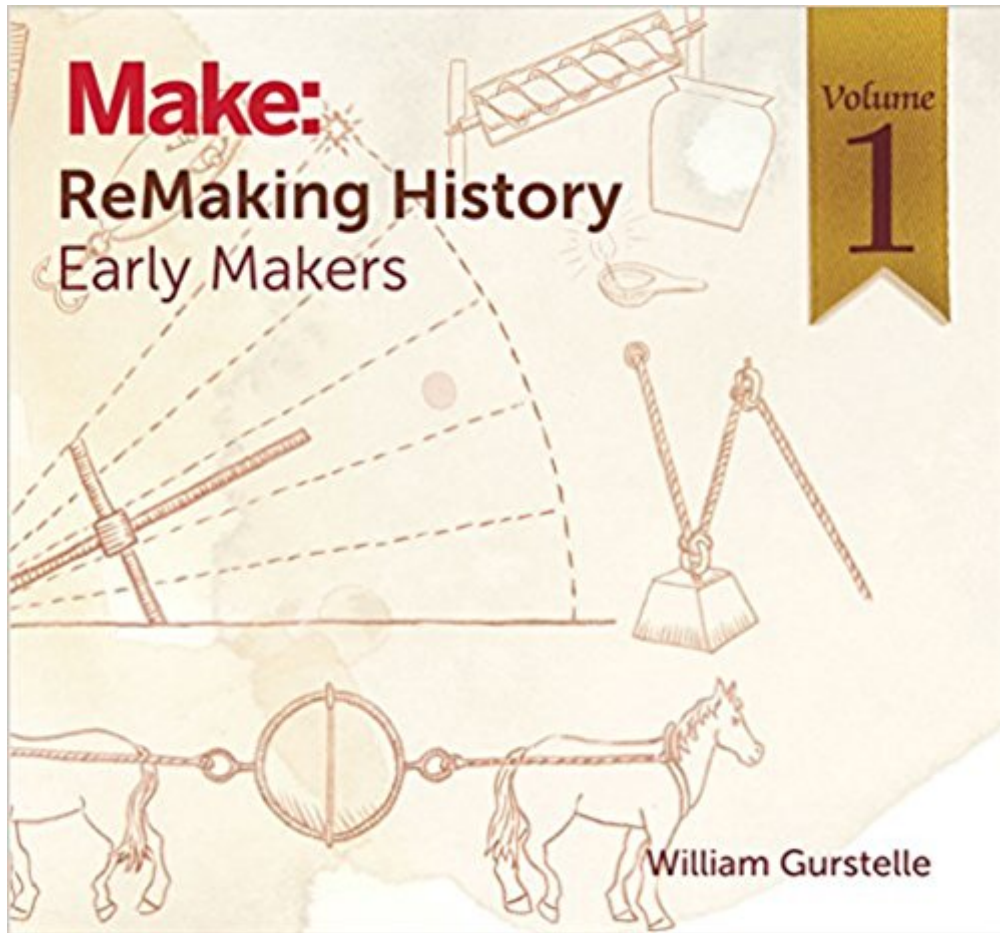


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# ReMaking History, Volume 1: Early Makers



## Synopsis

William Gurstelle begins his remarkable journey through history with this volume, *Early Makers*. Each chapter examines a remarkable individual or group of people from the past whose insights and inventions helped create the world we live in. What sets this series apart from other history books - including other histories of technology - is that each chapter also includes step-by-step instructions for making your own version of the historical invention. History comes to life in a way you have never experienced before when you follow the inventors' steps and recreate the groundbreaking devices of the past with your own hands. In this volume you will discover: The Cave Dwellers of Lascaux and the Oil Lamp, Pythagoras and the Tantalus Cup, Heron and the Gin Pole, Egypt's Bag Press, Otto von Guericke and the Magdeburg Hemispheres, Levi ben Gershon and the Jacob's Staff, Juliana Berners and the Fishing Lure, Archimedes and the Water Screw, China's Differential Windlass. Be sure to also check out *ReMaking History, Volume 2: Industrial Revolutionaries* and *ReMaking History Volume 3: Makers of the Modern World*.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is eye-opening, informative and enjoyable. Many of the inventions from the past date back much farther than many of us understand. The ancient Egyptians, the ancient Greeks and even the ancient cave dwellers came up with important processes and devices still in use today, in

modern forms. For example, more than 2,000 years ago, the first coin-operated vending machine dispensed holy water in a Greek temple. More than 4,000 years ago, the ancient Egyptians invented a way to squeeze significantly more juice from wine grapes while separating the juice from the pulp. Perhaps 20,000 years ago, the cave painters who left behind elaborate, beautiful rock paintings worked in their dark caverns by the light of oil lamps. "ReMaking History, Volume 1, Early Makers" devotes 10 chapters to the creations of inventors in ancient times, Medieval times, and Early Modern times (up to the 17th century). The latter inventions range from fishing lures to vacuum pumps. The book shows how to duplicate many of the early inventions using modern materials and explains the processes that make the devices work. (My thanks to O'Reilly for sending a review copy.)

When I was a kid we weren't swamped in technology like we are today. Simple inventions were far more appealing than they may be now to kids. But if we're to have more scientists and engineers in the future it's important that some kids are exposed to early technology so they have historical perspective about technology in general. If you already know all that and you have some bright kids handy this book should appeal to them and to you. Many of the devices and ideas explained and described here translate well into projects that will keep your kids happily and gainfully occupied for days and weeks to their great enjoyment and benefit. While you're at it, get your kids some of Martin Gardner's books on math wonders so they can learn about Möbius strips and hexaflexagons. For all their wonder, computers are so complex, internally, that they offer few insights into technology or engineering. Smart kids have to start somewhere that's intellectually accessible. Did I mention that the book is flat-out fun and well written? I forgot that part. Full disclosure: not only did I receive the book free as a review sample but I've been a subscriber to Make from volume 1.

The book introduces some tools from the ancient times with the humble oil lamp to about 17th century before the industrial revolution. 's "Look Inside!" feature has many of the book's pages. The projects are more challenging and require more tools than I expected. For instance, I do not own a table saw and have to use a manual saw, among other tools, so the projects can be difficult and overwhelming. But, for someone with a full workshop, these projects are wonderful to complete with the young ones. The end of the book has a list of recommendations for what you need for a workshop so you can make, fix and build. I wish I had the space and the means to set up a workshop. It's impossible to cover everything, but all the items are of Eurocentric Western civilization and one from Ancient Egypt. I hope there will be more books in the series to introduce discoveries

from other continents and civilizations. Besides learning about previous inventions, it's a reminder of how humans benefit from the advancements in our past that allow us to innovate and progress.

This is an entertaining and instructive book about a number of important inventions from the ancient Greeks and Egyptians through the mid-17th Century. It combines a little history, a little science, and a little engineering to explain why the inventions are important and how they work. Projects include: an oil lamp, a water screw, a gin pole crane, an olive (which was new to me), a fishing lure, and others. Most readers will want to try one or more of the projects. The author gives detailed instructions on creating versions of the inventions. Note that many of these projects are rather involved, requiring specialized tools or supplies and adult assistance. Most of them look like fun.

This slender book packs a lot of information about some basic but important inventions and the scientific principles behind them. Alongside the histories of the inventions, there are small experiments/projects that young readers can complete to demonstrate the principles. Everything is clear and the instructions are easy to follow. My only complaint is that the paper does not feel like it's going to hold up well over time: it's glossy and a bit flimsy. That kept me from giving this one five stars without reservations. Overall, though, it's an informative and engaging book that will help children start to understand that the technologies around them did not just fall out of the sky.

This is a great book for kids & adults. It provides the history behind various inventions, the scientific principles as well as instructions on how to make this invention at home. The construction procedures are clear with interim photos. Some of the invention models are quite large and would require buying large wooden poles and such. We found Jacob's Staff is a more doable project for my 4th grader's science fair.. It is written in an easy to understand manner that an older elementary school child can read and mostly understand. I was expecting a thick book but this book is only about 100 pages so it is one of a series of books.

Ever wonder how sailors determined their latitude before GPS? Or why the genie's lamp in Aladdin has that iconic shape? ReMaking History explains these historically important inventions (and many more), then provides instructions for recreating them. These projects are pretty intense, but in return for all your work you get real, working facsimiles of the original invention. If your child has any interest in history or science, they'll love doing these projects with you!

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