

BASIC HISTORY LIBRARY
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History Moments Blog



INTRODUCTION

This allows readers to begin their own electronic library in history. Note that this is to just start a history library of your own. Selections were made based on the

- importance of the historian,
- importance of the subject,
- ease of understanding the text,
- cost being legally free, and
- availability of the books on the internet.

Some books such as Herodotus cannot be read by modern readers for the first time without guidance. Those books, as important as they are, are not included in this list.

The internet is not all that it is cracked up to be when it comes to availability of books, even books in the public domain. Even when books are supposedly accessible, they are not in a practical way. These selections are.

An attempt was made to balance geography and time periods but in the end, this had to be relegated to a secondary priority.

The books are presented in alphabetic order according to the author's last names. Links begin with "http://dld.bz." Copy links into your browser and hit [Enter].

THE LIST

Anthologies, Collection of Stories Every Child Should Know

Basic stories from different sources. Some of them are of mythic people. Here because this is a good starting point for someone beginning a study of history.

Heroes: <http://dld.bz/dRhta>

Heroines: <http://dld.bz/dRhtw>

Julius Caesar, Commentaries on the Gallic and Civil Wars

A classic work about Rome's conquest of Gaul (modern France) and the civil war that followed. A little too Herodotus but still readable.

<http://dld.bz/dRhtB>

Winston S. Churchill, His Books on Africa

He won the Nobel Prize for Literature and was disappointed that it was not the Peace Prize. He was Prime Minister during World War II. While people remember him for his history of that war, it was his Africa books that established him as a major historian.

The River War, an Account of the Reconquest of the Sudan: <http://dld.bz/dRhud>

London to Ladysmith Via Pretoria: <http://dld.bz/dRhue>

Ian Hamilton's March: <http://dld.bz/dRhuf>

My African Journey: <http://dld.bz/dRhuj>

Edward Gibbon, History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

This is one of the must-haves, the marriage of great history with great writing. It goes all the way to the fall of Constantinople at the end of the Medieval Age.

Vol 1: <http://dld.bz/dRhuY>

Vol 2: <http://dld.bz/dRhvp>

Vol 3: <http://dld.bz/dRhvq>

Vol 4: <http://dld.bz/dRhvr>

Vol 5: <http://dld.bz/dRhvs>

Vol 6: <http://dld.bz/dRhvt>

Herbert A. Giles, The Civilization of China

A professor at Cambridge, this book is selected for subject matter and readability.

<http://dld.bz/dRhvu>

Flavius Josephus

Often cited, seldom read, there were lots of controversies these books are cited for due to the intersection with The Bible and history, so people forget that there was a lot more to Jewish history than just Bible-related stuff.

The Antiquities of the Jews: <http://dld.bz/dRhvv>

The Wars of the Jews: <http://dld.bz/dRhvw>

Thomas Babington Macaulay, History of England from Accession of James II

While these books cover just the last few decades of the 17th. century. While there was a lot going on during these years, these books demonstrate that a lengthier work can be more interesting than a short one. Details, details, those details can be organized through good thinking and good writing into one of the most entertaining reads out there. - Just beware the section on Marlborough. Churchill condemned that as untrue.

Vol 1: <http://dld.bz/dRhvx>

Vol 2: <http://dld.bz/dRhvz>

Vol 3: <http://dld.bz/dRhv2>

Vol 4: <http://dld.bz/dRhv3>

Vol 5: <http://dld.bz/dRhv4>

Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower on History 1660 - 1783

One of the most influential books any historian ever wrote, the principals from this book affects policy to this day.

<http://dld.bz/dRhvH>

Francis Parkman, France and England in North America

This remains one of the greatest historical works to ever come out of America. A professor at Harvard University, Parkman combined solid research with good narrative presentation.

1) Pioneers of France in the New World: <http://dld.bz/dRhvM>

2) The Jesuits in North America in the 17th. Century: <http://dld.bz/dRhww>

3) LaSalle and the Discovery of the Great West: <http://dld.bz/dRhUP>

4) The Old Regime in Canada : <http://dld.bz/dRhUR>

5) Count Frontenac and New France Under Louis XIV: <http://dld.bz/dRhUS>

6) A Half-Century of Conflict, Part I: <http://dld.bz/dRhUU>

7) A Half-Century of Conflict, Part II: <http://dld.bz/dRhUV>

8) Montcalm and Wolfe: <http://dld.bz/dRhUY>

9) The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War After the Conquest of Canada:

<http://dld.bz/dRhUY>

Plutarch, Plutarch's Lives

This combines biography with morality. What lessons can we learn from the lives of these ancient celebrities?

Vol 1: <http://dld.bz/dRhUZ>

Vol 2: <http://dld.bz/dRhVa>

Vol 3: <http://dld.bz/dRhVb>

Vol 4: <http://dld.bz/dRhVd>

Leopold von Ranke, History of the Popes, Their Church and State

He is important because he championed objectivity in history. With current trends going in the opposite direction, he is as relevant to the field of history now as he was then.

Note the controversial subject of this selection and how he tries for fair and balance while always looking for the truth in the story.

Vol 1: <http://dld.bz/dRhVf>

Vol 2: <http://dld.bz/dRhVg>

Vol 3: <http://dld.bz/dRhVh>

George Rawlinson, Great Monarchies of the Ancient World

Selected first for the subject matter, this author still ranks among the great historians.

The trouble with ancient history, though is that new things are always being discovered so that this or any other book from around 1900 is going to be dated. The big things he gets right.

Chaldea: <http://dld.bz/dRhVm>
Assyria: <http://dld.bz/dRjrf>
Media: <http://dld.bz/dRjrh>
Babylon: <http://dld.bz/dRjrj>
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Sassanian: <http://dld.bz/dRjrw>
Ancient Egypt: <http://dld.bz/dRjrG>
Phoenicia: <http://dld.bz/dRjrM>

Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History

Among the current controversy of Eurocentricism vs. Afrocentrism in American history, let's not forget that there is a third choice. Turner argued that America was chiefly affected by the frontier and westward expansion.

<http://dld.bz/dRjrT>

H.G. Wells, A Short History of the World

I suggest that if you don't read anything else, you read this book. Not only does he give decent coverage of humanity as a whole, there is a lot of analysis that ought to be considered.

<http://dld.bz/dRjrX>

James T. Wheeler, India under British Rule

Another choice decided by first subject matter then other considerations. Among those other considerations was that this was a top-notch author who covers an interesting topic in an interesting way.

<http://dld.bz/dRjrZ>

TOP 3 CHOICES

- 1) H.G. Wells, A Short History of the World
- 2) Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower on History 1660 - 1783
- 3) Edward Gibbon, History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

INDEXES

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Alfred Thayer Mahan: <http://dld.bz/dRjsn>
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Leopold von Ranke: <http://dld.bz/dRjst>
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