The Crusades

Two Key Dates to Remember

A.D. 1095: The beginning of the crusades; the Roman Catholic Church attacks the Muslims in Palestine.

A.D. 1291: The end of the crusades with the fall of the city of Acre into Muslim hands.

I. First Crusade (1095-1099)
A. Mission:
   1. Defend Eastern Christians from Muslim aggression.
   2. Make pilgrimages to Jerusalem safer.
   3. Redirect knights' aggression.
   4. Recapture the Holy Sepulcher.
B. Leaders:
   1. Pope Urban II, who called for the crusade in November 1095.
   2. Peter the Hermit, preacher who recruited a first wave of crusaders, mostly peasants.
   3. Baldwin of Boulogne, Godfrey of Bouillon, and other French princes who led a second wave.
C. Outcome:
   1. The first wave, an unauthorized "people's crusade," massacred Jews and plundered Eastern Christian territory before being slaughtered by Muslims near Nicea in 1096. A second wave, led by princes, moved into Asia Minor that summer and won strategic battles at Nicea and Dorylaeum. After a seven-month siege, Antioch was captured in June 1098. With great violence the crusaders captured Jerusalem in the summer of 1099. Four crusader states were established in the Holy Land.

II. Second Crusade (1145-1148)
A. Mission:
   1. To regain crusader capital of Edessa, which had been overrun by Muslims in 1144.
B. Leaders:
   1. Bernard of Clairvaux, revered monk, who preached the crusade.
   2. King Louis VII of France.
   3. Emperor Conrad III of Germany.
C. Outcome:
1. Because of bickering and ineffective leadership, the German crusaders suffered a major defeat at Dorylaeum (1147). Badly weakened, the crusaders abandoned any hope of retaking Edessa. Instead, they besieged Damascus. But following a strategic blunder they failed in their siege and were forced to retreat (1148). Christians were devastated that a crusade preached by a moral exemplar and led by royalty would fail.

III. Third Crusade (1187-1191)
A. Mission:
   1. To retake Jerusalem which fell to Muslim general Saladin in 1187.
B. Leaders:
   1. Frederick Barbarossa, Holy Roman Emperor.
   2. Philip II, King of France.
   4. Pope Gregory VIII.
C. Outcome:

IV. Fourth Crusade (1198-1204)
A. Mission:
   1. To defeat Egypt, center of Muslim power.
B. Leaders:
   1. Pope Innocent III.
   2. Enrico Dandolo, Doge of Venice.
   3. Byzantine prince Alexius IV.
   4. Boniface de Montferrat.
C. Outcome:
   1. The crusaders contracted with Venice, the shipping power, to sail them to Egypt. When they couldn't pay the bill, the crusaders agreed to conquer for the Ventians a Christian city along the Adriatic Sea. Then Alexius IV, son of the former Byzantine emperor, asked the crusaders to restore his father to power. In return he'd pay huge sums of money, reunite the Eastern Church with Rome, and supply a crusade to the Holy Land. Most crusaders agreed, and against the pope's orders, attacked Constantinople, the capital of Greek Christendom. When the restored Alexius couldn't fulfill his promises, the crusaders attacked the city again. The resulting three-day massacre soured
relations between Eastern and Western Christians for centuries. The crusade never reached Egypt.

V. **Fifth Crusade (1217-1221)**
A. **Mission:**
   1. To defeat Egypt, center of Muslim power.
B. **Leaders:**
   1. Pope Honorious III, who organized the crusade called for by his predecessor, Innocent III.
C. **Outcome:**
   1. In 1218, crusaders successfully took a strategic tower in Damietta, on the Nile. More troops arrived with Cardinal Pelagius, who assumed leadership. Though Muslims offered to give up the kingdom of Jerusalem, he continued the siege and took Damietta in 1221. Then an advance inland failed, forcing crusaders to retreat with nothing gained. Only bright spot: during the siege of Damietta, Francis of Assisi crossed enemy lines to preach to the Muslim sultan.

VI. **Sixth Crusade (1228-1229)**
A. **Mission:**
   1. To retake Jerusalem and the Holy Land.
B. **Leaders:**
   1. Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor.
   2. Pope Gregory IX.
C. **Outcome:**
   1. Frederick I, who had vowed to participate in the Fifth Crusade, pleaded illness as the Sixth set out, so the pope excommunicated him for not fulfilling his vow. Nonetheless, Frederick joined the crusaders in the Holy Land and soon negotiated with Muslims for Christian access to Jerusalem (except for the Temple area). The treaty was denounced by the devout of both faiths and lasted but ten years. Ironically, Frederick was again excommunicated for making peace rather than pushing for military victory.

VII. **Seventh Crusade (1248-1250)**
A. **Mission:**
   1. To defeat Egypt, Muslim political center.
B. **Leaders:**
   1. Louis IX, king of France.
   2. Pope Innocent IV.
C. **Outcome:**
   1. As soon as he heard Jerusalem had fallen to Muslims, the devout Louis IX of France volunteered to lead a new crusade. After four
intense years of planning, the well-financed army of crusaders took the Egyptian city of Damietta in 1249. But on a subsequent move toward Cairo, Louis' forces were surrounded, and he was taken prisoner. Louis was ransomed for a huge sum in gold and the city of Damietta. Louis then went to the Holy Land for four years and rebuilt many Christian fortresses.

VIII. Eighth Crusade (1270-1272)

A. Mission:
   1. To retake Holy Land fortresses and cities that had recently fallen to Muslims.

B. Leaders:
   1. Louis IX, King of France.
   2. Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX.

C. Outcome:
   1. Louis' second crusade got sidetracked into attacking Tunis in North Africa. Typhus and dysentery spread through the crusader camp, killing Louis. His brother Charles negotiated a treaty. Edward arrived too late to join Louis. Still, he proceeded to Acres, where soon the crusade was abandoned. In 1291, the Crusader City of Acre fell, and the Christian presence in the Holy Land ended.