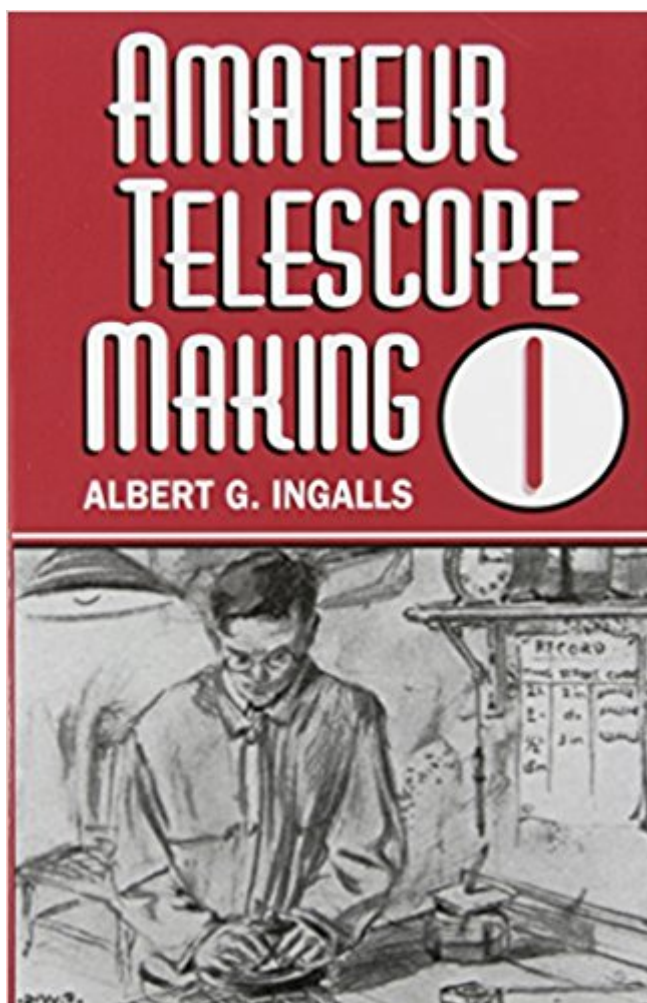


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Amateur Telescope Making (Vol. 1)



Synopsis

Definitive book on amateur telescope making. Contains plans and theory on a variety of styles. Subjects covered: Newtonian Telescope Mirror Making; Optical Testing; Workshop Wisdom; and Observatory Buildings.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Definitive book on amateur telescope making. Contains plans and theory on a variety of styles. Subjects covered: Newtonian Telescope Mirror Making; Optical Testing; Workshop Wisdom; and Observatory Buildings.

It appears to be a very interesting book. I have not yet explored it in detail.M.Jolly

Very in depth material. A good read for those interested in making their own telescope.

To even be able to get this book was a great find. A classic description of how an amateur can make his or her own telescope. Excellent condition.

This book was written in the first half of the 20th Century, as one of three related volumes. In 1996, publisher Willmann-Bell rearranged the hodge-podge collection of articles, into a more logically arranged edition, also of three volumes. This first volume deals exclusively with: Newtonian Mirror

Making, Optical Testing, Workshop Wisdom and Observatory Buildings. Together, these stand-alone articles detail the thoughts, methods and techniques of that bygone era. A modern reader might find such practices "primitive" these days, but one must remember that using the simplest of tools and measurements, ordinary (non-technical) folk were able to produce some excellent optics. Still, this should no longer be considered a beginner's book of telescope making. Though the general concepts and principles remain, the actual materials, fabrication techniques and measurement methods have greatly improved, or at least no longer apply to the text. Instead, this book should be considered as a resource for ATM's with some actual experience, and who might have the historical or technical curiosity to see how others accomplished marvels a century before, without the benefit of personal computers, light emitting diodes, or off-the-shelf telescope hardware.

I made my first two telescope mirrors using (or in spite of) the information I found in the original ATM Volumes I and II put out by Scientific American. There were a lot of interesting tidbits but you had to mine for them thru a hodge podge of material that Ingalls thrown together (he even stated that books one and two he edited were in no particular order). But much of the information in these books was already obsolete by the time I made my first mirrors in 1968. There is much talk in the original books about using HCF "honeycomb lap foundations" as a quick (and inferior) polishing lap, making your own abrasives, making your own eyepieces and alike, that even 40 years had long since been abandoned. I even think these books discouraged as many people as they encouraged to make their own telescopes, a point of view I share with the great John Dobson. There are far better, easier to understand books available today such as "Build your own Telescope" by Richard Berry, "Making Your Own Telescope" by Allen Thompson (written about the same time as the ATM books but far easier to follow), and of course the classic "How to Make a Telescope" by Jean Texereau. I have reviewed the new editions reedited and reorganised by Willmann-Bell, and while they are a valiant attempt to resurrect these tombs, what I found was a lot of the tidbits to be found in the later (post 1950) editions were gone. I would advise the novice if you've really gotten the bug to build a scope of your own from the primary mirror up, to get a hold of one or better yet of the all books I've listed above before you invest in the new edition of the ATM books. If you're still interested in seeing what was in the original books try the used book sites on the web. There are still a number of them out there at reasonable prices from checking myself before I wrote this review. They are interesting to look thru to see what techniques and materials used to be used, but I would not want to make my first telescope again from them.

I also started making my own telescope in 1968 and wanted to use the most complete book on the subject (and so I chose ATM because it was promoted by Scientific American). I later realized that it was too technical, difficult to understand, and much of it was OUTDATED ALREADY IN 1968. They just keep printing it because it still sells. And it still sells because people still ignorantly think that if it has Scientific American's endorsement, it must be the best (just like I thought). If you are a beginner, don't waste your money on this... If you are a pro at telescope making, then you may benefit from ATM, but that's about it.--George Stancliffe

What a great book! I decided to make my own scope, and so I bought this book, ground and polished a piece of glass, and I had a telescope! This book has one problem. It can get too technical at times. This can be desirable, but not when you are dealing with beginners. If this book was revised to be simpler, I am sure it would be the choice book for amateurs. --Matt Hanson

Now updated, this book is the definitive introduction to the subject. It is against this book that others should be judged. If you are interested in Amateur Telescope Making you should buy it (and probably at least Vol.2 and maybe Vol.3). In my opinion this is one of those books that really deserves 6 stars.

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