



The Astrodome: Building an American Spectacle

James Gast

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In the summer of 1960, a group of men in Houston, Texas set out to build the largest room in the world. That room would have to be large enough for a baseball game, sunny enough for grass to grow, and with air cool and clear enough for thousands of smokers to puff away in air-conditioned comfort. Led by a brilliant and colorful politician, this collection of architects, engineers, oilmen, scientists, and ballplayers created the Astrodome. What they built forever transformed the way baseball and other sports were played and viewed—for better and for worse. More importantly, theirs was a uniquely American achievement that reflected the place and extraordinary times in which it was constructed. This is the story of the creation and early days of the first domed stadium, highlighting the people who participated and the unprecedented solutions they developed for problems that had not previously existed. It places the building in its historic context among worldwide architectural and engineering accomplishments, as well as its cultural setting in mid-century America. It is the result of more than a year's research using both primary-source archival material and interviews with the participants.

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