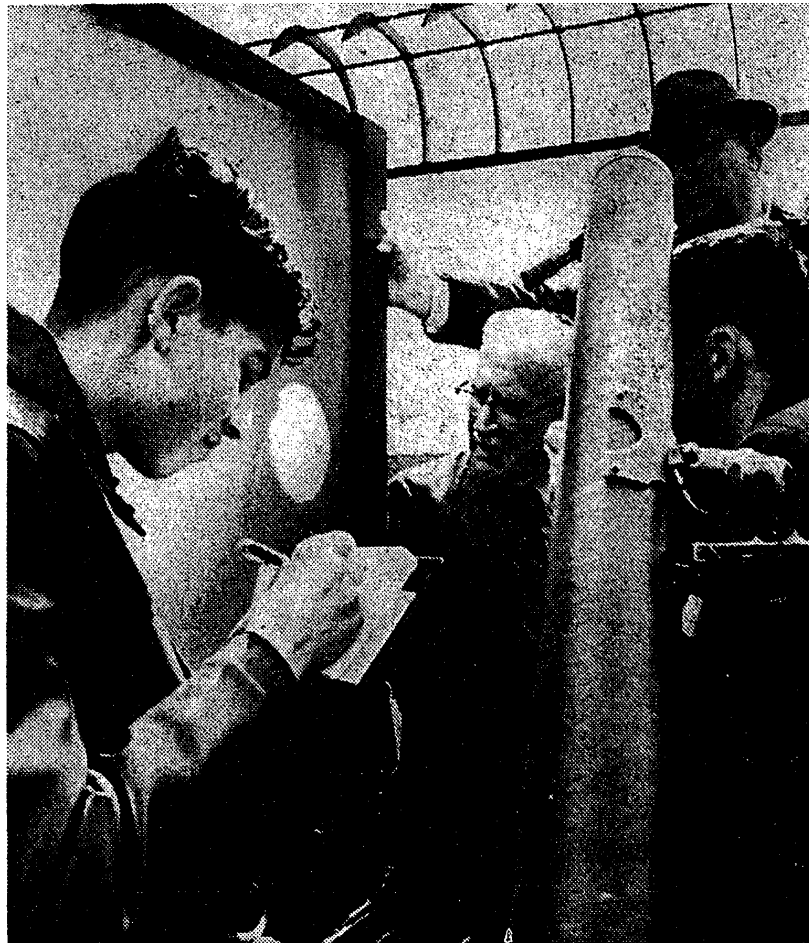


# Hobbyist, 79, Eclipses the Eclipse



The New York Times (by Neal Boenzi)  
 From left, Eric Bram, Richard S. Luce, Patrick V. Rizzo, wearing hat, and Ronald Abaleah on 86th floor of Empire State Building yesterday. They are viewing an image of a partial solar eclipse cast by a 3½-inch telescope on a silver screen held by Mr. Rizzo.

## Steals Empire State Audience From a Dim Solar Show

By RICHARD D. LYONS

Eclipses, even third-rate solar eclipses, fall into the first order of magnitude in the life of Richard S. Luce.

An amateur astronomer is like that: patient, undemanding, inured to smog and hostile weather, willing to accept even the smallest crumbs from the star tables.

### Brings Special Telescope

One of these small victories occurred yesterday when a partial eclipse of the sun took place. But it was meager fare for all but the 79-year-old Mr. Luce and three other enthusiastic amateur astronomers who huddled on the wind-swept 86th floor of the Empire State Building to take in a celestial show that everyone knew was going to be a turkey.

At 9:21 A.M. the rising new moon dutifully started nibbling at the sun's image. But only 2 per cent of the sun's face was obscured.

In fact, the eclipse was so partial in the metropolitan area said: "You know, I've never—although on parts of the West Coast and in Alaska more than one-half of the sun's image was obscured—that it was all but invisible unless an observer

viewed it through either a piece of exposed film or a special reflecting telescope, such as the one that Mr. Luce and his friends carried.

The crowd on the building's observation deck—tourists, honeymooners, schoolchildren and adventurous nuns—seemed far more attracted by the enthusiasm of the four members of the Amateur Astronomers Association than by the celestial pas de trois of the sun, moon and earth.

The 3½-inch telescope was set in place by Mr. Luce, a retired mechanical engineer from Brooklyn, and Patrick V. Rizzo, also from Brooklyn, who is a former president of the association.

### Expectations Dampened

Mr. Rizzo's positive reaction contrasted with the studied boredom of the spectators. "This is the sort of eclipse that must be considered from its artistic and historic value," he said, although he conceded that "this is not too spectacular an eclipse."

Mr. Luce watched the image of the sun cast by the telescope on a silver screen, nodded his head of gray hair and said, "Here we go!" when the eclipse was first became apparent.

He gazed at the slightly dimpled image thoughtfully and said: "You know, I've never seen a really good solar eclipse as an amateur astronomer—something always comes up."

In 1963, Mr. Luce, said, he

## Only Two Per Cent of Sun's Face Is Obscured Here

went to Maine to view a total solar eclipse. "It was awfully disappointing. The sun was out until half an hour before the eclipse, and then the sky became overcast."

Two years before, Mr. Luce continued, he went to Massachusetts to see a partial solar eclipse. "The weather looked good at first," he said, "and then there was nothing but rain, rain, rain." He said that a business meeting prevented him from seeing the last total solar eclipse in New York in 1925.

### Surrounded by Pupils

"I've seen some total eclipses of the moon," he said, "But nothing really startling."

Mr. Luce spends much of his enthusiasm at the Hayden Planetarium, where he teaches mirror and telescope building.

As the eclipse neared its end at 10:19 A.M., fifth-grade and sixth-grade students from Intermediate School 318 in Brooklyn surrounded Mr. Luce and the telescope. "They studied eclipses two weeks ago," a teacher said.

She asked a pupil: "Salvatore, what's an eclipse?"

The boy shrugged. "I dunno," he said.

Mr. Luce looked pained.