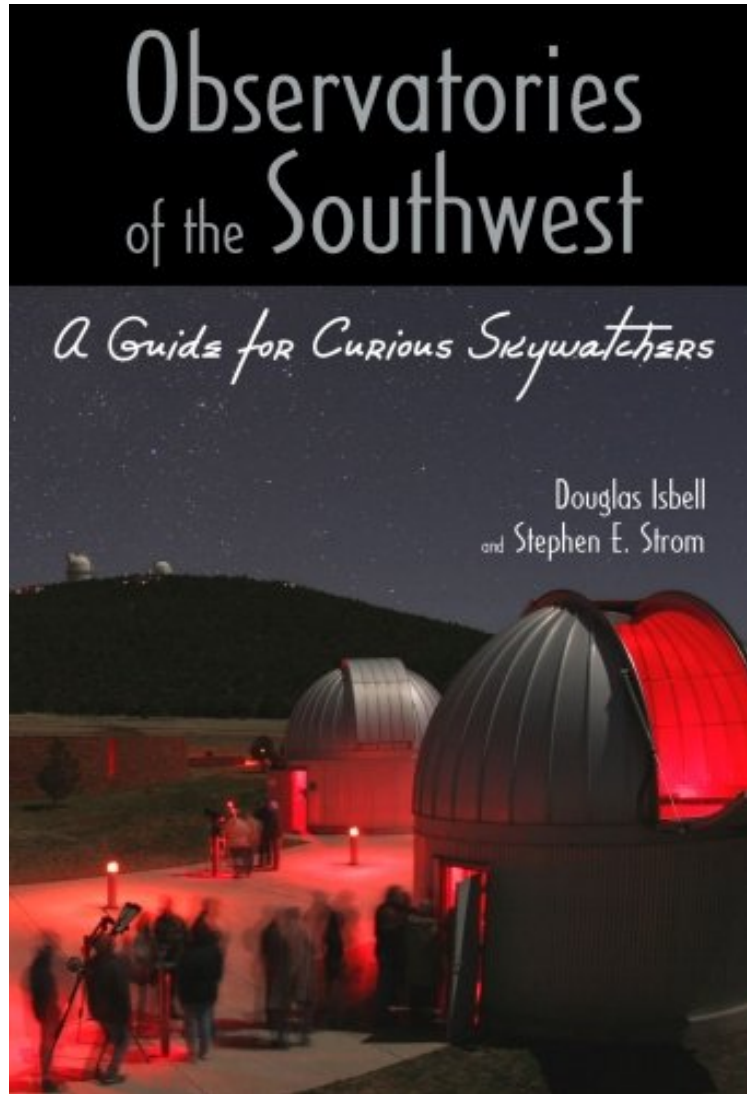


[Download] Observatories of the Southwest: A Guide for Curious Skywatchers

Observatories of the Southwest: A Guide for Curious Skywatchers

Douglas Isbell, Stephen E Strom

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Douglas Isbell, Stephen E Strom : Observatories of the Southwest: A Guide for Curious Skywatchers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Observatories of the Southwest: A Guide for Curious Skywatchers:

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Somewhat disappointing By Ursiform My initial surprise, upon receiving this book, came from reading the back cover, and noting the observatories not included. The Lick Observatory has what once was the world's largest telescope, the 36 inch refractor. It also has a 36 inch reflector that was the first major reflector using a metal coating on glass, the model for all of the large telescopes of today. Decades later, the 3 m Shane telescope became the second largest in the world for a while. Not included. The Mt Wilson

Observatory has a 60 inch telescope that was the largest in the world until its 100 inch neighbor, the Hooker telescope, saw first light. The Hooker was the largest in the world for three decades until the 200 inch was completed on Palomar Mountain. Mt Wilson also has three major solar telescopes, and was once the leading solar observatory in the world. Not included. (Which is especially odd given that in his preface coauthor Strom mentions how he was influenced by a trip to Mt Wilson as a young teen.)The Big Bear Solar Observatory is building what will probably be the largest aperture solar telescope in the world when it is completed. (Although much larger solar telescopes are planned elsewhere.) Not included. (This is less surprising, given that Big Bear has a lower profile than many observatories, and is currently closed to the public due to construction.)One might think that the authors don't consider California part of the southwest, a not uncommon view in neighboring states. Yet there is Palomar! (Maybe too important to leave out?) Facing the introduction is a map of the southwest that includes much of California. Mt Wilson and Big Bear would fall cleanly on the map. It looks to me like Lick would be right at an edge. Not the choices I would have made, but it's not my book.The next mystery was about authorship. The book is credited to "Douglas Isbell and Stephan E. Strom". But the preface is by Strom, and the "About the Authors" page lists Strom first, with about twice the lines devoted to Isbell. Yet it appears Isbell did the heavy lifting.The general structure is that for each observatory there is a few page history, followed by information on visiting the observatory, followed by an interview with someone associated with the observatory. This all appears to be Isbell's work. Then there is a few page "Science Highlight" about something related to work done at the observatory, apparently by Strom. (The interview and science highlight are omitted from the final entry covering Mount Graham.)The histories are serviceable, but not a lot more than you can find at most of the observatories' websites. Likewise the information on visiting can be found on line (and should be current). The interviews are not all that interesting. And the science highlights won't be greatly illuminating to most of the people who would be drawn to a book like this in the first place.Not a bad book, exactly, but not a very useful one, either. You can probably do better looking up observatories on line.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Almost complete...By HarpoA nice little book with in-depth information about history and background of our important southwestern observatories.Interestingly, it omits the Mount Wilson Observatory, only mentioning it in passing in several places, even though it covers the Mt. Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff.

With its clear skies and low humidity, the southwestern United States is an astronomers paradise where observatories like Kitt Peak have redefined the art of skywatching. The region is unique in its loose federation of like-minded research outposts and in the quantity and diversity of its observatoriesplaces captured in this unique guidebook. Douglas Isbell and Stephen Strom, both intimately involved in southwestern astronomy, have written a practical guide to the major observatories of the region for those eager to learn what modern telescopes are doing, to understand the role each of these often quirky places has played in advancing our understanding of the cosmos, and hopefully to visit and see the tools of the astronomer up close. For each observatory, the authors describe its history, highlights of its contributions to astronomywith an emphasis on recent resultsand information for visitors. Also included are wide-ranging interviews with astronomers closely associated with each site. Observatories covered range from McDonald in Texas to Palomar in California, with significant outposts in between: Arizonas Kitt Peak National Observatory southwest of Tucson, the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, and the Whipple Observatory outside Amado; and New Mexicos Very Large Array near Socorro and Sacramento Peak close to Sunspot. In addition to describing these established institutions, they also take a look ahead to the most powerful ground-based telescope in the world just beginning to operate at full power on Mount Graham in Safford, Arizona. With more than three dozen illustrations, Observatories of the Southwest is accessible to amateur astronomers, tourists, students, and teachersanyone fascinated with the contributions that astronomy has made to deepening our understanding of humanitys place in the universe, whether exploring the solar system from Lowell Observatory or studying the birth of stars using the army of giant radio telescopes at the Very Large Array. This book aims to inspire visits to these sites by illuminating the major scientific questions being pursued every clear night beneath the dark skies of the Southwest and the amazing machinery that makes these pursuits possible.

"Anyone who wants to visit these hallowed centers of astronomy needs to own this book. But you wont need to place the American Southwest on your travel planner to enjoy this book. It makes a terrific experience simply to read and enjoy learning more about the observatories and how their roles have changed over time from the comfort of your chair."Astronomy.com