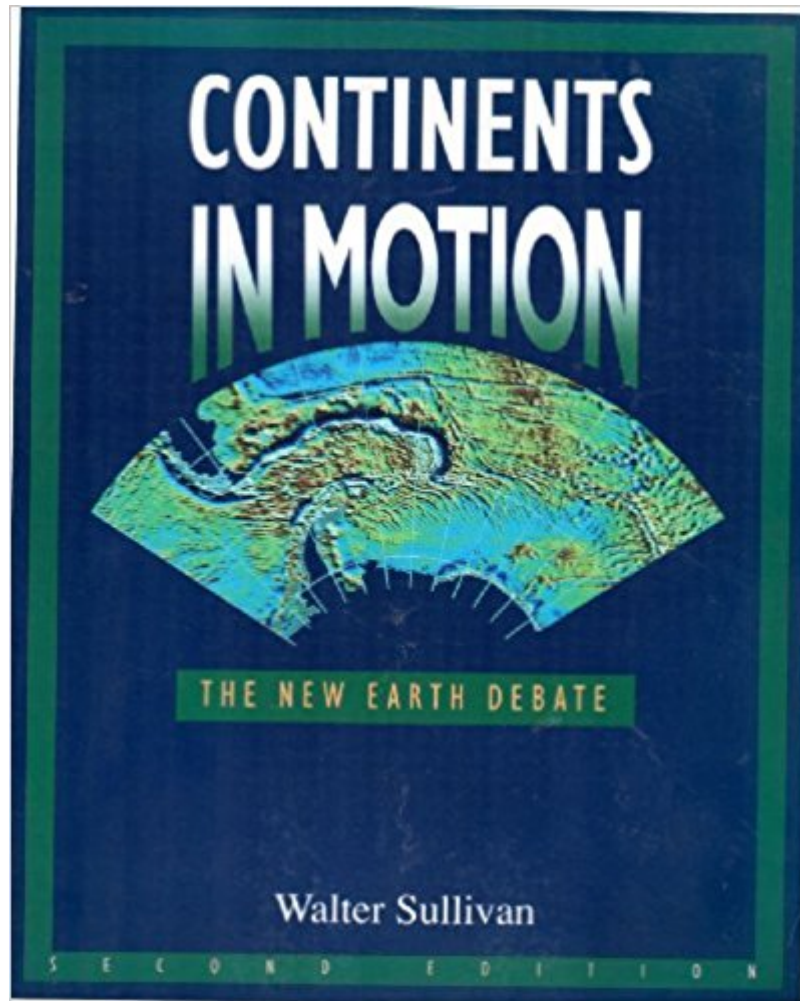




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Continents In Motion



Synopsis

"A history of discovery as revealing as the ways of science." The New York Times "Offers the purest intellectual excitement, the pursuit of knowledge for knowledge's sake...." Wall Street Journal "Beautifully illustrated, superbly written, and thoroughly documented." San Francisco Examiner This book presents a history of the idea of continental drift, which revolutionized our understanding of geology. Sullivan presents the idea from its tentative beginnings in the 19th century to the accumulation of overwhelming evidence in the 1960s. The second edition is extensively updated to reflect our current understanding of the basic geophysics underlying continental drift as well as more recent corroborating evidence. The book is written at a slightly more technical level than the average New York Times science news story. Walter Sullivan, as Science Editor of the New York Times, witnessed many of the scientific discoveries described here, having, for example, accompanied four research expeditions to Antarctica.

Book Information

Paperback: 425 pages

Publisher: American Institute of Physics; 2nd edition (July 18, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0883187043

ISBN-13: 978-0883187043

Product Dimensions: 10 x 8 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (4 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,596,565 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #39 in [Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Geology > Plate Tectonics](#) #614 in [Books > Science & Math > Earth Sciences > Geophysics](#) #5545 in [Books > Textbooks > Science & Mathematics > Earth Sciences](#)

Customer Reviews

Walter Sullivan (1918-1996) was the award-winning science editor for the New York Times from 1962 to 1987 and was the author of several classic books on science, including "Assault on the Unknown" (about the International Geophysical Year of 1957-8), "We Are Not Alone" (an early examination of SETI), "Black Holes: the edge of space, the edge of time" and this one on the revolution in geology that occurred when we discovered that earth's continents really do move and how they manage it. The notion that the continents move is not new; if you could stick Africa and South America together in just the right way, they would seem to be two broken pieces of the same

continent. Alfred Wegener was the first one to try to get all the evidence together to prove this, something he worked at for many years, publishing his results in the 1920s. He was not believed. He was right and the rest of geology was wrong, of course, but it is understandable that they were skeptical. The earth is a complex place and, though there were many geologists who were mapping and exploring, discovering the myriad details as to the age, structure, and chemical makeup of the earth, the notion that continents could move seemed impossible. How can rock move through other rock? How, indeed! The evidence was there: some very different parts of the earth seemed to be very like other parts that are very far away. They seemed to be fragments of the same kind of terrain, and the process of finding that out took lots of geologists, lots of work, and lots of years. While the evidence built up, the mechanism that managed to move them remained hidden. This book discusses a lot of this research as well as many theories that ranged from conservative to downright crazy (e.g.

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