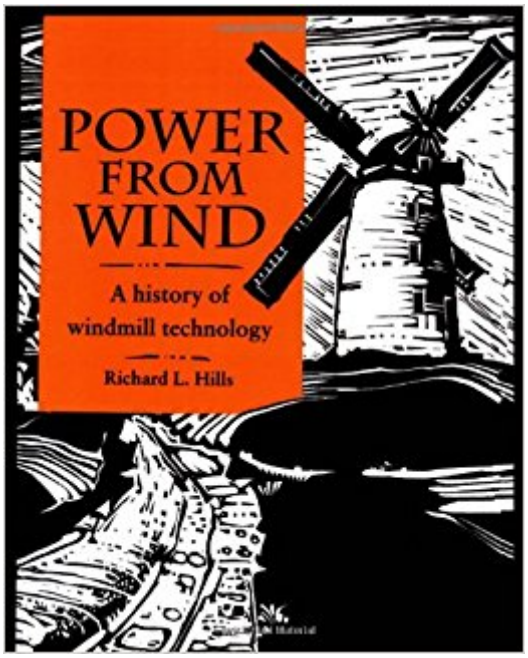
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Power From Wind: A History Of Windmill Technology



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Synopsis

Since the inception of windpower around 1000 AD, technology has been deployed to obtain the most economical power from wind. The author traces its technical evolution, concentrating on the growth in understanding of wind and charting crucial developments in windmill design. The history of the windmill focuses on North Western Europe, but Hills indicates the origins of the first horizontal windmills in Persia, Tibet and China. He also examines industrial applications such as in textiles, papermaking and mining. The book concludes with a look at the recent reemergence of windpower as a viable source of power in the wake of the energy crisis.

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Customer Reviews

"...an important contribution to the history of technology, for it is the first solid, scholarly monograph devoted to the history of the windmill....it will be...the place from which all subsequent studies of the windmill’s history begin." Terry S. Reynolds, Science"...comprehensive and compellingly organized history of the technology of the windmills of the world." Bret Ancowitz, Yale Scientific"Historians of engineering will therefore welcome Richard Hill’s full and well-researched account of the history of wind power, a book in which this most singular problem of design and development (which has a long history and is by no means yet a dead letter) is so elegantly described....Hills provides as good an account as one could wish to read of the techniques developed and deployed to convert air flow into mechanical movement, to rotate whole buildings to face the wind, and to try to deal, automatically, with the vagaries of wind direction and speed....a fascinating history, which Hills has

so expertly and lucidly set out." Norman A.F. Smith, ISIS"Power from Wind is not the typical windmill history book....End notes and a bibliography make this book especially helpful for readers interested in delving deeper into wind power history....Power from Wind provides interesting history..." Windmiller’s Gazette

Since the inception of windpower around 1000 AD, technology has been deployed to obtain the most economical power from wind. This text traces its technical evolution, concentrating on the growth in understanding of wind and charting crucial developments in windmill design.

Wonderful book full of descriptive line drawings, b&w photos, history and observations. A real gem for teachers and students interested in early wind power and its technological evolution.

More depth on the actual mechanics of windmills than anywhere else currently published in English. The chapter on Sails is the only treatment I’ve found, and explains the different windmill sail types quite understandably. The governor mechanisms introducted to smooth out windgusts into smoother power sources are also very interesting, while not bogging down the text. For those interested in the math and equations, the biography lists extensive historical sources.Very good coverage of British and Dutch windmill technology. American style windmills, only used to pump water, are sparsely covered --"A Field Guide to American Windmills" is not in danger of being challenged here.Windmills being used to grind grain or pump water are of course well covered, but the harnessing of wind for other industrial uses such as sawing in lumbermills, pulping paper, and uses in wool industry are also explained in their own chapters. Good to see these lessor subjects expanded on.The author does spend some time reiterating the standard arguments for where vertical windmills *didn’t* originate historically, but holds back from stating the growing if still controversial view of Viking origin for this invention sometime between 700-1000 AD. He simply states the known case of the earliest recorded windmills existing in Europe around 1300 AD, and Persians recording the first windmills they’d seen being built by the Crusaders and then spreading the technology East, and only in crude form. Hopefully future archeology digs will settle this question.Other historical technology books focus on recording specific historical windmills and their sites. This book gives the overview on how construction and mechanical methods improved, how those improvements spread (not uniformly!), and which proved best in actually getting the job done. While most windmills must by necessity remain with their sails stripped and idle as part of preservation, this book gives a detailed view of how they actually worked and moved in their time.

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