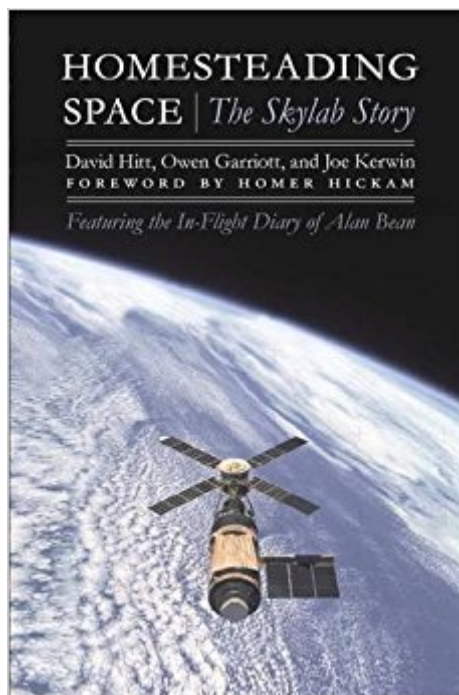




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# Homesteading Space: The Skylab Story (Outward Odyssey: A People's History Of Spaceflight)



## Synopsis

As the United States and the Soviet Union went from exploring space to living in it, a space station was conceived as the logical successor to the Apollo moon program. But between conception and execution stood the vastness of space itself, to say nothing of the monumental technological challenges. *Homesteading Space*, by two of Skylab's own astronauts and a NASA journalist, tells the dramatic story of America's first space station from beginning to fiery end. *Homesteading Space* is much more than a story of technological and scientific success; it is also an absorbing, sometimes humorous, often inspiring account of the determined, hardworking individuals who shepherded the program through a near-disastrous launch, a heroic rescue, an exhausting study of Comet Kohoutek, and the lab's ultimate descent into the Indian Ocean. Featuring the unpublished in-flight diary of astronaut Alan Bean, the book is replete with the personal recollections and experiences of the Skylab crew and those who worked with them in training, during the mission, and in bringing them safely home.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Pioneering long-duration spaceflight, the three Skylab missions are chronicled here by an authorial team that includes Skylab astronauts Owen Garriott and Joe Kerwin. Written largely in an oral-history style, with extensive quotation from participants in the Skylab program, the work explains the genesis of the space-station concept, the decisions that led to its actual configuration,

and the station's near-death experience when launched in 1973. As space-history readers know, critical pieces of Skylab ripped off during its launch, causing a crisis overcome by repairs the first crew made in one of NASA's finer moments. Less known was a danger confronted by the second crew that compelled NASA to prepare an improvised rescue mission (which proved unnecessary), and not known at all is the fact that astronaut Alan Bean secretly wrote a journal during his sojourn on Skylab. Published here for the first time, Bean's diary, added to voice transcripts of space walks, produces the you-are-there immediacy that buffs crave. They'll be delighted to encounter this original work, which is ideal for browsing.

--Gilbert Taylor --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"A worthy account of an important but largely forgotten program. . . . For those who would like to learn more about the achievement, Homesteading Space offers valuable personal recollections from those who were there."

•Roger Launius, *Air & Space* (Roger Launius *Air & Space*)

"A well-told saga of Skylab from start to fiery fall."

•Coalition for Space Exploration (Coalition for Space Exploration)

"Savvy consumers of space history have come to expect high quality in the *Outward Odyssey*

•A People's History of Spaceflight series edited by Colin Burgess. This fourth volume definitely does not disappoint."

•Rick W. Sturdevant, *Air Power History* (Rick W. Sturdevant *Air Power History*)

"Published here for the first time, [Alan] Bean's diary, added to voice transcripts of space walks, produces the you-are-there immediacy that buffs crave."

•Gilbert Taylor, *Booklist* (Gilbert Taylor *Booklist*)

"Homesteading Space is not just about the scientific knowledge that was obtained in orbit this is the story of the astronauts who conducted the experiments, who lived in space for weeks or months at a time, and how they coped."

•Andrew J. Liptak, *Worlds in a Grain of Sand* blog (Andrew J. Liptak *Worlds in a Grain of Sand* blog)

"The success of our nation's first space station did not come easily. The challenges were met with vision, courage, and competence. Those who personified these traits forcefully and honestly tell their stories here unfiltered by writers or press. The result is both historically significant and a great read."

•Ed Gibson, *Skylab III* science pilot and author (Ed Gibson)

Wonderful story about the idea, evolution, construction and operation of America's first space station. The end of the book is a big "what could have been" especially with NASA's departure from heavy lift boosters towards the STS

An old story, but lots of details that I didn't know about. The astronauts who took a day off - and didn't fly again. I'm with them! The political arm wrestling over using a rocket that had fuel in it vs just building the space station and boosting it into orbit. And tasking for the guys in space - idle time is wasted time! Gotta fill it!...

For me, Apollo has always been where it's at. Big rockets, big missions, groundbreaking history. Skylab? A bunch of guys floating around the earth for months at a time. Dull, right? Your mind will most certainly be changed when you read this excellent addition to the "People's History of Spaceflight" series. I picked this volume up immediately after finishing the terrific "In the Shadow of the Moon: A Challenging Journey to Tranquility, 1965-1969". I was so impressed with the quality of "Journey" that I was certain that "Homesteading" would be worth reading. Indeed, I was not disappointed. Since few authors have ever devoted the kind of attention to Skylab that Apollo has received (aside from the dry, official NASA documents), a void was really waiting to be filled. Until now, there's been a serious gap in the historical record. One of the best things about the "People's History" series is its reliance on first-person eyewitness accounts. In this volume, the story of Skylab is brought to life by those who designed it, lived aboard it and supported it from the ground. "Homesteading" relies heavily upon lengthy quotes from the astronauts themselves, assembled from relatively recent (post-2000) oral histories. The reader gets direct accounts from Alan Bean, Jack Lousma, Owen Garriot, Joe Kerwin, Paul Weitz and many others. (It's terribly unfortunate that Pete Conrad's untimely death in 1999 prevented him from being similarly interviewed as he considered his crew's rescue of Skylab more significant than his Apollo 12 lunar landing mission.) The tales range from the high drama of rescuing Skylab from its nearly fatal launch malfunction to chronicles of the reality of living in space for extended periods. Other interesting bits include detailed descriptions of how the second parasol was deployed by the second crew and how two malfunctioning RCS quads almost necessitated a "rescue mission" of that crew. There's also a great and detailed description of what it was like to ride the Saturn 1B into orbit -- something I've seen nowhere else. With the success of observatories like Hubble, robotic astronomy is something we now take for granted, but in 1973 humans armed with film-based cameras were needed to collect images of the sun that could not be obtained by earth-bound observers. Skylab delivered a tremendous scientific return for a comparatively modest investment. "Homesteading" spends quite a bit of time recounting that scientific research. (My one quibble with the book is that the chapter "Science on Skylab" near the end recapitulates much of what was covered in earlier

chapters.) "Homesteading Space" will make you pine for the days before spaceflight had become "routine" in the shuttle era. It will also make you wistful for the days when the U.S. had the machinery to launch a cavernous space station into orbit in a single shot, something that was given up in favor of a system that in retrospect seems like a regrettable 25-year detour.

Superbly written and researched, I have read most of the Odyssey series and they really are the benchmark for all otherspace exploration books to be measured against, this is as close as you can get to going into orbit yourself !

I have not finished this book (yet) but I find it to be detailed and fascinating. It supports my research but I would otherwise read it just to enjoy it. I followed Skylab when it was in orbit and thought I knew a lot about it, but Hitt's book is an eye opener. All fan's of human space exploration will appreciate it.

I'm glad to have this. I worked with the Skylab 1 crew.

This is a great book. Although Skylab is a distant memory, this book gives great insight into the challenges and dramas of mankind's pursuit of space flight / colonization. Well worth the read and highly entertaining (if you are a space nut..... of course).

To technical...to much about poop in space. I was really wanting a better read and I didn't get it. The people that went on the missions were hero's...the book is a dud!

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