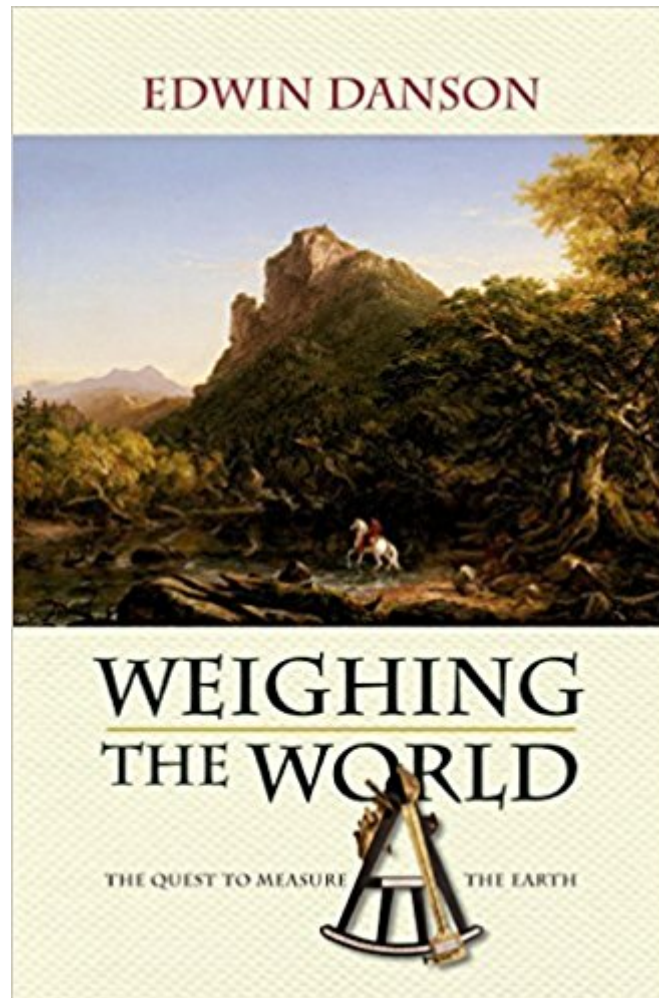




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Weighing The World: The Quest To Measure The Earth



Synopsis

At the start of the 18th century there were no maps, anywhere in the world. No one knew, with any certainty, the shape of the earth or what lay beneath its surface. Was it hollow or solid? Were the Andes the highest mountains on the Earth or was it the peak of Tenerife? Was the Earth a perfect sphere or slightly squashed as Sir Isaac Newton prophesized? In *Weighing the World*, master-surveyor and bestselling author Edwin Danson presents the stories of the scientists and scholars who cut their way through jungles, crossed the arctic tundra, and braved the world's highest mountains to discover the truth about our Earth. Danson also recounts the extraordinary experiment, conducted on a desolate Scottish peak by Astronomer Royal Neville Maskelyne, to understand the so-called "attraction of mountains," the curious capability mountains have to bend gravity, without which it would be impossible to accurately map Earth's surface. A spell-binding scientific adventure story, *Weighing the World* will intrigue anyone curious about the shape of our planet and how we have come to know it.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fascinating story of the mathematical quest to establish the size, mass, dimensions of our planet, by pioneers of geophysics. I gave my copy to a friend who loves it.

The author is clearly an expert in his subjects' fields, so much of his descriptions of their meticulous work might be lost on the reader who, like me, is not a geographer, not an astronomer, and possesses only rudimentary math skills. Even so, I could not put this book down. The drive to measure the world precisely, to figure out where exactly everything is, makes sense, but the actual painstaking process of doing that is something I admit to never having given much thought before, and here it comes across both clearly and compellingly. The wonderful characters who propelled this effort forward are described sparsely but precisely; the early deaths of crabby, racist, complex-ridden mathematicians should not feel like tragedy, but in this book they do. And because this book details the actual measuring processes - processes not included in other histories of geography and cartography - it fills a unique niche. I'm very glad I read it.

A remarkable book, addictive notwithstanding the huge amount of historical facts that the author displays packed in nearly 280 pages. Every page is full of data for the human struggle for knowledge in the XVIII century. Highly recommendable.

Arrived in better condition than advertised.

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