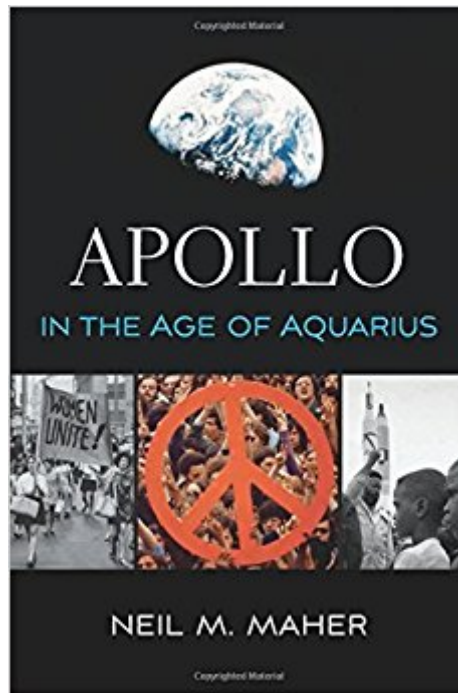




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# Apollo In The Age Of Aquarius



## Synopsis

The summer of 1969 saw astronauts land on the moon for the first time and hippie hordes descend on Woodstock for a legendary music festival. For Neil M. Maher, the conjunction of these two era-defining events is not entirely coincidental. *Apollo in the Age of Aquarius* shows how the celestial aspirations of NASA's Apollo space program were tethered to terrestrial concerns, from the civil rights struggle and the antiwar movement to environmentalism, feminism, and the counterculture. With its lavishly funded mandate to send a man to the moon, Apollo became a litmus test in the 1960s culture wars. Many people believed it would reinvigorate a country that had lost its way, while for others it represented a colossal waste of resources needed to solve pressing problems at home. Yet Maher also discovers synergies between the space program and political movements of the era. Photographs of "Whole Earth" as a bright blue marble heightened environmental awareness, while NASA's space technology allowed scientists to track ecological changes globally. The space agency's exclusively male personnel sparked feminist debates about opportunities for women. Activists pressured NASA to apply its technical know-how to ending the Vietnam War and helping African Americans by reducing energy costs in urban housing projects. Particularly during the 1970s, as public interest in NASA waned, the two sides became dependent on one another for political support. Against a backdrop of Saturn V moonshots and Neil Armstrong's giant leap for mankind, *Apollo in the Age of Aquarius* brings the cultural politics of the space race back down to planet Earth.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Maher takes two well-known stories of the long 1960s—the space race and grassroots political activism—and combines them into a new and thought-provoking history. He skillfully demonstrates that man's quest to reach the moon had unintended earthly effects as ideas about space exploration, resources, and technology collided in unexpected ways with local activism and emerging ideas about the planet. Anyone interested in the space race, the turbulent social politics of the 1960s, and changing ideas about nature and the environment should read this book. (Gretchen Heefner, author of *The Missile Next Door: The Minuteman in the American Heartland*) A major work from a fine writer. Maher is the first to explore how the space race intersected with the era's political, social, and cultural movements. (Adam Rome, author of *The Genius of Earth Day: How a 1970 Teach-In Unexpectedly Made the First Green Generation*) As a child in the 1960s, I was aware of both NASA's achievements and social unrest, but unaware of the clashes between those two historical currents. Maher does yeoman work in capturing the maelstrom of the 1960s and 1970s as it collided with NASA's program for human spaceflight. (George Zamka, Colonel USMC (Ret.) and former NASA astronaut) Neil Maher offers an outstandingly novel work on the conflicting political and cultural currents that swirled around NASA in the 1960s and 1970s. *Apollo in the Age of Aquarius* is a landmark in space history, a paradigm shift that will hopefully inspire a new generation to think and write differently about the nation's major technological achievements. (John Krige, author of *Sharing Knowledge, Shaping Europe: US Technological Collaboration and Nonproliferation*) I very much enjoyed this book. Think of it as a substance-rich, original on every page exploration of how the space program interacted with the environmental movement, and also with the peace and "Whole Earth" movements of the 1960s. Most of all it is a social history of technology. (Tyler Cowen *Marginal Revolution* 2017-01-30) On 20 July 1969, men landed on the Moon; back on Earth, the United States was gripped by sociopolitical convulsions. NASA and Woodstock may now seem polarized, but in this illuminating, original chronicle, historian Neil Maher traces multiple crosscurrents between them. The impact of the "Blue Marble" image of Earth on environmental policy is famous. Less so is how the costs of the Apollo program enraged inner-city activists—and how NASA duly deployed a crack team of aeronautics experts to solve practical housing issues for poor African Americans. (Barbara Kiser *Nature* 2017-03-30) In *Apollo in the Age of Aquarius*, Maher frames a meticulously researched story of NASA's interaction with the social and political movements of the 1960s. A reader with an interest in NASA history will

find a new perspective in this book with a focus on the space program's interactions with the civil rights movement, the women's movement, environmentalists, and the counterculture. Those with an interest in the cultural history of the 1960s will find an even more rewarding read, as Maher offers depth and breadth in his writing. (Linda Levitt PopMatters 2017-06-28)

Neil M. Maher is Associate Professor of History at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and Rutgers University "Newark.

Neil Maher is the most insightful eco-historian of the modern era, connecting the dots between our actions as social beings and the rising awareness of how those actions impact our fragile planet. Weaving concrete observation and intuitive deduction with startling alacrity, *Apollo in the Age of Aquarius* is a serious scholarly page-turner that will find great appeal in the wide-world beyond the halls of academia.

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