

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION

This brief history of Europe is for those persons who live in the United States of America and who have an interest in genealogy and their European origins and surnames. The writer will be among the first to admit that he is unable to claim academic perfection in the preparation of this work. If such attention to historical detail and completeness were expended for each of the nations discussed in this work, the final result would not have been only one book which the reader can hold in his hands but instead exhaustive histories for each European nation, culminating in a multitude of volumes. The writer had no intention of preparing such exhaustive works. Instead, his aim has been to write a brief history to provide the reader with some basic knowledge of the origins and early history of the European peoples by showing how their civilizations developed in the manner they did and to explain how the surnames of those nations evolved. The United States has been founded by or has taken in emigrants from each of the nationalities discussed in this history. Now, the writer hopes the living descendents of those immigrants can gain a better appreciation of who their forefathers were and from whence they came.

The writer believes many novices to the field of genealogy may wonder why their surname, or others which they may be researching, cannot be traced back for more than just a few hundred years. The simple fact is that surnames have not been around really very long in the overall perspective of time and man's existence on earth. In the British Isles, the Norman French in England and King Brian Boru in Ireland started the use of surnames. Until approximately the year 1100 A.D., no one had a surname, and for four centuries or longer, individuals continued to change their surnames almost without fail every generation. In 1413, during the reign of King Henry V, the English enacted the Statute of Additions in an effort to have the common people adopt surnames for legal purposes. But still, they changed their names. At long last, in 1538 during the reign of King Henry VIII, the English enacted the Registration Act requiring people to record a permanent surname in Church registers for births, marriages, and deaths. The latter Act formalized and made permanent the use of surnames in England. Why should we turn to the English? Because the English people were among the first to commence the use of surnames. And, besides, our basic culture, our basis of law, and our use of English as our national language were brought to America by the early English colonists who settled our land. Thus, for these

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reasons, the writer discusses at length the evolution of English surnames in Chapter 6.

There are a few fortunate persons who can trace their lineage to royalty and can possibly trace one or more lines back to the time of Charlemagne in the ninth century. However, these persons are members of a distinct minority, and their proofs of lineage may or may not be questionable. But, all living persons can rest assured that their own particular lines of descent have managed to survive down through the ages. Considering this fact, all readers of this history must know they too had ancestors. Otherwise they would not be walking this earth today. Whether one can trace his or her lineage back only a few generations, a few centuries, or to the time of Charlemagne, there comes a time when no further information can be found. Where does the reader turn to learn about his forefathers if he or she cannot trace their surnames beyond a given time? Why, naturally, he or she turns to the histories of the various nations in order to learn the origins of the European peoples and how they lived before they began to adopt surnames. The writer hopes this brief history will provide those searchers with the rudiments of knowledge to satisfy their curiosity.

Some readers may find the discussion of Creation expressed in Chapter 1, *The First Europeans*, to be controversial. In response to possible criticism regarding Creation, the writer is hopeful the reader can share his views on this subject, but if not, then he or she is free to disagree. However, until the case for evolution can be proven conclusively, the writer holds the belief that modern or Cro-Magnon man has lived only from the time of the Neolithic Era to the present and not before. His belief is based on the Book of Genesis taken from the Christian Bible. This source is the oldest written testimony documenting man's origins and history on this earth. No ancient or contemporary written records, artifacts, or remains of Cro-Magnon man have been found which date before 5500 B.C. and which can dispute the Book of Genesis. Quite possibly, the Jewish calendar of man's early origins may be more accurate than the Christian version. But, who on earth knows how to prove otherwise?

Some scientists, and certainly some anthropologists, may dispute the Creation of man. However, the challenge to disprove the Book of Genesis is awesome. Of course, the scientific community have at their disposal the most modern means of radio-carbon dating technology with which to estimate the age of ancient bones and artifacts. However, measurement of time as expressed in the Book of Genesis before the Great Deluge may have been quite different from what man has used since. Nonetheless, the challenge remains. Can the radio-carbon dating procedures be in error? Can old bones and artifacts discovered by modern

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anthropologists--such as the late Louis S. B. Leakey, his son Richard, and others--in Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania, and elsewhere, be proven in fact to be those of early man (humanoid) and not some similar creature (anthropoid)? If true, they have yet to prove their contention beyond doubt that Cro-Magnon man is a product of evolution and not Creation. And, who says that modern or Cro-Magnon man had to be created during the time of the dinosaurs? Much of the modern conception of man--even the theory of evolution--remains pure speculation, despite the knowledge scientists and anthropologists have gathered about Neanderthal man, Java man, and other early, speculative forms of man. Conclusive proof has not been forthcoming.

On the other hand, the reader should really marvel at the progress Cro-Magnon man has made in just the last 7,500 years of his existence on earth. Really, we must give man credit for being an inquisitive, intelligent, and adventuresome being. If the reader will pause and take but a few moments to reflect on the remarkable achievements man has made in the last 2,000 years alone, then the realization is apparent that the time of his Creation was not very long ago. We can only be amazed at the wondrous inventions, the writings, and the gifted intelligence of man to improve his lot in just the last two millennia alone. Even his progress in the last 100 years is most astounding. If it were not true, then why did man flounder for so long--many thousand or perhaps even a million years or longer--without making any perceptible progress in his culture and the material things of life before he "put his act together?" No, we all can readily appreciate--even by reading this brief, incomplete history--that man in all likelihood only entered and settled in Europe some 5,000 years ago. In fact, the island of Iceland had never been inhabited by man prior to the arrival of the early Vikings--only some 1,100 years ago! Even the discovery and settlement of the Western Hemisphere is comparatively recent. The Europeans--the Vikings and Christopher Columbus--discovered it only some 1,000 and 500 years ago respectively. It is true that various Indian nations had discovered it earlier, and there can be no doubt they came from Asia across an ice bridge over the Bering Strait perhaps some 2,000 years before. But, for the most part, the culture and progress of the "Native Americans" remained rather primitive until the Europeans arrived in the hemisphere.

Further, the reader will note that the brief histories of the European peoples of the chapters of this book have no common point in time for their end. For example, the chapters concerning the West Europeans conclude in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. The chapters about the Greeks and Italians end in the nineteenth century, and the chapters about the East Europeans end in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The reasoning the writer has used for ending the various chapters

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when he did is based upon the order the immigrants arrived in the American Colonies or after their countries became political entities and they can clearly be associated with a modern country of Europe. The majority of our early colonies were English. The English founded our country and gave us the basic culture, customs, and laws which prevail throughout the country. There are other ethnic groups and cultures, but the official language we use is English, and the American culture is a modified English culture. In other words, the chapter histories end about the time the people of these countries began to immigrate to the United States.

Therefore, with the caveats for Creation and evolution of man out of the way, the writer invites the reader to read and enjoy this book for what it is--a brief summary outlining the origins and early histories of the various European nationalities before they began to take surnames. When the reader reaches the impasse of not being able to trace his or her family name any further, he or she should turn to recorded history to learn more about his or her early ancestors. The writer hopes this brief account of European history will assist the reader in his or her quest for knowledge of the past. Generally speaking, the average American does not know very much about ancient, medieval, and modern European history, but he or she should. Have fun--read and learn who your early ancestors were, from where the very earliest generations came, and how the later generations lived in their home countries of Europe before and after they took surnames!