



# Flat Earth: The History of an Infamous Idea

By Christine Garwood

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Contrary to popular belief fostered in countless school classrooms the world over, Christopher Columbus did not discover that the earth was round. The idea of a spherical world had been widely accepted in educated circles from as early as the fourth century b.c. Yet, bizarrely, it was not until the supposedly more rational nineteenth century that the notion of a flat earth really took hold. Even more bizarrely, it persists to this day, despite Apollo missions and widely publicized pictures of the decidedly spherical Earth from space.

Based on a range of original sources, Garwood's history of flat-Earth beliefs---from the Babylonians to the present day---raises issues central to the history and philosophy of science, its relationship to religion and the making of human knowledge about the natural world. *Flat Earth* is the first definitive study of one of history's most notorious and persistent ideas, and it evokes all the intellectual, philosophical, and spiritual turmoil of the modern age. Ranging from ancient Greece, through Victorian England, to modern-day America, this is a story that encompasses religion, science, and pseudoscience, as well as a spectacular array of people and places. Where else could eccentric aristocrats, fundamentalist preachers, and conspiracy theorists appear alongside Copernicus, Newton, and NASA, except in an account of such a legendary misconception?

Thoroughly enjoyable and illuminating, *Flat Earth* is social and intellectual history at its best.

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## Flat Earth: The History of an Infamous Idea By Christine Garwood Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Garwood, historian of science at the Open University in England, presents a thoroughly enjoyable first book. Examining the belief that the world is flat from a wide array of perspectives, she makes some important points. She demonstrates quite convincingly, for example, that, contrary to what most people believe, the ancients knew the world was not flat: the earth has been widely believed to be a globe since the fifth century B.C. Only in the 19th century did acceptance of a flat earth spread, promoted largely by biblical literalists. Garwood does an impressive job of comparing those flat-earthers with modern-day creationists. She also makes the case that it's all but impossible to argue effectively with true believers. Modern believers assert that the space program is a hoax. In 1994, on the 25th anniversary of the first manned landing on the moon, a *Washington Post* poll estimated that approximately 20 million Americans thought the landing was staged on Earth, underscoring that some outrageous beliefs still hold sway. Garwood is respectful throughout, analyzing the philosophical underpinnings of those who have doubted, and continue to doubt, the Earth's rotundity. (Aug.)

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## Review

“An energetic, all-inclusive, and amusing account of man’s impressive capacity for self-delusion. Every creationist should read it.” ---Steve Jones, author of *Darwin’s Ghost*

“Highly entertaining and often hilarious.” ---*Sunday Telegraph*

“The focus of Garwood’s impressive research is a forgotten episode in the history of science.” ---*New Scientist*

“A glorious romp around the world of Flat Earthism.” ---*Daily Express*

“Garwood’s often hilarious book is a serious look at an aberrant belief and those who took it up in modern times, centuries after the ?at Earth had been scientifically dismissed. . . . Garwood’s books shows just how doggedly faith in an unscienti?c idea can hold.” ---*The Commercial Dispatch*

“[A] quirky and highly entertaining slice of intellectual history. Elicits plentiful laughter and astonishment.” ---*Sunday Times*

“Wonderful . . . dispassionate, and understanding.” ---*Financial Times*

## About the Author

Christine Garwood studied history as an undergraduate and was later awarded a doctorate in history of science. She has been a Research Fellow at the Open University and is currently a freelance writer and researcher.

## Users Review

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#### Douglas Whatley:

Why? Because this Flat Earth: The History of an Infamous Idea is an unordinary book that the inside of the book waiting for you to snap this but latter it will zap you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book

beside it was fantastic author who have write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of benefits than the other book get such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking method. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

### **Shawn Proctor:**

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book especially book entitled Flat Earth: The History of an Infamous Idea your mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each and every aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely can be your mind friends. Imaging every word written in a publication then become one type conclusion and explanation in which maybe you never get ahead of. The Flat Earth: The History of an Infamous Idea giving you an additional experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful data for your better life in this particular era. So now let us teach you the relaxing pattern here is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning a. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

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