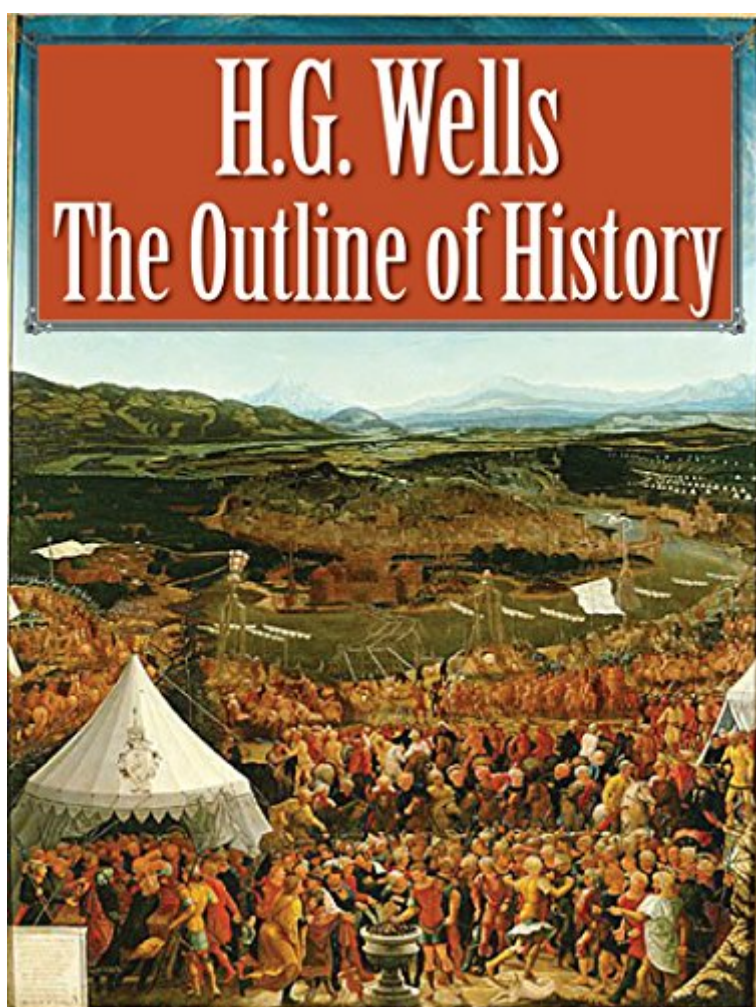


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The Outline Of History (Illustrated)



Synopsis

THIS Outline of History is an attempt to tell, truly and clearly, in one continuous narrative, the whole story of life and mankind so far as it is known to-day. It is written plainly for the general reader, but its aim goes beyond its use as merely interesting reading matter. There is a feeling abroad that the teaching of history considered as a part of general education is in an unsatisfactory condition, and particularly that the ordinary treatment of this subject by the class and teacher and examiner is too partial and narrow. But the desire to extend the general range of historical ideas is confronted by the argument that the available time for instruction is already consumed by that partial and narrow treatment, and that therefore, however desirable this extension of range may be, it is in practice impossible. If an Englishman, for example, has found the history of England quite enough for his powers of assimilation, then it seems hopeless to expect his sons and daughters to master universal history, if that is to consist of the history of England, plus the history of France, plus the history of Germany, plus the history of Russia, and so on. To which the only possible answer is that universal history is at once something more and something less than the aggregate of the national histories to which we are accustomed, that it must be approached in a different spirit and dealt with in a different manner. This book seeks to justify that answer. It has been written primarily to show that history as one whole is amenable to a more broad and comprehensive handling than is the history of special nations and periods, a broader handling that will bring it within the normal limitations of time and energy set to the reading and education of an ordinary citizen. This outline deals with ages and races and nations, where the ordinary history deals with reigns and pedigrees and campaigns; but it will not be found to be more crowded with names and dates, nor more difficult to follow and understand. History is no exception amongst the sciences; as the gaps fill in, the outline simplifies; as the outlook broadens, the clustering multitude of details dissolves into general laws. And many topics of quite primary interest to mankind, the first appearance and the growth of scientific knowledge for example, and its effects upon human life, the elaboration of the ideas of money and credit, or the story of the origins and spread and influence of Christianity, which must be treated fragmentarily or by elaborate digressions in any partial history, arise and flow completely and naturally in one general record of the world in which we live. The need for a common knowledge of the general facts of human history throughout the world has become very evident during the tragic happenings of the last few years. Swifter means of communication have brought all men closer to one another for good or for evil. War becomes a universal disaster, blind and monstrously destructive; it bombs the baby in its cradle and sinks the food-ships that cater for the non-combatant and the neutral. There can be no peace now, we realize, but a common peace in all the world; no

prosperity but a general prosperity. But there can be no common peace and prosperity without common historical ideas. Without such ideas to hold them together in harmonious co-operation, with nothing but narrow, selfish, and conflicting nationalist traditions, races and peoples are bound to drift towards conflict and destruction. This truth, which was apparent to that great philosopher Kant a century or more ago "it is the gist of his tract upon universal peace" is now plain to the man in the street. Our internal policies and our economic and social ideas are profoundly vitiated at present by wrong and fantastic ideas of the origin and historical relationship of social classes. A sense of history as the common adventure of all mankind is as necessary for peace within as it is for peace between the nations.

Book Information

File Size: 7392 KB

Print Length: 672 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Didactic Press (August 4, 2014)

Publication Date: August 4, 2014

Language: English

ASIN: B00MG1F6R8

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #420,978 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #11

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Customer Reviews

Even though this book is only called the outline of history, I have found it to be the most comprehensive history book in my very large collection. Even though the book is as old as my grandparents, the information it contains is still valid today, and since I am a history buff, it occupies an honored place in my library at home. I do not agree with all of his conclusions, but his insight and honesty (I am glad he is not one of those who worships the past) are very refreshing. A must read

for anyone who wants to find out about the history of the world.

In a time of "political correctness" in everything including our history texts, it's not startling to find the most unbiased look at world history is in a text that was first published 80 years ago! H. G. Wells was a man well in advance of his time. Not afraid to contradict the jingoistic attitudes of contemporary European and American historians, he places equal importance upon the development of Asian and African civilizations in his text, making sure the reader realizes that many events were happening simultaneously around the world, as well as pointing out the follies of European colonizing policies. (At the same time, he doesn't hesitate to point out mistakes made by African and Asian governments in their dealings with Europeans and each other.) His history reads like a sweeping fictional saga as he shows how events all over the world tie together in a cause-and-effect scenario. His history is not just names and dates, but explanations as to WHY things happened as they did! (The 1940 edition is particularly fascinating, as the final chapter in it details his amazingly-accurate analysis of the then-present situation in Europe, the rise to power of Adolf Hitler and the failure of the other European powers to stop him when they had the opportunities! Remember, Wells is the man who predicted mass bombings of cities, extensive use of tanks and submarines, and other aspects of warfare pooh-poohed by military "geniuses" of his time!) He's brutally honest in his assessments of events and the people who caused them. There's no glossing over or whitewashing of history of the type seen in today's histories. I can see why many educators don't want it in today's classrooms. Find it and read it--if you have the guts.

i was in prison when i read this book so i only got to read the second volume but it made me change my whole perspective on history. It is a very good book for anyone who wants to REALLY UNDERSTAND history because instead of just giving a plain account of it, it puts history in perspective, in more of an outline, hence the title. i think it lays it out better than any history book i read in my high school. it makes history look rational and not just like a bunch of random, unconnected events. I think it exposes a pattern and a natural sequence to the events that have shaped this world. After reading it, i kind of look at what's happening today and put it in a historical context. It takes a step back to view history as a whole instead of getting too close to look at the details and making you lose focus of the BIG PICTURE that makes history so very important.

I have the 1921 edition - the original which I picked up at a local second hand shop a few months ago for just \$1.00. I had no idea that H.G. Wells had written a history text. Being a history buff and

having earned my degree in history I was surprised. I never heard this text mentioned once in four and a half years of higher education - why? Well for one Mr. Wells does not fit the academic mold nor does his book follow what is still established doctrine for history texts. He has opinions about everything, he doesn't hesitate to tell the reader what he thinks was wrong with ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, Alexander etc. This isn't a man suffering from hero worship. Being a fan of all things Roman I didn't necessarily agree with all his evaluations of the Empire and its civilization, but I have to respect his courage in stating it. This is a book which challenges the reader to think. While Wells is guilty of omission and some commission which historian isn't? No this is a daring work and even though my addition is eighty years old I found it very relevant and lacking in pretension. I'm proud to have this book sitting on my shelves. Excellent.

This work ranks among the premier volumes on the subject of world history. The writing is of the highest order as to sentence structure, vocabulary and general usage. The author discusses the history of the world from the BC period up to the 20th century. There is a considerable coverage of the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, the Industrial Period and the global struggles of the early 20th century. The life and times of the Mediterranean peoples, Mesopotamia and Asia are explained. The author discusses both the historical and cultural dimensions of world history including some reference to the pre-historic period and longstanding Chinese dynasties. The contents could fill a dozen or more dissertations. The presentation is geared for collegiate study/review or well-read/sophisticated readers. These volumes would make a good starting point for a dissertation on world history, culture or politics. The contents of this book could be helpful in crafting a global framework for better understanding in today's world. Sample topics include the following: 1. Space and Time 2. The Beginnings of Life, Fishes, Reptiles, Birds and Mammals 3. Primitive Thought and Early Civilizations 4. Sumeria, Early Egypt and Writing 5. Nomads and Seafaring Peoples 6. Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and Ancient Greece 7. The Wars of the Greeks and Persians, Alexander the Great 8. Confucius and Lao Tse 9. The Roman Empire, the Huns, Chinese Dynasties, Muhammad and Islam 10. The Crusades, Popes and the Great Schism, European Revival 11. The Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars 12. Steamship, Railways, the Rise of Germany and Japan 13. The British Empire, World War I, Russian Famine 14. Political and Social Reconstruction

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