



Study, Measure, Experiment: Stories of Scientific Instruments at Dartmouth College

David Pantalony, Richard L. Kremer, Francis J. Manasek

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Dartmouth College boasts one of the largest collections of old scientific instruments in North America; they range from precision machines that represented the most advanced technology of their day to homemade devices produced by faculty and students. This book examines approximately 150 items from this remarkable collection to offer insights into the teaching of science and the conduct of scientific research at a leading educational institution. Though the instruments are beautifully photographed and presented, the authors do not treat them as isolated objects; rather, they stress the historical and social circumstances of the instruments' creation and use. The instruments are grouped by function, emphasizing their roles in the scientific enterprise, and they are often presented with supporting documentation, such as bills of sale, that shed light on how they were produced and consumed. The photographs often focus on details of their operation and parts, giving a dynamic rather than static sense of the objects. A substantial introductory essay places the collection in context while the descriptions of the instruments stress their design, function, and use. This beautiful book showcases an extraordinary collection and situates the objects in terms of the prevailing scientific and educational practices of their day.

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