

Our Old World Background

VERY REV. MSCR. EDMUND J. GOEBEL, PH.D.
Superintendent of Schools, Archdiocese of Milwaukee

REV. THOMAS J. QUIGLEY, M.A., PH.D.
Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Pittsburgh

JOHN E. O'LOUGHLIN, PH.D.
*Vice-Headmaster and Formerly Head of Social Studies Department
Somerville High School, Somerville, Massachusetts*

Made available by
OUR LADY OF VICTORY SCHOOL
421 S. LOCHSA STREET
POST FALLS, IDAHO 83854
(208) 773-7265
www.olvs.org

Nihil Obstat: JOHN A. McMAHON
CENSOR LIBRORUM

Imprimatur: ✠ SAMUEL CARDINAL STRITCH
ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO

ART DIRECTOR
MILO WINTER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
MILO WINTER AND A. K. BILDER

MAPS BY GORAND MAPS

Printed in the United States of America

INTRODUCTION

This series of history texts for the Catholic schools provides pupils a comprehensive picture of our country. In *Builders of Our Country* pupils read the biographies of those who through their leadership in many fields helped make our country great. *The Story of My America* emphasizes the period between the discovery of America and the inauguration of Washington. *Our Old World Background* provides the basis for a deepening understanding of our country's history. *A History of the United States* reviews the early history of America but emphasizes the events in the development of the country after the establishment of our federal government. Thus through a carefully planned series pupils gain an over-all understanding of what our country is and how it became what it is.

This book—*Our Old World Background*—has been prepared for the boys and girls in our schools who are studying the historical background of our country. Beginning with a chapter on prehistory, this book goes on to describe the contributions of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and other peoples who have helped to build our civilization. The last chapter deals with the transplanting of this civilization to the Western Hemisphere.

The most decisive event throughout this long period of history and, in fact, throughout all history was the birth of Christ. And among the important developments was the rise and growth of the Catholic Church. Pupils are helped in this book and throughout the series to appreciate the vast contribution made by the Church to the advance of civilization.

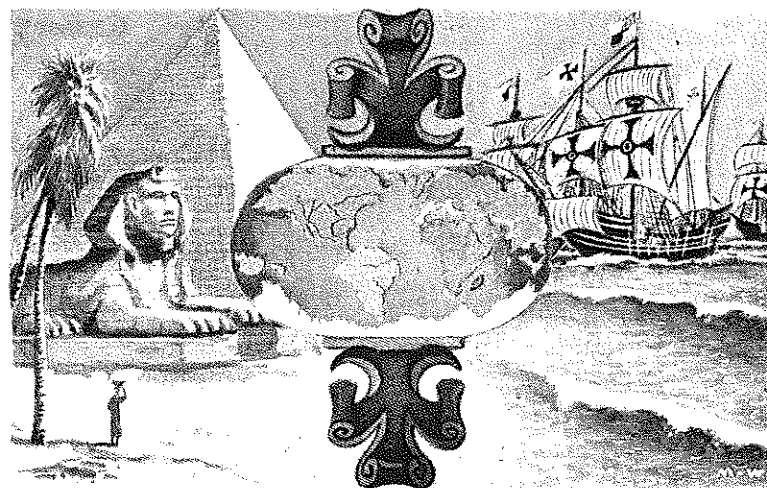
This book is divided into nine units. Each unit is introduced by a preview which helps pupils make a quick survey of what they will study in that unit. Each unit is divided into a varying number of chapters containing as much information on related subjects as the pupils need and can absorb. At the end of each chapter are study exercises designed to help pupils clarify for themselves what they have read in that chapter. At the end of each unit is a review of the salient facts presented in the unit.

The authors have made every effort to make this book simple in style and accurate in fact. They have tried to provide a background which will help boys and girls understand their own country not only through dates, men, and places, but through an appreciation of the ideals that have motivated individuals and nations.

The maps, seven of them in full color, help clarify the background for the events of history. The illustrations, more than forty of them in full color, portray vividly the events with which they are concerned. These maps and illustrations, along with the large type and generous margins, help pupils realize that a book can be a thing of beauty as well as a source of information.

It is the authors' hope and belief that the pupils who study this book and the others in the Catholic School History Series will come to understand and love their country with increased depth and fervor.

The Authors



Contents

UNIT ONE

THE DAWN OF HISTORY

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. Before History Became a Story.....	13
2. The Ancient East	24

UNIT TWO

LIFE AMONG THE GREEKS

3. The Land and the People of Greece.....	57
4. The Expansion of Greece.....	80

UNIT THREE

LIFE AMONG THE ROMANS

5. Early Rome and the Republic.....	99
6. The Roman Empire	115

UNIT FOUR**THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY**

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
7. The Founding of Christianity.....	137
8. Barbarian Tribes Invade the Roman Empire..	151
9. The Moslem Threat.....	165
10. The Conversion of Europe.....	171

UNIT FIVE**THE FEUDAL PERIOD**

11. Charlemagne and a New Empire.....	197
12. The Feudal System	212
13. When Knighthood Was in Flower.....	226
14. The Church and Feudalism.....	243

UNIT SIX**THE STORY OF ENGLAND**

15. Early England	267
16. The Coming of the Normans.....	287
17. England under Norman Kings.....	297

UNIT SEVEN**NEW NATIONS ON THE CONTINENT**

18. The Story of France.....	321
19. Spain and Portugal	341
20. Germany and Italy.....	352
21. The Crusades	371

UNIT EIGHT**LIFE IN THE MIDDLE AGES**

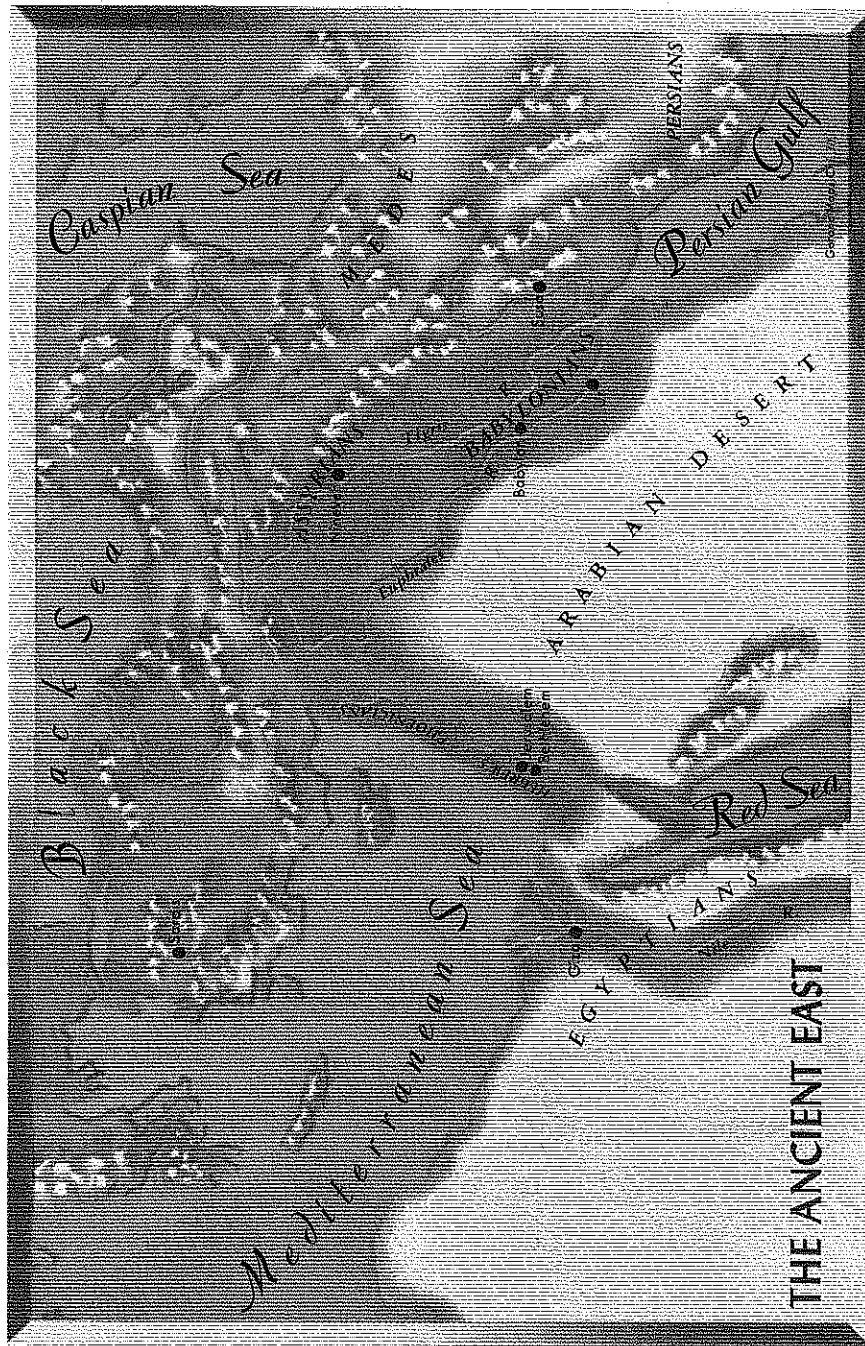
<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
22. A Catholic Way of Life.....	397
23. Education and Culture.....	416
24. Life and Trade in the Towns.....	428

UNIT NINE**A CHANGING WORLD**

25. The Renaissance	453
26. Revolt and Reform in Religion.....	473
27. Europe Expands Overseas	494
INDEX	507

LIST OF MAPS

Europe and the Near East about 1500 A. D.	Inside Covers
The Ancient East	10
The Persian Empire about 500 B. C.	43
The Greek World about 500 B. C.	54
Alexander's Empire in 323 B. C.	92
The Italian Peninsula.....	96
The Roman Empire in the Time of Augustus.....	134
The Barbarian Invasions	161
Charlemagne's Empire about 800 A. D.	194
The British Isles in 900 A. D.	264
Western Europe about 1350 A. D.	318
The Holy Roman Empire about 1200 A. D.	394
Trade Routes to the East.....	450



UNIT ONE

THE DAWN OF HISTORY

IN your Bible history you learned how God created our first parents, Adam and Eve. You know that because they sinned against God, they were driven from the Garden of Eden. You also learned that when the descendants of Noe attempted to build the Tower of Babel, they were dispersed to various parts of the earth.

All this was revealed by God to Moses at a later time, for in very early days probably no one could write. Yet, through various clues, we know something about early peoples. They did leave records—pottery, tools, weapons, and many other things. From these unwritten records the story of prehistoric man has been written. As time went on, these peoples learned to use fire, to tame animals, and to work with metals. Finally they learned to write. This was the beginning of history.

Early peoples moved to the most fertile lands they could find. The Egyptians, who settled in the rich valley of the Nile, developed one of the earliest civilizations. The people who settled in another fertile valley, the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, made many contributions to the growth of civilization.

Also in the ancient East two other peoples contributed to the growth of civilization. The Phoenicians, by their trading voyages, helped to spread knowledge throughout the Mediterranean world. The Hebrews, who lived in the midst of these other peoples, alone preserved the belief in one true God. To them God made the promise that He would send a Messiah, who would redeem man from the effects of sin.



BEFORE HISTORY BECAME A STORY

Detectives on the Trail

The Clues. Man probably lived for thousands of years before he began to write. The time before writing was invented is called "prehistoric" time. To know how men lived in that period requires real detective work. It means studying every possible clue. The clues are the many kinds of remains left by men of long ago.

Some of the clues are found in burial mounds, like those left by the Indians in this country. Some are found along the banks of rivers. Sometimes a stream dries up, leaving a number of clues in full view. Early man often used a cave as a shelter or home. Caves sometimes offer helpful clues.

The scientist who is interested in detecting the clues of prehistoric time is called an archaeologist.¹ The archaeologist must be a good detective. He may decide to explore some prehistoric cave. On first sight, he may see nothing more than a huge pile of dirt in a corner of the cave. But the dirt may cover a heap of rubbish. By carefully clearing away the dirt and examining the rubbish, he may

1. archaeologist (är'kê ôl'ô jîst)

uncover many important clues. He may find the bones of animals or birds that had been used for food. He may find stone arrowheads, which would indicate that the men living in this cave in prehistoric time were hunters and could use the bow and arrow.

The Old Stone Age

Early Weapons and Tools. Stones were among the earliest tools and weapons used by man. The first tools and weapons were rough and crude, since man used the stones just as he found them. The period when stones were used without being shaped or sharpened is called the Old Stone Age.

Ivory needles have often been found in caves. The women of prehistoric time would sew together the skins of wild animals for rough clothing. This kind of clothing gave their men protection from the cold and from the brambles of the forest as they went hunting. In addition to animals, the men would search for nuts, berries, fruits, and roots to feed their families.

Man also drew pictures on the cave walls, and many of these may still be seen today. This is the earliest attempt at art. Later, pictures were used as an early form of writing.

This ability of early man to draw and paint should be no surprise, because he had many gifts

which animals do not have. As you know, man is made "to the image and likeness of God." Even after Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were driven from the Garden of Eden, man did not lose all these gifts. Slowly—very slowly—man began to make improvements in his struggle to live without fear of his surroundings.

God's Gifts to Man. The mind of man is one of the most wonderful gifts of God. The mind enabled man to think about events as they happened. He was able to remember other, similar events. He could plan new ways to escape danger or other troubles. This gave him a very great advantage in his struggle with his animal enemies, even though these animals were huge and powerful.

Speech is another wonderful gift of God. A person making a discovery or an improvement was able to tell his friends and neighbors about it. They, in turn, could copy the improved method that made work easier. In this way progress spread.

Each man also has a remarkable pair of natural tools—his hands. They are far more skillful than the paws of any wild animal. The hands are capable of doing various types of work. They were of great value in fashioning new stone tools and weapons. Man could handle these objects more skillfully than any other creature. And, of course, man walked upright, leaving his hands free for work.

These were some of the wonderful gifts of God to man. They made man different from the animals. They gave him an advantage over the animals that threatened him.

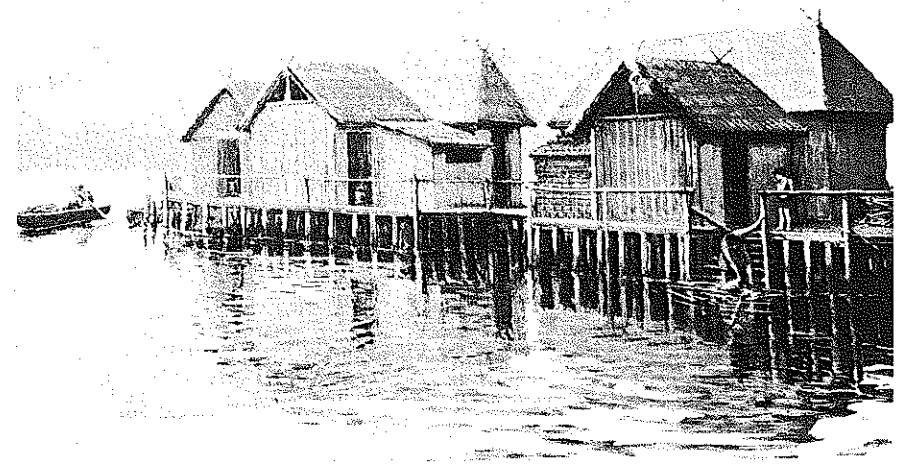
The New Stone Age

Improvement and Change. Years passed, and gradually improvements were made in the stone tools and weapons that man found handy. Man learned to sharpen the stones and to shape them to fit his needs. Wooden handles were sometimes added. With the sharpened tools, man could do better work. This change brought about another period, which is called the New Stone Age. By the time man reached the New Stone Age, the clues show us, he had improved his living conditions in many other ways.

The Lake Dwellers. During the summer of 1921 there was very little rain in Switzerland. The waters of Lake Geneva sank to a very low level and revealed a whole set of new clues about man in the New Stone Age. As the water level sank, there appeared many wooden posts. These had served as supports for houses built out over the water. The prehistoric people of this area had built their homes on piers.

Other people in the New Stone Age lived in tents. You probably have seen pictures of the wigwams

of North American Indians. The Indians were still living under Stone Age conditions when the first European explorers arrived in America. The priests who came with the explorers, in writing about the Indians, were describing life in the Stone Age.



*Chicago Natural History Museum
Frederick Blaschke, artist*

Lake Dwellings in Prehistoric Switzerland

Freedom from Want. All the clues of this period tell us that man had tamed, or domesticated, many animals that had been wild. We know that horses, dogs, cattle, sheep, and goats became the servants of man. They helped him with his heavy work. Some of them also added to his food supply.

Think of the many ways in which cows could be of help to early man. They supplied milk and meat

for food. The skin could be used for clothing, for bed covering, and for tents. The horns and bones made good tools and weapons. Later, man learned how to make oxen pull crude plows and carry heavy loads.

Man was constantly searching for animals to help him with his heavy work. The horse was found to be very helpful in pulling a plow or in carrying a heavy burden. In dry countries the camel was used, and in colder lands, the reindeer. In some other countries, man even tamed the elephant to be a beast of burden.

Man learned to grind certain grains into flour to make a kind of coarse bread. He then settled down as a farmer. Grains that had previously grown wild were domesticated.

At first, man probably broke the ground for planting with a sharp stick or even a sharp stone or shell. Later, he may have used a sharp deerhorn or some animal's tooth fastened to a long stick. These were the first crude plows. The next important step was to train animals to pull the plows and to lighten the work of man. With his crops and his cattle and sheep, man became less of a hunter. He began to look for fertile lands, where he could settle down and build a home for his family.

With his increased food supply, man looked for some means of storing the grain after it ripened.

Pottery came to be used for this purpose. Someone had discovered that clay would harden in the heat of the sun or a fire. Later, the clay was worked into various shapes and forms to make pottery that



Baking Pottery in Prehistoric Times

was beautiful as well as useful. A vast amount of pottery has been found in places where families of the New Stone Age lived.

The Gift of Fire. Sometime before man entered the New Stone Age, he discovered the use of fire. We do not know how man first learned about fire. We do know that after a while he learned how to

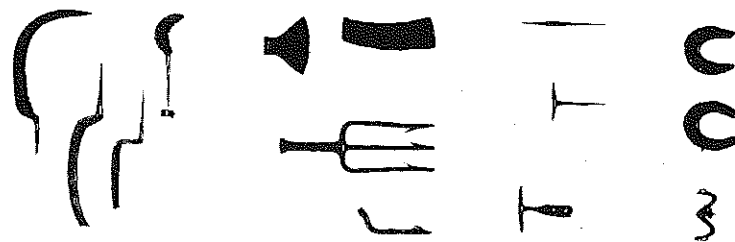
use it in many ways. He cooked his food over a fire. Fire gave him warmth. It helped him bake his pottery. It gave him protection from wild animals, because animals are afraid of fire.

At first, fire was rarely used and was carefully guarded. In some places, where men did not know about the true God, fire was worshipped as a god. Later, someone discovered how to start a fire by striking two pieces of flint together. Boys still use this method when they go on a camping trip.

Early Government. As man ceased to wander, and began to settle down in small villages, some form of government became necessary. At this early period, the family consisted of more than father, mother, and children. It included grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. All these lived together and worked together. As time went on and the number of families continued to increase, groups of families would join to form clans or tribes.

The Age of Metals

More Rapid Progress. There are no clues to indicate where or how man first discovered metals. After he learned to shape metals over a fire, he tried many experiments with the new material. He realized that metal was superior to stone for weapons and especially for tools. From that time to our own, metals have been so important that this period



Chicago Natural History Museum

is called the Age of Metals. The Metal Age has been much shorter than either the Old Stone Age or the New Stone Age. However, the progress of man has moved at a more rapid pace in the Metal Age.

The Invention of Writing. It was probably about the time that man learned how to use metals that he learned how to write. Writing was very helpful in spreading new ideas. From that time on, the best clues to how man lived are in the messages which he wrote on paper or in clay or which he sometimes carved in stone. As the tribes grew, they left more and more written records. The records tell us how these early peoples improved their farms, built their homes and temples, and defended their lands against invaders. Some describe their religious beliefs. Others explain their laws and governments. As a result we have a far greater knowledge of the peoples who could write.

By the time a people learned to write, it already had a large number of unwritten stories and songs which told of its earlier history. These had been

passed along from one generation to another. Gradually, as new ideas were added, the stories and songs changed. By the time they were written down, it was difficult to separate fact from fiction. Yet, in spite of this, the stories and songs tell us a great deal about the life of man in the period before history began.

In the case of the Hebrews, God revealed the chief events in their past history to Moses, one of their great leaders. Moses wrote down this revelation in five books, which form the first five books of the Bible.

History, in the strict sense of the word, begins with the invention of writing. That is why the earlier ages are called "prehistoric." Our only knowledge of the prehistoric period comes from the clues and remains which archaeologists have found. When man began to leave written records, his story became more complete. It became history. We will now examine the history of some of the earlier peoples.

AN OUTLINE OF THIS CHAPTER

1. Detectives on the trail
2. The Old Stone Age
3. Man's gifts from God
4. The New Stone Age
5. Man increases his food supply
6. The discovery of fire

7. The Age of Metals
8. The invention of writing

STUDY EXERCISES

1. Where do we find clues about prehistoric man?
2. What types of clues were left by the people of the Old Stone Age?
3. What were the gifts of God that permitted man to be superior to his animal enemies?
4. What was the chief improvement of the New Stone Age?
5. Explain how man increased his food supply during the New Stone Age.
6. Make a list of the ways in which fire was important for early man.
7. What advantages did man gain from the use of metals?
8. Why was the invention of writing important?

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Visit a museum or library near your school that has tools or pictures of tools used by prehistoric man.
2. Prepare a story showing how fire might have been discovered by a boy or girl your age.
3. Part of your work this year will be to compile a history scrapbook. You should plan now to get a book for this purpose. You may put in it anything that is connected with the work you are doing. You may come across interesting post cards. You may find pictures in magazines. Perhaps you can draw maps or charts. You might write brief stories. Make your scrapbook neat, colorful, and attractive.