



AIA BOOK CLUB SELECTION

Walls: A History of Civilization in Blood and Brick

by David Frye

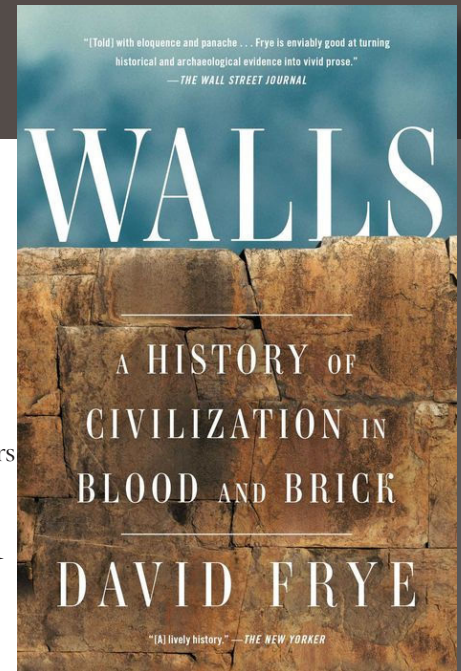
"A lively popular history of an oft-overlooked element in the development of human society" (*Library Journal*)—walls—and a haunting and eye-opening saga that reveals a startling link between what we build and how we live.

With esteemed historian David Frye as our raconteur-guide in *Walls*, which Publishers Weekly praises as "informative, relevant, and thought-provoking," we journey back to a time before barriers of brick and stone even existed—to an era in which nomadic tribes vied for scarce resources, and each man was bred to a life of struggle. Ultimately, those same men would create edifices of mud, brick, and stone, and with them effectively divide humanity: on one side were those the walls protected; on the other, those the walls kept out.

The stars of this narrative are the walls themselves—rising up in places as ancient and exotic as Mesopotamia, Babylon, Greece, China, Rome, Mongolia, Afghanistan, the lower Mississippi, and even Central America. As we journey across time and place, we discover a hidden, thousand-mile-long wall in Asia's steppes; learn of bizarre Spartan rituals; watch Mongol chieftains lead their miles-long hordes; witness the epic siege of Constantinople; chill at the fate of French explorers; marvel at the folly of the Maginot Line; tense at the gathering crisis in Cold War Berlin; gape at Hollywood's gated royalty; and contemplate the wall mania of our own era.

Hailed by *Kirkus Reviews* as "provocative, well-written, and—with walls rising everywhere on the planet—timely," *Walls* gradually reveals the startling ways that barriers have affected our psyches. The questions this book summons are both intriguing and profound: Did walls make civilization possible? And can we live without them? Find out in this masterpiece of historical recovery and preeminent storytelling.

Publisher's Description



David Frye

David Frye is a professional historian, whose views have been sought in interviews by the Science Channel, CNBC, National Geographic, theHistory Channel, BBC Radio, The Washington Post, Rolling Stone, Wired, and many other media outlets. A specialist in late ancient history, Frye received his PhD from Duke University and has participated in several archaeological excavations internationally. His articles have appeared in a variety of academic journals, popular websites, magazines, and blogs, including *McSweeney's*, *Time*, *BBC World History*, *Medium*, and *MHQ*.

<https://www.easternct.edu/faculty-directory/frye.html>



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Possible Discussion Questions

1. How do you think the decision to withhold the ultimate destination affected the expedition? Would knowing have made a difference?
2. Something about losing the equipment and the effect it had on the expedition
3. What surprised you most about the expedition?
4. What was particularly memorable? The biggest takeaway that you didn't know before?
5. What did you learn about the time period in which the book is set that you did not previously know?
6. If you got the chance to ask the author of this book one question, what would it be?
7. What did you like best about this book?
8. What did you like least about this book?
9. What questions do you still have?

