



The Cosmic Inquirers: Modern Telescopes and Their Makers

Wallace Tucker

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The Cosmic Inquirers gives a remarkable inside view of the people who helped to forge some of the most sensitive tools of modern science, the astronomical observatories. Based on interviews with pioneers in several fields of astronomy, this book recounts the efforts of scientists to promote, design, and build these magnificent instruments despite political and technical obstacles. The astronomers in these pages tell us, in their own words, about their struggles with Congress, NASA, and colleagues to obtain support and funding. They speak candidly about the demands that Big Science places on its practitioners, and about their personal ambitions and frustrations, the problems with their profession, and the direction of future research. The Tuckers interweave into the fabric of their human story the scientific challenges posed by these observatories, most of which orbit about the earth's obscuring atmosphere. These telescopes have probed the entire electromagnetic spectrum, from radio waves to x-rays to gamma radiation, and have yielded a new understanding of phenomena as diverse as quasars, black holes, pulsars, and starburst galaxies. This book invites us to view these telescopes not merely as technological wonders but as the life's labor and achievement of outstanding individuals.



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