

The biggest problem of all is the haphazard way Mr. Nelson has structured the narrative. Arranging the composition in three acts isn't bad, but the acts are both out of chronological order and redundant. I cannot see how acts 1 and 3 (which deal essentially with the Apollo 11 mission itself) perform different functions within the manuscript. They feel like heavy bookends, buttressing the middle act with unnecessary ornament.

*Rocket Men* is not completely without enjoyment. It's full of trivia and the author uses some of the quirkiest metaphors I've ever seen applied to a technical subject (comparing the Eagle lunar module to a bacteriophagic virus, landing on a foreign body and discharging its human genetic material will forever "infect" my memory). And, of course, act 2 (concerning the Cold War arms race) is a thrill. Reading *Rocket Men* is a little like being atop a Saturn V at launch: It lurches, is erratic and utterly beyond one's control. It's a bumpy ride, but one that may ultimately be worth the discomfort.

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### **Howard says**

A great history of the quest to land on the moon, for those that have lived it, and especially for those that are too young to remember.

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### **Noelle says**

This book to me is the "bible" of the space race. Lots of new details but presented in a manner that will still hold the interest of the everyday non rocket scientist reader .. sort of human interest aspects, intermingled with new trivia (did you know they had to prop the door open on the lunar lander as the design had omitted to put a handle on the outside to get back in - the ultimate "I've locked myself out" nightmare!!) mixed with a very few technical passages that the average reader may want to skim over. I enjoyed it immensely being a space / aviation addict but also because it really does put the projects I deal with in my "stressful" job into perspective!

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### **John Davis says**

I found this an absorbing read of the seemingly miraculous feat of America's race to be the first to put a man on the moon. This history is informative, entertaining, and thrilling. With a plethora of first hand reminiscing and reflective commentary by those intimately engaged with NASA's Apollo missions the reader gets a good lead-up narrative to and through the greatest voyage in human history. It is the story of a cold war and its accompanying space race with the Soviets that begins at the end of World War II with the U.S. acquiring top German rocket scientist Werner von Braun and his team. Then on through the Mercury and Gemini programs and all the challenges confronted by the engineers, astronauts, their families, and the four hundred thousand people generally unknown that made it all possible. A very satisfactory read that I highly recommend.

## Dave Gaston says

Once every two years (if I'm lucky) I have the rare privilege of reading a true five star epic. Nelson's detailed account of America's amazing space race captures an essential historical decade. Several times I was shocked by the clarity of his story telling at both the macro and micro levels. Nelson achieves this effect by layering together a sweeping series of well edited personal cameos, each on to itself a fascinating victory or tragedy. I'm 46 and this is one of those invaluable books that helps fill the void in my early childhood memories. It also historically connects my father's lifetime to my own. The space race captured the imagination of the world and sparked a national and international media frenzied. Nelson tells the inside story at Nassau, the Pentagon, MIT and the Kremlin. He also made the book deeply emotional and accessible by revealing the personal lives of each Apollo astronaut and their families. Finally, not to put too big a bow on it, this is also a very macho story stuffed with genius level intellect, national pride, determination, risk and bravado. The science alone is staggering. I kept thinking how did they do all this without an I-Mac? For God's sake this was the 1960's, we had yet to invent the 8-track tape player! One of the more interesting aspects of Rocket Men is the direct parallel and interrelationship between the space program and the international arms race. It seems obvious now that I step away from it, but prior to reading this fine book it never dawned on me that the two programs were in fact one and the same. What worked for space rockets worked for war rockets. Rather clever how it was spun and sold to America!

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## Barney says

I am a sucker for books about the Space Race. I picked this up when I finally broke down and bought "A Game of Thrones". I saw this book with the picture of Buzz Aldrin next to the U.S. flag during Apollo 11 flight, and I saw the discount price of \$5.98. SOLD!

Oh well, would that it were worth it. Don't get me wrong, it is not a bad book. Craig Nelson wrote a very well received biography of Thomas Paine, and his writing is crisp and detailed. What this one lacked was really anything new that one could not get out of any of the other 75,000 books about the Apollo program. I made the mistake of actually thinking it was solely about Apollo 11. That was my mistake, as Nelson's text careens through the timeline of the mission, interspersing anecdotes with stories about Robert Goddard, JFK, Werner Von Braun and Sergei Korolev. The info on Von Braun, whose record of service with the Nazis has been classified and then expunged, is quite well done.

But again, there is little here that is new. Besides some excellent quotes from Alan Sheperd concerning JFK (actually using the term "Space Cadet" with its original connotation) and a couple of anecdotes about the years after the mission, a reader should check out "Moon Shot" by Deke Slayton and Shepard.

For those (like me) who constantly bitch that the US put men on the moon 42 years ago and that we are now a country whose own citizens think can do nothing right, Nelson does offer some hope. He does point out that it took roughly 60 years to get from the Wright Bros to reliable jet travel. Of course, space travel is much more difficult than jet travel. It also took roughly 120 years between Columbus "discovered" a continent with millions of people on it and the founding of Plymouth colony. We could do more; the question as always is are we willing to pay for it? In the 1950s, it was "Hot damn! Let's go!" Now it appears to be "Waaaaaaaa! We can't afford stuff like space flight! We can't afford ANYTHING! Good lord! That SOB Johnson and that even bigger SOB Roosevelt ruined this country with their damn Socialism! I'll cut three departments from the Federal government: Commerce, the EPA and that one what deals with school lunches. Do you know

lunch ladies have a UNION!?!?!?! What in the Blue Blazes of the Left Nut of St. Reagan is wrong with these people?"

Sorry.

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### **Tim says**

*Rocket Men* by Craig Nelson is a good, solid book on the origins of the space program, the space race, and Apollo 11. Having completed it, I feel I learned a great deal.

The largest portion of the book is focused on the Apollo 11 mission and astronauts. The book begins with the lead-up to the Apollo 11 launch and then takes a detour to cover the origins of the space program, with a significant amount of time explaining the cold war fueled space race between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. The birth of NASA, the Mercury, Gemini, and early Apollo missions are all given the high light reel treatment. After this overview, we return to the Apollo 11 narrative, covering the launch, the mission, and lives of the Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins. Very little is mentioned of the later Apollo missions, which I found disappointing. The book concludes with an indictment of the current space program and an appeal to regain the magic that took us to the Moon and back.

Nelson uses a large number of quotes from those involved to tell most of this story, which works surprisingly well. It does make the narrative dry at points, but not enough to drag the book down. I recommend the book to anyone that has an interest in the space race period of the 60's or the Apollo 11 mission.

As someone who has always loved the idea of space exploration, I share Nelson's sentiments regarding the decline of NASA and America's drive to reach to the stars. Its sad to think that after the success of Apollo, a commission presented President Nixon with three options for the future of the space program: funding the development of the space shuttle and a space station, funding a manned mission to Mars, or funding both of the aforementioned with the addition of a lunar station. Nixon chose none of the above, and cut NASA's funding, telling them to focus on the space shuttle alone.

The decline of the manned space program is a tragedy and one that I hope will one day be rectified. In the meantime, however, you can read about the amazing things that man was able to accomplish in such a brief period of time, with combined strength of a few brilliant minds, determined people, and the support of the American public.

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### **Grant says**

It's always hard for a professional engineer to read a history of the technology they are involved with. When the (usually) non-technical author messes up on a technical detail, it's worse than fingernails on a blackboard...

However, Craig Nelson does a very good job of seeing past much of the hype and propaganda to tell some of the tales of the Moon Program, often in personal detail from the mouths of those having done the work. The book really grabs my interest when it talks with people I know personally in the industry. It makes me want to call them up and say, "Did the author get this right?" ....

The book is readable, factual and thorough. It drags through some points, but my sense of time is probably warped by the foreknowledge of what is to come. I would recommend this book for non-technical people that vaguely remember the Apollo days, but have lost the details in the fog of time. I would also recommend that they share it with their kids to make sure the current generation that were not alive in July, 1969 understand some of the "real" history that came before them.

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