

First on the Moon: A Voyage with Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr.

Buzz Aldrin , Neil Armstrong , Michael Collins , Arthur C. Clarke (Epilogue)

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First on the Moon takes the reader on a voyage with the three astronauts who first set foot on the lunar surface. Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin give us the exclusive story of Apollo 11: from the earliest preparations to the final touchdown back on Planet Earth. Theirs is the inspiring tale of a truly heroic adventure. Photographs accompany the text.

First on the Moon: A Voyage with Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr. Details


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From Reader Review First on the Moon: A Voyage with Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins, Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr. for online ebook

Tyler says

I have finally finished this book in the midst of my teaching here in Colorado. Life Magazine reporters Dora Jane Hamblin and Gene Farmer, with the help of the Apollo 11 astronauts, constructed a meticulous account of the first voyage to land humans on the Moon during the year after the mission. I felt the strongest aspect of the book was the authors' ability to take the reader into the Armstrong, Collins, and Aldrin households where the wives and children anxiously awaited each mission milestone. The book is also strong in describing the technology of the voyage. My favorite part, though, was probably the epilogue by Arthur C. Clarke in which he compares the newfound human ability to reach beyond Earth's atmosphere to the human ability to migrate from the oceans to the land during the early years of life on Earth. He was overly optimistic in what he felt the future would hold following Apollo (he felt that "well before" the end of the twentieth century, a human child would be born on the Moon), but so many of his points remain salient in 2018 if the political and entrepreneurial will can be summoned to send humans beyond low Earth orbit again.

Lire says

I cannot believe I hadn't heard about this book before. It was amazing.

Assuming that the reader finds minor details about the moon landing amazing...which I do.

Benedikte Moldskred says

The first on the moon

The Author is Seymour Simon.

That I like about the book was when the Neil Armstrong came to the moon.

That I dislike about the book are, there was too much to read and many difficult words.

Facts about the book, I learned at in July 20/1969 Neil Armstrong became the first person to set a foot on the moon.

The book suitable for older children.

Josh Williams says

this book talks about the first people to travel to the moon. It also talks about what it takes to be an astronaut. what they go through to prepare to go to space. This book would be good to introduce students to space, and astronauts. The pictures in this book were actual pictures from a camera.

MisterFweem says

It takes a talented team of writers to know when to step back and use original material and firsthand accounts, and when a bit of storytelling is needed to weave it all together. That's present in this telling of the Apollo 11 moon landing.

And really, that was the only way to tell this story, as the documentary evidence was strong in the NASA record and the world was waiting to hear more from the astronauts themselves. So while I'm sure Armstrong, Aldrin, and Collins worked hard on their contributions to this book, Hamblin and Farmer should also get their due.

Their inclusion of a glossary at the beginning of the book was handy, and I referenced it often enough until I refreshed the lingo in my head. (Being a big fan of the Apollo 13 film helped too.)

To be avoided is the epilogue by Arthur C. Clarke. This is a book of science, not science fiction, and as with most hard sci-fi authors, Clarke is good at envisioning the future but guesses poorly when it comes to connecting the future to the present. Many of his predictions depended on public support and political will extending into space exploration long after the Apollo moon landings, when it should have been clear even at the time that the support and political will were going to be fleeting. Kennedy's promise to land on the moon and return before the decade was out had been reached, and there were no more public or political goals to accomplish. There's a reason the only reason we know of Apollo 18 is because of They Might Be Giants.

Jeff says

Read this the week of July 20, 09 to coincide with the 40th anniversary. From the writers and photographers of Life Magazine. VERY detailed, including transcripts of most of the conversation between the astronauts and mission control, which gets a little tedious. The book shines in giving biographical background of the three astronauts, including their families, shining a light on what their wives and children went through during the flight. This is history written as it happened, before conspiracy theorists and revisionists could get a hold of the story. It makes you feel like you are living July 1969. Though a little long and drawn out at times, still a very good read.

James says

Not as interesting as I thought it would be. Very detailed, but more of a reference book than a compelling story. I finally slogged through it.

Laura Grabowski says

My parents gave me this book when it was first published in 1970. I have read it several times over the years, and am completely enthralled each time. The book gives wonderful detail about the Apollo 11 mission, as well as insights into the personalities and experiences of the crew. The book is out of print, but can be found on the secondary market. It's a great book for space enthusiasts.

Christopher says

I consider this the infodump history of Apollo 11. Of the great many histories of the Apollo program I've read, this still ranks near the top, mainly from the sheer volume of information it contains.

The book very elusively does not credit an author. I believe the Library of Congress actually credits this book de facto to Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins. In actuality, it was put together by editors of Life magazine (even though Life is not mentioned in the copyright!). I don't think I own another book--at least from the commercial market, anyway--that consciously omits an author copyright.

First on the Moon has a jarring quality to it, in that it is a book assembled by a committee. It feels like a quickie book released in the days or weeks following the flight (although the publishing date indicates 1970). The writing does not flow well, and it can be a very tedious read if you're not really into this subject. There are long stretches of official flight transcript dialogue, unedited chunks of technical descriptions, and extended detours for background data. Most of the quotes by the astronauts are block quotes of complete thoughts (in fact, I think this is the only book of its kind containing long quotes from the *astronauts' wives!*). That's great for completists like me, who revel in seeing the right contexts provided, but it must also be crashingly boring for the general reader who wants only the meat and none of the fat.

I learned a ton from this book, and it is probably still one of the most complete histories of the entire Apollo 11 mission. (The current gold standard is now David Harland's *The First Men on the Moon*, but this book presents more information tangential to the mission, such as the public atmosphere at the Cape, backgrounds of the crew, etc., whereas Harland's book focuses more acutely on the mission details.)

I take a point off for the sloppy assemblage, the quickie book approach, and the lack of focus, but if you like your data unfiltered and unmentholated, this still ranks among the very best Apollo 11 histories available.

Greg Enloe says

What a great year of in depth knowledge gain I've had in 2018. By reading the story of the Wright Brothers pursuit 60+ years before Apollo 11's moon-shattering success earlier this year, and finishing the year by reading this technical/personal account of the initiation and completion of the first men on the moon, completes an amazing circle of the focused determination required to risk lives to conquer new frontiers. The intense study, brainstorming of potential failure modes, sacrifices of family life, and unwavering desire to succeed are the common threads between the Wright's and America's space program. All accomplished within 60 years, after literally thousands of years of watching the birds, and wishing man could fly.

James says

Excellent description of both the lunar voyage and American life circa 1969.

I watched the lunar landing from a tiny TV set imported into my New Hampshire sleepaway camp during July 1969. We couldn't really see the moon that night; like much of that "summer" it was pouring rain.

The book helped me fill in what I missed by not reading daily papers while away at camp. It put me back into history.
