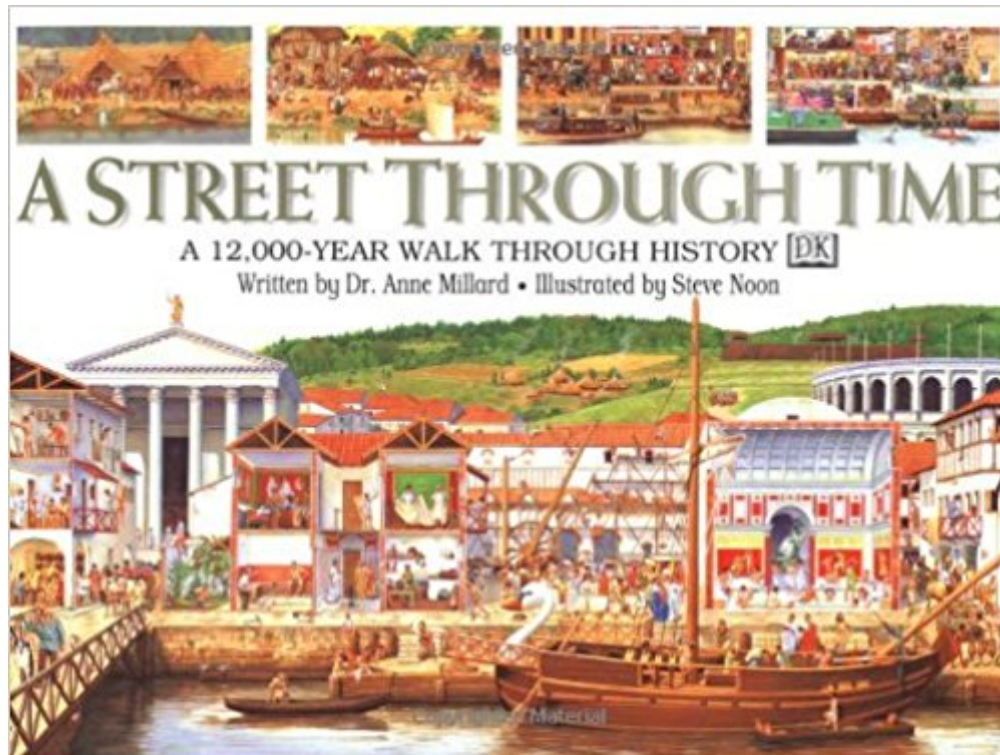




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A Street Through Time



Synopsis

Demonstrating the unfolding of history, panoramic views visiting a particular site every few centuries follow the evolution of a Stone Age riverside settlement into a twentieth-century city. A bold title and date with a few sentences describing significant changes appears in the upper-right-hand corner of each broad vertical scene. Added statements wind around the four borders, offering details about daily life of the period and inviting readers to search for significant activities among the many small vignettes in the larger view. Tiny figures busy at daily life offer an engaging chronicle of human experience over time as invaders and disease take their toll or more peaceful times bring prosperity and growth. The hypothetical street is in an unnamed European setting; Romans, Barbarians, Vikings, and the plague alter the fortunes of in-habitants. Some of the historical milestones represented by the fourteen segments are not so far apart, while long stretches of time separate others. It's a very telescopic view, compressing the rich complexities of history into a few glimpses, but there's plenty of human interest in the passing scene to keep readers poring over the shifting yet similar pursuits of people over time. The timeline construct is a useful demonstration for children, and the busy vistas would make a fine springboard for encouraging students to create scenes of local history.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 680L (What's this?)

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Product Dimensions: 10.8 x 0.4 x 14.2 inches

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 80 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #775,423 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #65 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Archaeology #368 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Cultural Studies > Customs, Traditions, Anthropology #4817 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History

Age Range: 10 - 17 years

Grade Level: 5 - 12

Customer Reviews

Grade 4-8-This oversize volume features full-color panoramic drawings of the same riverside European location at 14 different periods from the Stone Age to modern times. Each double-page spread includes a brief paragraph of description, while page borders provide summary overviews and scenes to locate. Some details are labeled. However, this is a book that relies primarily on its illustrations to convey information about the evolution of the site from a settlement to a city and the many eras (Viking, Roman, Medieval, etc.) that are represented. The coverage is so broad and the details are so small that it is often difficult to impossible to interpret what is being conveyed. While some young readers may find these views intriguing, others will find them frustrating and overwhelming. Rosie Peasley, Empire Union School District, Modesto, CA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 3[^]-6. With each turn of its elongated pages, this imaginative volume graphically reveals the continuity of history. Beginning in the year 10,000 B.C., in a Stone Age hunters' camp, the book reveals how its riverfront location is key to the site's development. This primitive camp is the germ of the modern, bustling, big-city street viewed in the concluding double-page spread. In between, each panoramic image of this same locale witnesses significant achievements of each spotlighted epoch. The view from the Iron Age of 600 B.C. makes clear the impact of iron tools and weapons, and the next page jumps to A.D. 100 when the Roman influence means large stone buildings, a bridge, and an elaborate lifestyle. The medieval centuries draw repeated attention: first, the street as part of a village is visited in the 1200s; increased prosperity and growth see the village blossom into a town in the 1400s; the scene of the 1500s, eerily painted at night, intensifies the grisly realities of the Black Plague of that era. The text is printed in the borders, surrounding the pages and serving as a guide through the elaborately detailed illustrations, where keen-eyed readers can spot elements of humor and everyday life portrayed by the diminutive residents peopling the pages. There are also Where's Waldo type gimmicks to make a game of gleaning the most information from the busy artwork. A fun and effective way to lure youngsters into the study and enjoyment of history. Ellen Mandel

A lot of thought & care has gone into this book. It manages to be relatively realistic about difficult topics like war & religion without frightening children (or prudish parents) & makes studying the pictures fun using slapstick moments hidden in the drawings of more serious topics. My only complaint is that inevitably it shows the exclusively western European viewpoint that predominates in almost every other history book aimed at kids (or mainstream adult audiences for that matter).

That's not necessarily a bad thing since that's the starting point most Americans will be coming from, but I really wish there was a little more mention along the way of what was going in the Americas, Africa, and Asia during the same periods to give some perspective. Some partner books from those perspectives would be fantastic! That small complaint aside, here's what you'll find in the book:*

The first spread shows us a Stone Age encampment alongside a river. People make canoes beside skin tipis, dogs fight over scraps, meat is hung to dry, & a shaman performs a ceremony next to a pole supporting antlers. The painting of the forest spreading out in the distance is lush & lovely.*

The second spread shows us the First Farmers about 2000BCE. There is livestock, people practicing with bows & arrows, others dousing a house fire, and our first glimpse of a sacred stone circle that will remain partially visible in ongoing pages. This kind of continuity cleverly teaches an important lesson of history building on & over itself without being preachy about it.*

The Iron Age spread shows people in elaborate Celtic-style plaids & tattoos. A fort has been built on a hill at back- this will go through several iterations as the pages turn. Priests throw iron weapons into the river as an offering- these will be discovered in much later pages in another example of the clever planning given to the illustrations.*

In Roman Times, the village is replaced with a bustling city including schools, townhouses, & baths. Native huts have been pushed further up the hillside & some of the natives are being paraded as slaves. The fort has been modified & the ancient stone circle is partially knocked over.*

In the year 600, we get The Invaders. The Roman city is reduced to a couple ruins & people are living in thatched wooden huts. In one of the little visual jokes you get throughout the book, a man in a rough brown tunic turns his back to pee against a fallen column. The fort is falling apart & a shepherd boy tries to drive off wolves with a sling.*

The year 900 sees Viking Raiders. Illustrator Steve Noon paints these pages at sunset, the village lit by an orange glow that parallels the burning buildings destroyed by the Vikings. The fort has been completely overgrown & the village is centered on a stone church. A priest holds up a crucifix to try to ward off the invaders while others flee to avoid being captured as slaves. Noon does a good job of being relatively honest about the horrors of war in a visual style that is bright & cheerful enough so as not to frighten children.*

The Medieval Village of the 1200s has the fort replaced with a stone castle, & the ancient stone circle partially overgrown. The hills have been plowed into agricultural fields & villagers are trading at a market. As in other pictures, certain elements are reproduced at the bottom & top of the page to point out important elements of the scene & the viewer can play a Where's Waldo to locate the mini-scene within the larger setting. An example on this spread is someone delivering reeds by boat to avoid forest outlaws.*

The Medieval Town of the 1400s has new towers being added to the castle while the stone circle has been completely lost in the trees. This is

another example of Noon's weaving historical truths into his illustrations in a subtle way. The disappearance of the ancient sacred site is not pointed out but some observant children are sure to notice it & ask about it, leading to good educational opportunity. The viewer is invited to guess a name for a rowdy inn based on the sign hung out front. Typical slapstick humor is provided by a fashionable couple walking unfortunately beneath a window where a woman empties a chamberpot. A boatman has accidentally dredged up one of the helmets sacrificed centuries ago by a pagan priest.* In the 1500s, The Plague Strikes. The scene is painted at night, with the dark blue tones underlining the somber situation. Soldiers are blockading people from leaving the town, a brave priest tends to the dying, & an apothecary attempts to discover a cure.* In the 1600s, the town is Under Attack. Noon casually says that it is due to "disputes over territory & new ideas about religion". Again, he does not preach about the situation, but also doesn't think that kids need the kind of purely saccharine story that will only make them write off history as boring fairy tales. The castle is being burned & bombed, as are all the buildings of the town. People are hiding & an innkeeper is being threatened by pikes, but no actual murders nor tortures are portrayed. A couple soldiers lie face down, one cries out in pain & grasps his arm, one is hit by a falling sign. It is up to the adult sharing the book with a child to decide how graphic a description of war the child is ready for. The illustration itself looks bright & adventurous & would be unlikely to frighten any but the smallest children.* In Age of Elegance, the wealthy trade in wigs while others sell goods in the streets or sweep chimneys for a living. The castle is in ruins & the leading family has moved to a Lord's mansion further up the hill.* In the Grim Times of the early 1800s, children work while a man sits with a newspaper over his head to catch the leaks from a ceiling he can't afford to fix. A barge delivers coal from the mines depicted far off in the distance to fire the factories which belch smoke over the top of the illustration.* In the late 1800s, we move From Town to City. The city is a-bustle with new inventions like a steam engine in its own train station, a postman from the new, cheap postal service, & a man with a camera taking photos. The Lord's mansion has been joined by a pile of houses spreading into the growing suburbs.* Finally, The Street Today has high-rises in the suburbs, businesspeople using cell phones & computers, and, importantly, the castle ruins now serving as a heritage site in the center of the modern city. The final pages have a timeline that does address world history, & a glossary of terms.

This is the sort of book you can pick up and pore over repeatedly. My son got this book out of the library so many times that I just bought it. It's a great way to think about history and conveys some singularly profound ideas (history doesn't proceed directionally: people's fortunes, health, and

conditions ebb and flow over time, and people were interested in "the past" even in the past). Each two-page illustration shows another chapter in European history for a single street, from the Neolithic to modern times. There are all sorts of little Easter eggs in the illustrations, like treasure being hidden, then rediscovered a few pages/historical jumps later, and a "time traveler" observing from the fringes in each picture. If you have the kid of kid who studied the details of Richard Scarry as a child or loves history, than this is a great gift. An adult can learn from it too.

This is not a history text; it will not give you factoids or dates. But it will enliven your appreciation of the passage of time and the continuity of human existence. This is a large but lightweight book. Each page is approximately 13 by 10 inches, and each of the fourteen depictions are shown in a two-page spread of about 26 inches by 10. The site depicted is an area near a waterway, presumably in the English midlands, and the eras shown are 10,000 BCE, showing a winter settlement of Stone Age hunters; 2000 BCE, an early farming settlement; 600 BCE, the Iron Age; AD 100, during Roman occupation; 600, after the collapse of Roman civilization to barbarian invaders; 900, after the Viking raids; 1200s, a medieval village; 1400s, a medieval town; 1500s, during the Bubonic Plague; 1600s, during a time of religious wars; 1700s, the Regency period; early 1800s, the beginning of industrialization; late 1800s, a thriving city; and finally, a modern city. In successive time periods we see objects and buildings from the last era in ruins or having been adapted for other uses. We see that some things never change (boating or imbibing, for example) while others change markedly (technology, cleanliness, etc.), and that to "progress" is not always to move forward. A fun book with lively cross-section watercolor drawings that will bring the concept of history to life, this book will lose some relevance for North American readers (who might also enjoy Gail Gibbons' *FROM PATH TO HIGHWAY* about the Boston Post Road through history), but it is still eminently worthwhile and enjoyable.

I bought this (as well as *A City Through Time*) as an introduction to the idea of time and history for my 4 year old. So far, she loves looking at the pictures and it does seem to be helping with the concept of time passing and history. This is a picture book, but there are little notes about the specific time period for that page in the margins that older kids may find interesting (ie, what a typical woman's dress may look like in a certain era, or a tidbit about a musical instrument used in that period, etc)

This is a wonderful book which shows the same area (which becomes a street) throughout time. It

begins with hunter gatherers and goes through time on a European street. It shows the changes that take place from the Iron Age to the Roman Era and throughout time to the present day. It is full of facts and has charm like "Where's Waldo" because there are so many delightful things to discover on each page. I purchased this book because I checked it out from the library and it was THAT good! I don't want to be without it. Whether homeschooling or just parenting children between 4 and 14, this book has a lot of conversation starters about history and our world. My seven and nine year-old children were fascinated by the information and detail provided on each page. It is not a book you read and shelve, but a book that children like to return to often. Highly recommended!

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