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Living History: The Hands-On Approach To History

Andrew Haslam, editor
Two-Can Publishing LLC (Jun 25, 1997)
Unknown $29.95 (192pp)
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Young historians who want to experience the past will appreciate this very approachable look at four cultures—Old Japan, Ancient Egypt, The Roman Empire, and Native Americans.

Filled with facts and activities for children ages eight to twelve, the book offers an overview of each culture, along with an illustrated timeline. In the photographs, children appear dressed in the clothing of each period. In the section on Old Japan, the attire of a farmer and his wife, a craftsman, a merchant, and a samurai and his wife are displayed, making the point that clothing tells a great deal about societies in various times and places. In the Ancient Egyptians segment, readers are given directions for applying a queen's makeup and making a paper wig, with the explanation that in this culture, people of higher status wore more makeup and more elaborate clothing than lower-class people.

Maps and models are included and used well. The location of each area is shown in relationship to other countries. Relief maps include keys that are ingenious and easy to read. Aqueduct sections show the location of important sites in the Roman Empire, while cutouts of seaweed, salmon, and lemon illustrate the crops grown and the fish found on Japan's main islands. The models are great additions to the book, and depict such things as cities, homes, and a Native American canoe.

The editor, who is a joint winner of the *Best Science Writing for Children Award* from the *American Institute of Physics*, holds degrees in graphic design and also has taught children in both elementary and middle schools. In this book, he has provided a wide range of information for the four time periods, including such topics as transportation, clothing, games, food, arts, and religion. The projects supplement the text consistently. Directions are clearly written and easy to follow, with adult supervision suggested. Readers can make Roman armored shoes using chicken wire and papier-mÃ¢ché, Hopi boiled corn cakes, a Japanese Noh mask, and a Native American basket. The variety of projects shown is amazing, and adults may be tempted to try some of them, too.

Social Studies teachers will find this a valuable resource that will engage students and reinforce factual information in a colorful way. A glossary and index are included. Kids will love this "hands-on approach to history."
TRACY FITZWATER (March / April 2002)

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