

A Comprehensive Outline of World History

By:

Jack E. Maxfield

A Comprehensive Outline of World History

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C O N N E X I O N S

Rice University, Houston, Texas

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Foreword¹

“A Comprehensive Outline of World History” was written and self-published by Dr. Jack E. Maxfield.

The structure of the work is innovative. Each chapter covers a period of historical time (e.g. a century). Sections within chapters describe what was going on in every geographical region of the world; each section provides a reference for that region in the subsequent chapter, i.e. in the next time period. The reader can thus get a snapshot of the entire world at a point in time by reading one chapter, or can follow the history of a region through time by linking to sections in successive chapters.

This modular, linked structure is ideally suited to web-based online implementation, especially to the Connexions platform. I am pleased to make this content available on Connexions for the enjoyment and enlightenment of everyone with an interest in the history of our world.

Robert Maxfield
October 2008

More Details on the Origin of this Material

My father, Dr. Jack Eldred Maxfield, was an orthopedic surgeon with a deep interest in history. He self-published three editions of “A Comprehensive Outline of World History.” The 1959 first edition consisted of 200 pages with 8 references in the bibliography, and included a unique time-line, hand-drawn and hand-colored by him, showing the rise and fall of civilizations. An original and six carbon copies were typed from his hand-written manuscript. He put these copies into binders and presented them to me and my friends as high-school graduation gifts.

The second, hardbound edition, published about 1975, was a single volume of 474 pages, 47 bibliographical references, and numerous hand-drawn, hand-colored maps. I do not know how many copies were printed.

The third edition, typed by my father on an electronic typewriter and published in 1984, consisted of three hardbound volumes totaling 1303 pages and 322 bibliographic references. Well over one hundred copies, in batches of 20, were eventually published as demand grew. The following letter was included with each set he gave away:

Dear friends:

These three volumes are in no way to be considered a formal publication. They simply represent the end result of some 25 years of reading, writing and re-writing historical material arranged in a chronological way to suit my own fancy and for the use of my family if they so desired. I am happy now to include a few friends who have expressed an interest.

¹This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17880/1.4/>>.

Before using this manuscript for reference or even for casual reading, I would suggest that you first peruse the pages numbered with Roman numerals in Volume I. They give the general plan of the outline and suggest its purposes as well as defining some of its limitations. Please excuse any remaining typographical and/or spelling errors and I am sure there are many.

Best regards,
Jack E. Maxfield

Jack Maxfield died on September 14, 2006, at age 93. The original 1984 typed manuscript of “A Comprehensive Outline of World History” was found on a shelf in his closet. In 2007, a special print edition was published for his grandchildren, future generations of our family, and for special friends. Thanks to the World Wide Web and Connexions it is now available to everyone.

Introduction²

Back to The Foreword (Section)

My friends ask why I should undertake to write a World History. Aren't there already enough such books in the English language? Of course. There are dozens, perhaps scores of them, each with a particular purpose, or scope, or bias and each with some limitations. The very excellent **The Outline of History** by H.G. Wells was published some sixty plus years ago and lacks much of the information gained from recent archeology and other sciences. It devotes only about two pages to the Aztec and Inca empires and only an occasional sentence about Central and South America, otherwise. Sub-Saharan Africa is scarcely mentioned except in regard to the slave trade. The Durants' multi-volume work, **The Story of Civilization** is a beautifully written narrative which, however, gets bogged down in its later volumes with tiring details of long ago politics, royal genealogies and religious and philosophical dialogues. Unfortunately, as with other texts, it also has some inaccuracies. The more scholarly **A Study of History** is a somewhat mystical interpretation of Arnold Toynbee's personal ideas of history, not in any sense a chronological narration of happenings. If the reader is not already well versed in the essential landmarks of the world's factual history, understanding is of ten difficult. The same might be said of the more recent Hugh Thomas' **A History of the World**, which has no suggestion of continuity from the standpoint of dates, but discusses one facet of man's endeavors at a time, jumping freely from 1,000 B.C. to A.D. 1,800 and back again, assuming that the reader already knows the prosaic historical facts to appreciate these rapid changes of scenes. Again, inaccuracies are present, some of which are mentioned later in the text. While the usual high school history books have been cut of most of the gore, tragedy and even obscenities of the old world, some of the college and adult texts such as **The Columbia History of the World** and William McNeill's several texts are excellent, but they still do not reach the far corners of the earth in some of the centuries. The **An Encyclopedia of World History**, compiled and edited by William L. Langer, is an excellent documentation of world history - ancient, medieval and modern, chronologically arranged and this has been referred to many times during the writing of this manuscript, particularly for confirmation of dates, dynasties, clarification of names, etc. It is not a book for leisurely reading and enjoyment, however, and is essentially a list of year dates with short, concise material after each, purely for reference. Similar, but less useful, is James Trager's very recent **The Peoples Chronology**, a series of completely unrelated and miscellaneous "facts" (some are gross errors) listed by years. It is difficult to see the value of this except perhaps as a parlor game of "What things happened in the world at large in some specific year?" This manuscript has one purpose only - to give a panoramic picture of the entire globe from the arctic to deepest Africa and the south Pacific in specific time-frames. The emphasis is to give the overall view of the world and its peoples, without dwelling in too much depth on those features that are easily available in every school and municipal library and in many homes. I refer to such subjects as the details of classical Greece and Rome, the American Colonies and the various wars and specific battles. For example, in this text less space may be given the American Revolutionary and Civil wars than the pre-Inca civilizations of South America or the life of the Mongol soldiers in central Asia. Information on the former subjects is available everywhere, while that on the latter two subjects is limited.

Forward to:

1. The Mechanics of and Some Problems of the Presentation (Section)
2. Introduction to the Method of Geographical Presentation (Section 1.1)
3. Intro to Era (Section 2.1)

²This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17889/1.3/>>.

4. Africa (Section 2.2)
5. America (Section 2.9)
6. Central and Northern Asia (Section 2.5)
7. Europe (Section 2.4)
8. The Far East (Section 2.7)
9. The Indian Subcontinent (Section 2.6)
10. The Near East (Section 2.3)
11. Pacific (Section 2.8)
12. Some Thoughts³
13. Special Sections (Chapter 34)
14. Bibliography (Chapter 35)

³"Images of Memorable Cases: Case 32" <<http://cnx.org/content/m14954/latest/>>

The Mechanics of and Some Problems of the Presentation⁴

Material is arranged in one sense chronologically and in another sense geographically so that the reader may review historical situations either in a "satellite" cross-sectional view of the entire world in one time-frame, or may follow events in any one geographical area through the many centuries in more or less brief narrative form by following the simple (Continued on page so and so) after each section. An attempt has been made to give a brief resume of the political status, important philosophies, scientific developments and religious trends while devoting proportionately more time to a description of the status of the common people of an area at any given moment. Hopefully most of the world's outstanding personalities in all fields have been given some space, but it is admitted that many aspects of art, literature, music and architecture may, in some opinions, be slighted, as these are not the major fields of the author's interests.

The textual data is presented in multiple chapters, each representing a definite period of time. The earlier chapters span several millennia each, but beginning with the 7th century B.C. each chapter contains the events of one century only. Within each chapter or time-frame in addition to some general remarks pertinent to the period as a whole, the world situation will be discussed under eight main headings or sections, representing eight great areas of the globe. These areas and their subdivisions have been somewhat arbitrarily chosen, but seem to lend themselves satisfactorily to an orderly consideration of the various societies and civilizations. One cannot prevent certain over-lappings and certain difficulties with such a plan due to the changing political boundary lines from century to century. As one example it will be remembered that the Great Wall of China ended at Jiayuguan in the west, marking the border of traditional China, and beyond this on westward lies Central Asia. Yet today much of this land to the west belongs to the present Chinese Peoples Republic, even though the inhabitants are still chiefly Turkish and Mongolian peoples. So, in spite of the political shift certain areas currently under the domain of China, such as Sinkiang-Uighur (present spelling Xinjiang Uygur) and Tibet, will be considered in this manuscript under the heading of CENTRAL AND NORTHERN ASIA. Manchuria is considered an entity in itself, as part of the Far East complex.

Another matter which may annoy or confuse the reader as he progresses through the text is the spelling variations. One must realize that language is a spoken phenomenon and that what we call "written language" is really only a notation system that attempts to recall the spoken words to the observer. Thus when anyone attempts to write down a notation that seems to him to record a spoken foreign word his rendition will depend on his own language background and phonetics. The result may be only a rough approximation at best, and the spelling will vary greatly with the nationality of the translator. One of the most fascinating examples of this would be in the spelling variations for the great Mongol leader whose name has been variously written as "Jenghis Khan", "Chingis Khan", "Genghis Khan", "Chinggis Khan" and perhaps others. The Mongols as a group have been named "Khalkas", "Tatars", "Tartars", "Cumans", "Kipchaks", or "Poloritse" depending on the writer, his nationality and the location of the particular Mongol tribe at the moment. It is well known that the English use a "k" where Americans use "c" as in such words as "Keltic"- "Celtic" and "Khosru"- "Chosroes", etc. Although this author has attempted to be as consistent as possible there are probably many exceptions for which apology is asked.

⁴This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m17966/1.2/>>.

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