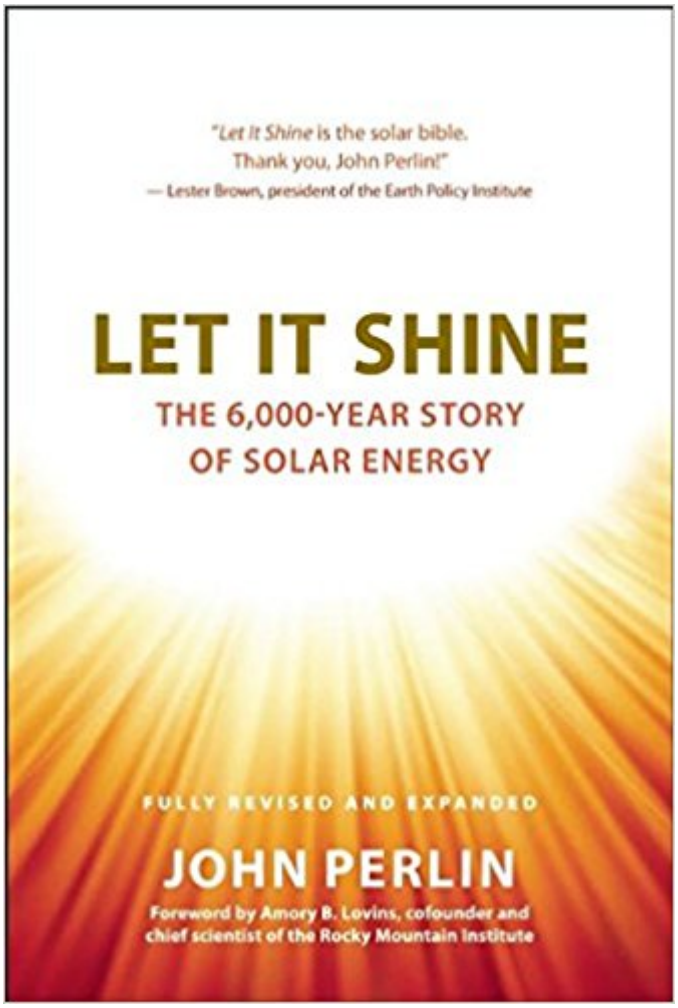
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Let It Shine: The 6,000-Year Story Of Solar Energy



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Synopsis

Even as concern over climate change and energy security fuel a boom in solar technology, many still think of solar as a twentieth-century wonder. Few realize that the first photovoltaic array appeared on a New York City rooftop in 1884, or that brilliant engineers in France were using solar power in the 1860s to run steam engines, or that in 1901 an ostrich farmer in Southern California used a single solar engine to irrigate three hundred acres of citrus trees. Fewer still know that Leonardo da Vinci planned to make his fortune by building half-mile-long mirrors to heat water, or that the Bronze Age Chinese used hand-sized solar-concentrating mirrors to light fires the way we use matches and lighters today.With thirteen new chapters, Let It Shine is a fully revised and expanded edition of A Golden Thread, PerlinÃ¢â ¬â„¢s classic history of solar technology, detailing the past forty years of technological developments driving todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s solar renaissance. This unique and compelling compendium of humankindÃ¢â ¬â„¢s solar ideas tells the fascinating story of how our predecessors throughout time, again and again, have applied the sun to better their lives — and how we can too.

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Customer Reviews

“Let It Shine is the solar bible. Thank you, John Perlin!Ã¢â ¬Â•— Lester Brown, president of the Earth Policy Institute“John Perlin is the historian of solar energy. He now takes the history back thousands of years to early Chinese architecture and the yang-sui, the little bronze mirrors boys used to start the family fire, to nineteenth-century inventors who feared that

coal supplies were about to run out, to modern passive solar buildings and todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s falling costs and growing use of photovoltaics. He does all this with a penchant for the diverse characters along the journey and with remarkable illustrations that vividly capture the six-thousand-year story of solar energy.Ã¢â ¬Â•— Daniel Yergin, Pulitzer Prize–winning author of The Quest: Energy, Security, and the Remaking of the Modern World and The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power“With remarkable depth, breadth, and precision, John Perlin lays out humankindÃ¢â ¬â„¢s long reliance on the sun before the carbon era and points the way to a healthy, comfortable, productive, resilient solar-powered world. There is more intelligence and common sense in this volume than in all the federal reports on energy of the last quarter-century combined.Ã¢â ¬Â•— Denis Hayes, former director of the federal Solar Energy Research Institute and founder of the Earth Day Network“The authoritative background story behind the worldwide solar revolution, Let It Shine is a story of human ingenuity and perseverance told with clarity and depth. The next chapter is ours to write.Ã¢â ¬Â•— David W. Orr, professor of environmental studies and politics at Oberlin College and author of Down to the Wire: Confronting Climate Collapse“Let It Shine makes it abundantly clear that solar energy has a long and glorious past — a prologue, in fact — that is as bright and diverse as its future will be. Far from being a disruption of the current energy economy, solar power can be harnessed in thousands of ways, making it easy to embrace and integrate into our future, as this book brilliantly demonstrates.Ã¢â ¬Â•— Daniel M. Kammen, distinguished professor of energy at the University of California, Berkeley“Let It Shine shows how todayÃ¢â ¬â„¢s renewable revolution builds on the tenacious efforts of countless generations of innovators whose vision we may finally be privileged enough to bring to full flower.Ã¢â ¬Â•— from the foreword by Amory Lovins, cofounder and chief scientist of the Rocky Mountain InstitutePraise for A Golden Thread, the previous edition of Let It Shine:“An absolute must-read.Ã¢â ¬Â•— Alexis Madrigal, senior editor at The Atlantic and author of Powering the Dream“Western man has been using the sunÃ¢â ¬â„¢s rays for useful purposes since the days of ancient Greece, as this comprehensive, carefully researched, clearly written history of solar architecture and technology makes abundantly clear. The illustrations and diagrams that illuminate the text on almost every page are especially fine examples of modern graphic presentations.Ã¢â ¬Â• — New York Times“It is a humbling book. Handsomely illustrated and lucidly written, A Golden Thread is a rich mine of information.Ã¢â ¬Â• — Los Angeles Times“The history of mankindÃ¢â ¬â„¢s efforts to use the sunÃ¢â ¬â„¢s energy is a fascinating story, one told in a lively yet scholarly manner here....The triumphs and defeats of solar pioneers help us appreciate what a

solar future may yet hold.Ã¢â ¬Â•— Christian Science Monitor“This book is sorely needed in the solar publication field, for although there are any number of how-to books on solar technology, few if any examine the history of this much-neglected energy source in any depth.Ã¢â ¬Â• — Denver Post“I just happened to be carrying A Golden Thread in my suitcase at Princeton. On my way home, I devoured it. Richly illustrated and thoroughly documented, it is a feast for the most critical historianÃ¢â ¬â„¢s mind and eye.Ã¢â ¬Â• — Technology Review

An international expert on solar energy and forestry, John Perlin has lectured extensively on these topics in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. Perlin is the author of A Forest Journey: The Story of Wood and Civilization as well as From Space to Earth: The Story of Solar Electricity. Perlin mentors those involved in realizing photovoltaic, solar hot-water, and energy-efficiency technologies at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), and coordinates the California Space Grant Consortium as a member of UCSBÃ¢â ¬â„¢s department of physics.

PerlinÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s original solar history, A Golden Thread was an inspiration to my solar career. Let It Shine digs deeper and wider into the past, and adds a major section on photovoltaics. Is there nothing new under the sun? Sure there is, but the development of successful solutions from the sun go WAY back. So do the follies. Perlin makes it all enlightening and amusing. Understanding the past helps us avoid classic mistakes, and gives a rich context to what we are seeing and doing now. IÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ve read most of PerlinÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s books. Even if they seem to be out of my field, I find them a first-class read. The man is a true, original historian, and a great storyteller who projects the big picture.If you are in any way involved with solar energy, at any level (aren't we all?), you will be grateful to have this book, if only for the adventure.

What a great book! Perlin walks you through man's discovery and rediscovery of passive solar building practices over the last six thousand years. It's essentially a history of how we've used solar energy for a long time to warm our homes and heat water for our homes, and into recent history with photovoltaics and solar thermal. After you read the book you'll look at architecture and city layout differently (unless you're already a passive solar fan). There's nothing controversial in the book - Perlin doesn't get negative. He really just points out the obvious, which people have forgotten over and over again.The book's cover makes it look like a hippie manifesto, but it's not (there's nothing wrong with hippies). It's a book about the practical use of free energy in our daily lives. Highly

recommended.

In Let It Shine, John Perlin tells the fascinating story of how we came to learn about and understand the power of the sun. Solar knowledge and technologies have come a long way, and Let It Shine will inspire you to reconsider the role the sun can play in your life. I have always been in awe of how simple and elegant it is to take full advantage of the sun through thoughtful design. Thus, I especially appreciate the chapters describing when and how humans learned about the sunÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢s skypath and the importance of building orientation. Few architects and builders design with the sun in mind, and this is why most of our utility money goes toward heating and cooling the spaces in which we live, work and play. Designing with the sun can eliminate (in some climates) or significantly reduce these energy loads. And, such design often lends itself to a building more conducive to utilizing a sun-powered technology for heating water and producing electricity. This progression provides a more efficient and cost-effective path for achieving net zero energy and regenerative design. Let It Shine reminds us that what is old is new (and improved) again, but also how using the sun is even more important today as we strive to live more responsibly on Earth.

John Perlin’s book "Let it Shine" is a marvelous book for understanding the role that solar energy has played throughout human history. I read his earlier version "A Golden Thread" in the 1980s and was inspired then, but this new book is much more comprehensive and covers a longer timeline. John’s book shows that using solar energy is not new, so we should feel confident that shifting from fossil fuels to solar energy is both possible and desirable. This book is highly recommended to anyone with an interest in solar energy.

As a retired electrical engineer who worked thru the years 55-97, it was interesting to read a book written by a historian about that time frame. It is easily read and has lots of notes to support what was written. I bought the book to find out about the time frame 1850-1950 and was not disappointed, and the added info I learned from the time period 1945-1990 was a pleasant surprise.

This was an amazing book that spelled out the history and technology of solar energy in an easy to understand way. This is a great read for anyone interested in incorporating solar into building a home. The book focuses more on theory than engineering. The way the author ties together history with the topic of solar energy is excellent. Study history to learn from mankind’s mistakes.

The Solar history book!!!!

I enjoyed this book out in the sun. It sums up methods of actively and passively using solar energy, and the author has collected many interesting stories.

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