



Ambassadors from Earth: Pioneering Explorations with Unmanned Spacecraft (Outward Odyssey: A People's History of Spaceflight)

Jay Gallentine

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Ambassadors from Earth reminds us that our first mad scrambles to reach orbit, the moon, and the planets were littered with enough histrionics and cliff-hanging turmoil to rival the most far-out sci-fi film. But it all really happened!

Drawing on original interviews with key players and bolstered by previously unpublished photographs, journal excerpts, and primary source documents, Jay Gallentine delivers a quirky and unforgettable look at the lives and legacy of the people who conceived, built, and guided our first unmanned spacecraft and planetary probes. From the Sputnik and Explorer satellites of the late 1950s, to the thrilling Voyager “Grand Tour” of the ’70s and ’80s, they yielded some of the most celebrated successes and spectacular failures of the space age.

Confessed one participant, “We were making it up as we went along.”

Gallentine fearlessly clambers to the bottom of a surprisingly bitter controversy over who first developed the technique of using gravity to steer a spacecraft. Also of special note are his candid discussions with James Van Allen, the discoverer of the rings of planetary radiation that now bear his name.



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