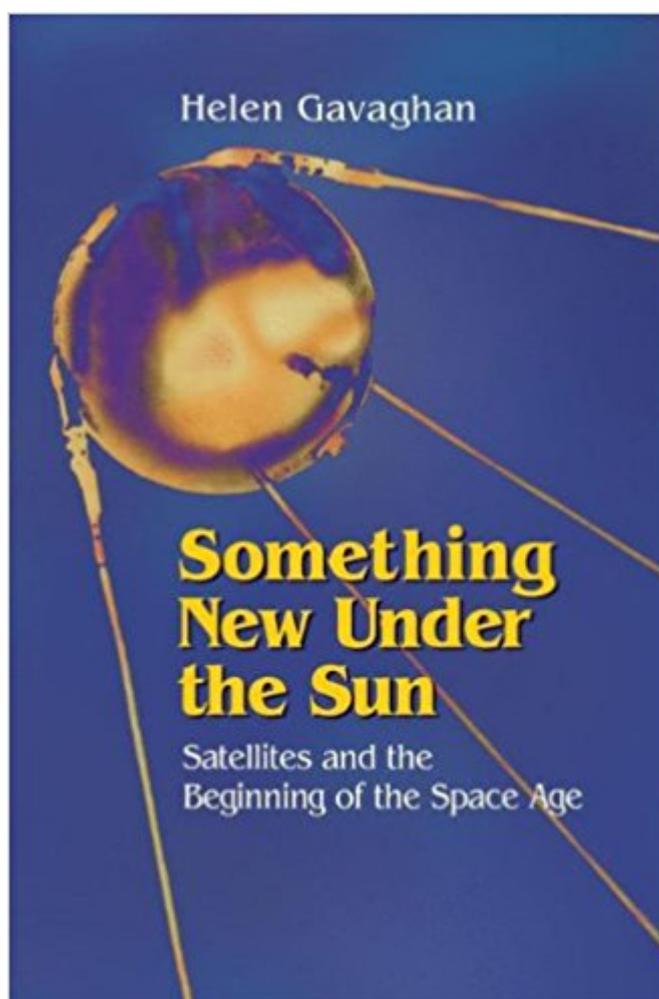


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Something New Under The Sun: Satellites And The Beginning Of The Space Age



Synopsis

In this, the first history of artificial satellites and their uses, Helen Gavaghan shows how the idea of putting an object in orbit around the earth changed from science fiction to indispensable technology in the twinkling of an eye. Focusing on three major areas of development - navigational satellites, communications, and weather observation and forecasting - Gavaghan tells the remarkable inside story of how obscure men and women, often laboring under strict secrecy, made satellite technology possible. "...a gripping read." -NEW SCIENTIST

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

On 4 October 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite into earth orbit. It was named Sputnik, which can be translated from the Russian as "fellow traveler" (Chertok 2006). It was soon itself to have many fellow travelers. Helen Gravaghan's *Something New Under the Sun* explores the history of this sputnik, the United States' reaction, and subsequent United States satellite programs relating to navigation, meteorology, and communication. This book, more than most, requires a complete reading from "Preface" through "Notes and Sources" in order to gain an understanding of the material presented. The majority of the book is derived from an extensive range of interviews that are listed in the "Acknowledgements" section and it is here that the book is strongest, revealing many intimate details of the personalities, technologies, and bureaucracies that shaped the first years of the Space Age. The weakest chapter of the book, unfortunately intended as a tribute to Sergei Korolov, the Great Designer of the Soviet space program, occurs when she

does not draw as heavily on her interviews, but instead on "secondary sources". The personal recollections that she deduced from her interview subjects put a very human face, in fact many human faces, on the accomplishments of the early days of artificial satellites and are an important addition to the history of the space program. The intimation that Gravaghan's project has strayed from its original intent comes in the preface where she reveals that the initial objective was to write a book that would cover the "history of every kind of civilian application satellite, from every country, from before the launch of Sputnik up to the 1990s.

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