

# Books

*From Hiroshima to the Moon*  
*Chronicles of Life in the Atomic Age*  
By Daniel Lang  
Simon and Schuster . . . . \$5.95

Daniel Lang became a chronicler of the Atomic Age by chance. As a staff member of *The New Yorker*, he was assigned to interview a worker at Oak Ridge in the summer of 1945, after the bombing of Hiroshima. Like most of his fellow-workers, the Oak Ridge man had found out, for the first time, what it was he had been working on all through the war.

Mr. Lang was led on from this assignment to get the story from intelligence agents on how the work of the Manhattan District was kept secret during the war. Then he went on to report on post-war life in Oak Ridge. Since then, most of Lang's reporting has been concerned, in one way or another, with life in the Atomic Age.

In 1948 a number of his articles

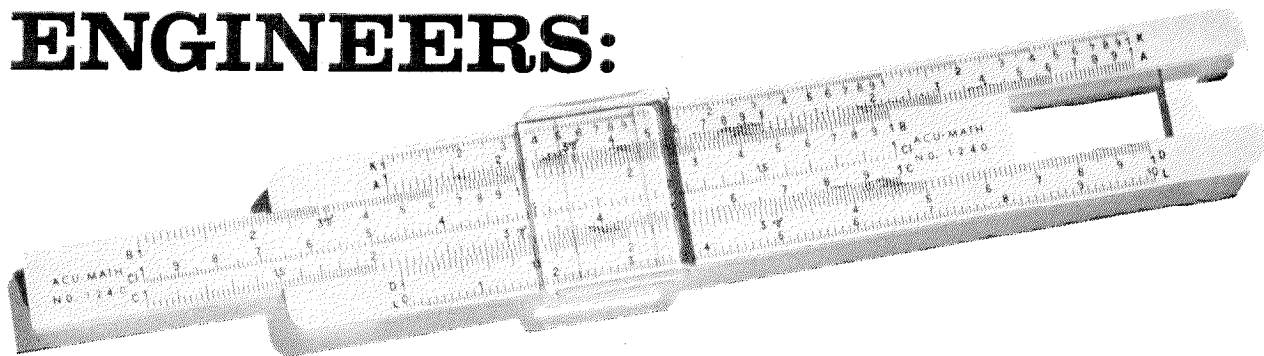
were collected into a book called *Early Tales of the Atomic Age*. A second collection, *The Man in the Thick Lead Suit*, appeared in 1954. *From Hiroshima to the Moon* includes selections from these earlier books, as well as a good deal of new material.

Lang calls his book ". . . the chronicles of a layman who, by virtue of his occupation, has been able to wander through the bewildering maze of developments since the Year One, and it is these very wanderings that lend the book whatever shape and form it may possess. Perhaps its contents will afford historians to come a clue as to what went on in the tumultuous era through which we have already lived, an almost perfectly carved-out piece of history in which we have gone from Hiroshima to the moon (and beyond), from earthly ruins to the unspoiled heavens. We will probably be centuries, or whatever time is left to us, assessing the consequences of these past few years, and it may be that

one useful way of coping with so concentrated a burst of history is to handle it journalistically. Perspective may come later . . ."

The material in *From Hiroshima to the Moon* is presented as straight journalism — and apparently pretty much as originally written, with updating or second guessing. It is class A journalism, too, and superb science writing. The articles are dated, running from August 1945 ("The War's Top Top Secret"—the Manhattan District) to November 1958 ("Man in Space"—some facts about the human factors in space travel). In between, there are chronicles on Brookhaven, Los Alamos, White Sands, Yucca Flat, and Cape Canaveral; on the AEC and Project Vanguard; on flying saucers, satellites, and fallout; on Wernher von Braun, Samuel Goudsmit, an Indian shepherd who made a uranium strike, and the Oak Ridge physicist who became an Episcopal deacon.

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