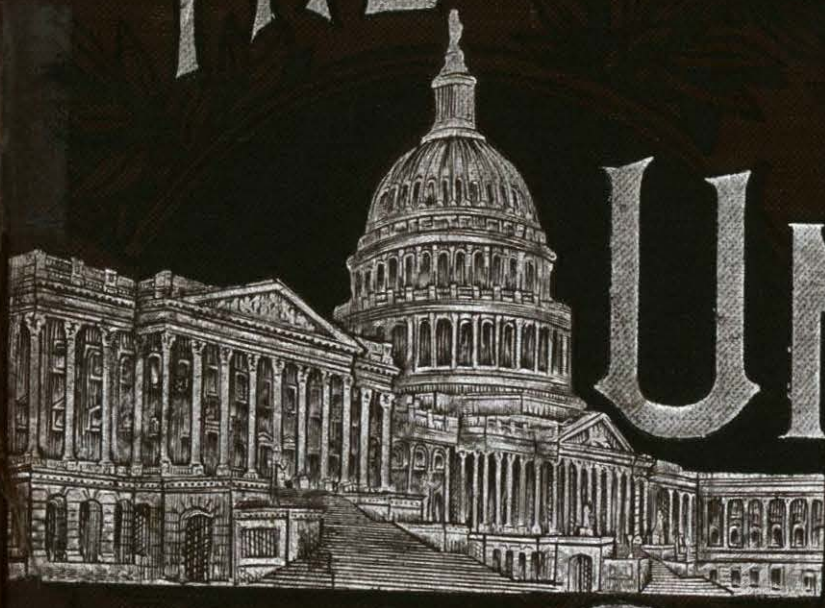


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UNITED STATES A HISTORY.

THE MOST COMPLETE AND MOST POPULAR HISTORY
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FROM THE ABORIGINAL TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

EMBRACING AN ACCOUNT OF THE ABORIGINES; THE NORSEMEN IN THE NEW WORLD;
THE DISCOVERIES BY THE SPANIARDS, ENGLISH, AND FRENCH; THE PLANTING OF SETTLEMENTS;
THE GROWTH OF THE COLONIES; THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY IN THE REVOLUTION; THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE UNION; THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION; THE CIVIL WAR; THE CENTENNIAL
OF INDEPENDENCE; AND THE RECENT ANNALS OF THE REPUBLIC

BY
JOHN CLARK RIDPATH, LL. D.

AUTHOR OF RIDPATH'S SCHOOL HISTORIES OF THE UNITED STATES, AND A CYCLOPEDIA OF
UNIVERSAL HISTORY

Revised and Enlarged

THE COMPLETE CENSUS OF 1890 AND OTHER VALUABLE STATISTICS,
MAGNIFICENTLY ILLUSTRATED WITH NUMEROUS ENGRAVINGS DESCRIBING
THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION



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PREFACE.

DEAR PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES:—

By this, my Preface, I offer to you a New History of your country—and mine. The work is presented in the form of an abridged narrative. My reasons for such a venture are brief, but, I trust, satisfactory:

First, to every American citizen some knowledge of the history of his country is indispensable. The attainment of that knowledge ought to be made easy and delightful.

Second, the Centennial of the Republic furnishes an auspicious occasion for the study of those great events which compose the warp and woof of the new civilization in the West.

This book is intended for the average American; for the man of business who has neither time nor disposition to plod through ten or twenty volumes of elaborate historical dissertation; for the practical man of the shop, the counter, and the plow. The work is dedicated to the household and the library of the working man. It is inscribed to the father, the mother, the son, and the daughter of the American family. If father, mother, son, and daughter shall love their country better—if they shall understand more clearly and appreciate more fully the founding, progress, and growth of liberty in the New World—the author will be abundantly repaid.

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In the preparation of the work the following objects have been kept in view:

I. To give an accurate and spirited Narrative of the principal events in our National history from the aboriginal times to the present day.

II. To discuss the Philosophy of that history as fully as possible within the narrow limits of the work.

III. To avoid all Partiality, Partisanship, and Prejudice, as things dangerous, baneful, and wicked.

IV. To preserve a clear and systematic Arrangement of the several subjects, giving to every fact, whether of peace or war, its true place and importance in the narrative.

V. To secure a Style and Method in the book itself which shall be in keeping with the spirit and refinement of the times.

Whether these important ends have been attained, dear People, it is not my province but yours to decide. I have labored earnestly to reach the ideal of such a work, and if success has not rewarded the effort, the failure has been in the execution rather than in the plan and purpose.

I surrender the book, thus undertaken and completed, to You—for whom it was intended. With diffidence I ask a considerate judgment and just recognition of whatever worth the work may be found to possess.

J. C. R.

PREFACE TO COLUMBIAN EDITION.

THE issuance of the present edition of the History of the United States falls fittingly on the four hundredth anniversary of the discovery of our country. The author has availed himself of the occasion to revise and enlarge the work, bringing the narrative down to the present day. He has expanded those parts which cover the last two decades of our history, so as to give to current events as much space as the limitations of the volume will permit. It is hoped that the reader may thus find not only an adequate account of the earlier epochs, but also a satisfactory narration of the recent—even the most recent—parts of our national development.

Little apology should be made for the publication of a work of this kind. Whatever may be the defects of composition and arrangement, the essential merits of the subject must prove to be not only the explanation, but in some measure the justification of the enterprise. The history of our country is a theme which can never be exhausted by repetition. It increases in interest with its diffusion; familiarity, in this case at least, instead of breeding contempt, adds rather an increasing charm to the story.

I have attempted in this work to give within the moderate limits of a single volume a succinct account of the principal events in the history of the United States. Beginning with the earliest voyages and discoveries, I have spoken of the first foothold and plantings of civilization on our continent. I have attempted to narrate, not in minute details but in general outline of sufficient amplitude, the adventures and tentative movements by which the better parts of the New World were reclaimed and brought at length under the dominion of the English-speaking race. The same method has been pursued in the so-called Colonial period of our history, and through the epoch of the intercolonial wars.

Two reasons may be assigned for dwelling with tolerable fullness upon this part of our career as a people. The first is the inherent interest which the early ages of our history possess; and the second is the dependency of our larger development upon the Colonial planting. He who dwells with care on the matters presented in our age of discovery can hardly fail to find in the same such interest as the drama furnishes to the eager and curious mind. He who studies with attention the facts present in our Colonial epoch will discover in the same the fundamental conditions of the larger national life which has arisen therefrom.

The formative period of that life includes the great event by which our independence of the Mother Country was achieved, namely, the War of the Revolution. In this struggle of our heroic age the movements of the new American societies towards unity, freedom and greatness can be easily discerned. The virtues of

PREFACE TO COLUMBIAN EDITION.

that important period—its patriotism, singleness of purpose, high motives of conduct and devotion to principle—must plainly appear to every thoughtful reader. The example of the patriot fathers may well furnish to their descendants the motives and inspiration requisite to right citizenship in the greatest of republics.

In history not everything is accomplished at one stroke. Our War of Independence did not suffice for the nationality of the United States. That came afterwards, by trial stages, by attraction and repulsion, by the growth of many things and the decay of some, and finally by the ordeal of the greatest war of modern history.

It was needed that a considerable period should elapse between the founding and the completion of our national structure. Room must be afforded for the abatement of old antagonisms and the death of hurtful prejudices. Opportunity must be given for the birth and development of new sentiments to which our fathers were strangers. Space must be had for the spread of this strong Anglo-American race, and for the obliteration of that localism with which it had been hampered in the beginning.

Our War for the Union carries still in the memories of men the bruises of the battlefield. That struggle made for itself a great memory in the world, and marked the limitation which the civilized life of man drew at last around some of the most grievous abuses of ancient times. It was in this furnace that African slavery perished; out of it came new concepts of the rights of man and the blessings possible under a purified and enlarged democracy.

Nor should we fail to reflect upon the great period which has now elapsed since the close of our civil conflict. More than one-fourth of our whole national career, measured from the foundation of the Republic, lies this side of Appomattox! During this period an increment of twenty-seven millions of souls, or forty per cent. of the whole, has been added to our population. A continent has been reclaimed and organized into great States; the foundations have been laid with seeming security for the greatest nationality in the world. We have made a way for posterity, as our fathers made a way for us.

It is fitting that all this should come vividly to the recollection in the Columbian year. The occasion of the international celebration in the most American and most marvellous of all cities may well invite all classes of readers to a review of the history of their country. I have endeavored in the following pages to recite the story in a manner befitting the year. It has been my aim to include all the essentials of the narrative, omitting only so much as may be spared without marring the outline of the whole. I do not flatter myself that the work has been perfectly done, but may claim to have spared no effort to make this one-volume history of our country worthy of the theme and of the great public, into whose hands I cordially deliver the result of my labor.

J. C. R.

GREENCASTLE, IND., AUGUST 27, 1893.

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