

**A "New" History of the World**

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Now that the year is at an end and we have been regaled from a ridiculous variety of perspectives, both domestic and foreign, pseudo-historical and physiological, from Isaac Shelby to the Hell's angels, and from graveyards to English pubs; with a variety of bizarre and contradictory stops elsewhere, it would seem that the time has come to call a halt to these musings and apply some sense of perspective and reflect on where we have been and possibly on where we're going, although this society, and especially the open meeting, may not be an appropriate forum for such exercises. Nevertheless, with deference to the senior member recently retired from the podium, what I modestly propose is a simple ten or fifteen minute history of the world, carefully avoiding anything remotely resembling an original thought except when absolutely provoked beyond human endurance.

I warn you in advance, virtually this entire work has been scandalously plagiarized from various sources, totally without their knowledge, permission or encouragement. The truth is--this varies from most normal papers in that I am telling you this in advance, where during the course of regular meetings such information must be dredged out of presenters by diligent questions during comment time. I have included the primary source for the record--another great break with Atheneum tradition!!

What follows is collected from years of reading student essays, from eighth grade through college. I must assure you that virtually none of the material comes from my classes or classes of learned fellow society members. Nevertheless, listen closely, as admonished by one of the original compliers, and you will learn a lot.

The inhabitants on ancient Egypt were called mummies. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere, so certain areas of the dessert are cultivated by irrigation. The Egyptians built the Pyramids in the shape of a huge triangular cube. The Pramids are a range of mountains between France and Spain.

The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the First book of the Bible, Guinesses, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, once asked, "Am I my brother's son?" God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Montezuma. Named, naturally, for the King of Europe. Jacob, son of Isaac stole his brother's birth mark. Jacob was a patriarch who brought up his twelve sons to be patriarchs, but they did not take to it. One of Jacob's sons, Joseph, gave refuse to the Israelites.

Pharaoh forced the Hebrew slaves to make bread without straw. Moses led them to the Dead Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. Afterwards, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Philatelists, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Soloman, one of David's sons had 500 wives and 500 porcupines.

Without the Greeks we wouldn't have history. The Greeks invented three kinds of columns--Corinthian, Doric, and Ionic. They also had myths. A myth is, obviously, a female moth! One myth says that the mother of Achilles dipped him in the River Stynx until he became intolerable. Achilles appears in *The Iliad*, by Homer. Homer also wrote *The Oddity*, in which Penelope was the last hardship that Ulysses endured on his journey. Actually, Homer was not written by Homer but by another man of that name. Socrates was a famous Greek teacher who went around giving people advice. They killed him. Socrates actually died from an overdose of wedlock.

In the Olympic Games, Greeks ran races, jumped, hurled the biscuits, and threw the javelin. The reward to the victor was a laurel wreath. The government of Athens was democratic because people took the law into their own hands. There were no wars in Greece, as the mountains were so high that they couldn't climb over to see what their neighbors were doing. When they did fight with the Persians, the Greeks were outnumbered because the Persians had more men.

Eventually, the Romans conquered the Greeks. History calls people Romans because they never stayed in one place for very long. At Roman banquets, the guests wore garlands in their hair. Julius Caesar extinguished himself on the battlefields of Gaul. The Ides of March murdered him because they thought he was going to be made king. Nero was a cruel tyrant who would torture his poor subjects by playing the fiddle to them.

Then came the middle Ages. King Alfred conquered the Danes, King Arthur lived in the Age of Chivalry, King Harold mustered his troops before the Battle of Hastings, Joan of Arc was canonized by Bernard Shaw, and victims of the Black Death grew boils on their necks. Finally, Magna Carta provided that no free man should be hanged twice for the same offense.

In medieval times most of the people were illiterate. The greatest writer

of the time was Chaucer, who wrote many poems and verses and also wrote literature. Another tale tells of William Tell, who shot an arrow through an apple while standing on his son's head.

The Renaissance was an age in which more individuals felt the value of their human being. Martin Luther was nailed to the church door at Wittenberg for selling papal indulgences. He died a horrible death, being excommunicated by a bull. It was the painter Donatello's interest in the female nude that made him the father of the Renaissance. It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented the Bible. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Francis Drake circumcised the world with a 100-foot clipper.

The government of England was a limited mockery. Henry VIII found walking difficult because he had an abbess on his knee. Queen Elizabeth was the "Virgin Queen". As a queen she was a success. When Elizabeth exposed herself before her troops, they all shouted "hurrah". Then her navy went out and defeated the Spanish Armadillo.

The greatest writer of the Renaissance was William Shakespear. Shakespear never made much money and is famous only because of his

plays. He lived at Windsor with his merry wives, writing tragedies, comedies and errors. In one of Shakespear's famous plays, Hamlet rations out his situation by relieving himself in a long soliloquy. In another, Lady Macbeth tries to convince Macbeth to kill the King by attacking his manhood. Romeo and Juliet are an example of a heroic couplet.

Writing at the same time as Shakespear was Miguel Cervantes. He wrote Donkey Hote. The next great author was John Milton. Milton wrote Paradise Lost. Then his wife died and he wrote Paradise Regained.

During the Renaissance America began. Christopher Columbus was a great navigator who discovered America while cursing about the Atlantic. His ships were the Nina, the Pinta and the Santa Fe. Later, the Pilgrims crossed the Ocean and this was known as Pilgrims Progress. When they landed at Plymouth Rock, they were greeted by the Indians, who came down the hill rolling their war hoops before them. The Indian squabs carried their porpoises on their backs. Many of the Indian heroes were killed, along with their cabooses, which proved very fatal to them. The winter of 1620 was a hard one for the settlers. Many people died and many babies were born. Captain John Smith was responsible for all this.

One of the causes of the Revolutionary Wars was the English put tacks in their tea. Also, the colonists would send their parcels through the post without stamps. During the War, the Red Coats and Paul Revere was throwing balls over stone walls. The dogs were barking and the peacocks crowing. Finally, the colonists won the War and no longer had to pay for taxis.

Delegates from the original thirteen states formed the Contented Congress. Thomas Jefferson, a Virgin, and Benjamin Franklin were two singers of the Declaration of Independence. Franklin had gone to Boston carrying all his clothes in his pocket and a loaf of bread under each arm.

He invented electricity by rubbing cats backwards and declared, "A horse divided against itself cannot stand." Franklin died in 1790 and is still dead.

George Washington married Martha Curtis and in due time became the Father of Our Country. The Constitution of the United States was adopted to secure domestic hostility. Under the Constitution the people enjoyed the right to keep bare arms.

Abraham Lincoln became America's greatest Precedent. Lincoln's mother



died in infancy and he was born in a log cabin which he built with his own hands. When Lincoln was President, he wore only a tall silk hat. He said, "In union there is strength." Abraham Lincoln wrote the Gettysburg Address while traveling from Washington to Gettysburg on the back of an envelope. He also freed the slaves by signing the Emancipation Proclamation and the Fourteenth Amendment gave the ex-negroes citizenship. But the Ku Klux Klan would torch and lynch the ex-Negroes and other innocent victims. It claimed it represented the law and order. On the night of April 14, 1865, Lincoln went to the theater and got shot in his seat by one of the actors in a moving picture show. The believed assassin was John Wilkes Booth, a supposedly insane actor. This ruined Booth's career.

Meanwhile in Europe, the enlightenment was a reasonable time. Voltaire invented electricity and also wrote a book called Candide. Gravity was invented by Isaac Newton. It is chiefly noticeable in the autumn, when the apples are falling off the trees.

Bach was the most famous composer in the world, and so was Handel. Handel was half German, half Italian and half English. He was very large. Bach died from 1750 to the present. Beethoven wrote music even though he was deaf. He was so deaf he wrote loud music. He took long walks in the

forest even when everyone was calling for him. Beethoven expired in 1827 and later died for this.

France was in a very serious state. The French Revolution was accomplished before it happened. The Marseilles was the theme song of the French Revolution and it catapulted into Napoleon. During the Napoleonic Wars, the crowned heads of Europe were trembling in their shoes. Then the Spanish gorillas came down from the hills and nipped at Napoleon's flanks. Napoleon became ill with bladder problems and was very tense and restrained. He wanted an heir to inherit his power, but since Josephine was a baroness, she couldn't bear children.

The sun never set on the British Empire because the British Empire is in the East and the sun sets in the West. Queen Victoria was the longest queen. She was on a thorn for sixty-three years. Her reclining years and finally the end of her life were exemplary of a great personality. Her death was the final event which ended her reign.

The nineteenth century was a time of many great inventions and thoughts. The invention of the steamboat caused a network of rivers to spring up. Cyrus McCormick invented the McCormick reaper, which did the work of a hundred men. Samuel Morse invented a code of telepathy. Louis Pasteur

discovered a cure for rabbis. Charles Darwin was a naturalist who wrote The Organ of the Species. Madman Curie discovered radium and Karl Marx became one of the Marx Brothers. The first World War, caused by the assignation of the Arch-Duck by a surf, ushered in a new error in the anals of human history.

Despite my dramatic departure from some of the cherished customs of this society, I will yield to one great Athenaeum tradition however, (multiple sequels to otherwise mediocre papers) and reserve the balance of the 20th Century for some future opportunity to inflict further pain and anguish on another captive audience.

(Much of this material originally appeared as an article in *Verbatim, The Language Quarterly* , compiled by Richard Lederer, "Student Bloopers".)