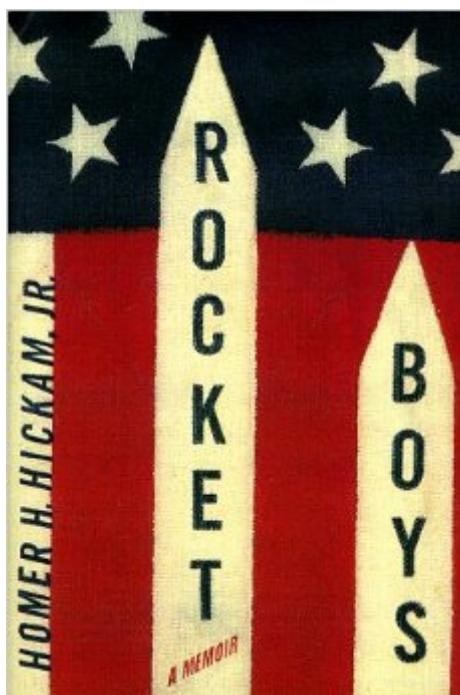


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# Rocket Boys (The Coalwood Series #1)



## Synopsis

"Until I began to build and launch rockets, I didn't know my home town was at war with itself over its children, and that my parents were locked in a kind of bloodless combat over how my brother and I would live our lives. I didn't know that if a girl broke your heart, another girl, virtuous at least in spirit, could mend it on the same night. And I didn't know that the enthalpy decrease in a converging passage could be transformed into jet kinetic energy if a divergent passage was added. The other boys discovered their own truths when we built our rockets, but those were mine." So begins Homer "Sonny" Hickam Jr.'s extraordinary memoir of life in Coalwood, West Virginia—a hard-scrabble little company town where the only things that mattered were coal mining and high school football. But in 1957, after the Soviet satellite Sputnik shot across the Appalachian sky, Sonny and his teenaged friends decided to do their bit for the U.S. space race by building their own rockets—and Coalwood, Sonny and A powerful story of growing up and of getting out, of a mother's love and a father's fears, Homer Hickam's memoir *Rocket Boys* proves, like Angela's Ashes and Russell Baker's *Growing Up* before it, that the right storyteller and the right story can touch readers' hearts and enchant their souls. In a town where the only things that mattered were coal-mining and high-school football, where the future was regarded with more fear than hope, a young man watched the Soviet satellite Sputnik race across the West Virginia sky—and soon found his future in the stars. In 1957, Homer H. "Sonny" Hickam, Jr., and a handful of his friends were inspired to start designing and launching the home-made rockets that would change their lives and their town forever. Looking back after a distinguished NASA career, Hickam shares the story of his youth, taking readers into the life of the little mining town of Coalwood and the boys who would come to embody its dreams. Step by step, with the help (and occasional hindrance) of a collection of unforgettable characters, the boys learn not only how to turn scrap into sophisticated rockets that fly miles into the sky, but how to sustain their dreams as they dared to imagine a life beyond its borders in a town that the postwar boom was passing by. *Rocket Boys* has already caught the eye of Hollywood: The producer of *Field of Dreams* is now working to produce a major motion picture in time for next year's Academy Awards. A uniquely endearing story with universal themes of class, family, coming of age, and the thrill of discovery, Homer Hickam's *Rocket Boys* is evocative, vivid storytelling at its most magical.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For those who loved the movie "October Sky", this book gives even more insight to the life of a teenage boy in Coalwood, West Virginia, in a time where the "outside world" was concerned with the Cold War and Dr. von Braun's team with "cashing up to the Russians in rocketry." The residents in Coalwood, however, were more concerned with what was below them rather than above, and with their dominant high school football team. 14-year-old Homer Hickam, Jr. (Sonny) is aware that only football stars (like his older brother Jim) ever get college scholarships, and the glory that he and his ragtag group of friends envy. It is common knowledge that the rest must work in or for the mine in the company-owned town. However, seeing Sputnik fly in 1957 and the attempts of Dr. von Braun's missiles, Sonny is inspired to launch his own rockets. With the support from his Mom, teacher, and friends (little from his father, the manager of the mines), Sonny, Roy Lee, and Sherman form the BCMA- Big Creek Missile Agency. They are later joined by Quentin and Billy, becoming widely known throughout Coalwood as the "Rocket Boys". They suffer through many mishaps during their teenage years, but manage to pull through. Sprinkled with humor, romance, and sadness, this book tells of a boy growing up trying to earn the approval of his father, his town, and ultimately himself. Many parts will make you laugh- Mom's constant warning not to "blow yourself up", Roy Lee's advice to Sonny about his love, Dorothy, and the Rocket Boy's experience getting moonshine for rocket fuel- and ending up drunk! Other parts will make a shiver run down your spine- how Sonny had to face his bitterness after the mine accident, and his arguments with his father. I got the same tingle reading the last chapter that I got from watching the movie- which is also wonderful. I would recommend this book to anyone who has ever fought hard to accomplish a dream. It is a truly inspiring memoir that will leave anyone with a feeling of happiness, sadness, and satisfaction all rolled into one. Read "Rocket Boys"- you won't forget it.

I get so depressed by some of the books on the market. Heavy themes, hidden meanings, verbose authors. October Sky is a get what you see book. It is simple but not too simple. It is an honest story about an honest guy growing up in West Virginia. His life is like ours. He has friends and enemies, successes and failures, girlfriends and conflicts. But his life is also a model for our time. Homer Hickam is a very special person and he has told the story of his life in this book. Mr. Hickam grew up modestly in a coal mining town. His love of rocketry, no his passion for rocketry pulls him out of an average community and propels him to success inspite of his family and surroundings. Few books appeal to adults and young adults alike. This is one. I want my wife to read it as well as my 13 year old son. Hickam is a mentor and I've never even met him. This is such down to earth honest writing it makes you smile. Read this wonderful story and you will have a hard time approaching your next mystery or drama. It is refreshing. I don't even want to see the movie after reading this book. I want the images I have to last not the ones Hollywood created.

Homer Hickam's Rocket Boys was one of those books that I couldn't put down, and I thought about for a long time after I finished it. There is humor mixed in with the story of one boy's determination to succeed in achieving his goals. I would recommend this book to people who are looking for an inspiring story. It is about growing up in a rural mining town in West Virginia struggling to accomplish goals in space when the main concern of the town is what is below the ground, not what is above it. I thought that this was an excellent book and would recommend it to teenagers as well as adults. It's considered an adult book, but it is an easy book to read and teenagers can relate to the main character. This is one of my favorite books. Through reading this book, I have learned that hard work and determination will allow a person to reach his or her goals in life. In this book, Homer Hickam had many obstacles to overcome in order to reach his goal of becoming a rocket scientist. This book has taught me that if I have a dream, I must try to reach it. No matter how many and how hard the obstacles are that come in the way of dreams, a person must keep trying. I would also recommend seeing the movie that was based on this book, October Sky. October Sky is an accurate presentation of the story. If you have already seen the movie, you are sure to enjoy this book.

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