



PROJECT MUSE®

Frontiers of Space Exploration (review)

John David Anderson

Technology and Culture, Volume 41, Number 2, April 2000, p. 380 (Review)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/tech.2000.0050>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/33509>

Frontiers of Space Exploration.

By Roger D. Launius. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1998. Pp. xxxi+204; illustrations, appendixes, bibliography, index. \$39.95.

This book is part of a series titled "Guide to Historic Events of the Twentieth Century." Each number in the series has a similar format, opening with a chronology that is followed by a narrative overview. Then comes a set of topical essays, each analyzing an issue or interpretive problem introduced in the opening chapter. A set of short biographies rounds out the volume. Roger Launius's contribution to this series is a well-organized and very readable account of one of the great scientific and engineering feats of the twentieth century: spaceflight and space exploration. It will prove to be one of the shining lights among the Greenwood Guides.

Launius is a well-respected historian, and this book only adds to his prestige. His familiarity with the subject has enabled him to write a history of space exploration that is concise yet compelling. In his overview he refers to spaceflight as a natural part of the third great age of exploration, in which we have begun exploring realms where human life cannot be sustained without the benefit of artificial apparatus. *Frontiers of Space Exploration* is a nicely proportioned blend of chronology, analysis of technical and political problems, and reasoned discussion of the major accomplishments of the space program and of its contributions to human knowledge. Launius makes a cogent argument that space exploration represents the "final frontier" of human endeavor.

The book is a good read, and will be enjoyed by anybody interested in the highlights of space exploration from its origins to the present day. Launius includes a section titled "Primary Documents of Space Exploration," beginning with the declaration issued by the National Security Council in June 1958 and ending with an essay by Robert Zubrim of the National Space Society on the exploration of Mars as part of the promise of space exploration for the next century.

JOHN D. ANDERSON JR.

Dr. Anderson is the curator for aerodynamics at the National Air and Space Museum and professor emeritus of aerospace engineering at the University of Maryland. In 1997 Cambridge University Press published his *History of Aerodynamics and Its Impact on Flying Machines*.