



# Fifty Machines that Changed the Course of History (Fifty Things That Changed the Course of History)

By Eric Chaline

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**Fifty Machines that Changed the Course of History (Fifty Things That Changed the Course of History)** By Eric Chaline

*The most significant machines of the 19th and 20th centuries.*

*Fifty Machines that Changed the Course of History* is a fascinating survey of the mechanical devices that propelled 18th-century society into the 19th and 20th centuries.

The book celebrates more than 200 years of technological development at the height of the Industrial Revolution. These are not generic inventions but rather specific, branded machines whose names in many cases have become synonymous with the machine or its purpose.

The entries fall into eight categories relating to their sphere of influence: Industry, Agriculture, Media, Transport, Science, Computing, Energy and Home. Concise text describes the machines, what led to their invention, and the effects on society. Annotated diagrams, illustrations, photographs and "Key Feature" insets enrich the coverage.

These are a few of the 50 machines described:

- Stephenson's Rocket (1829), the first locomotive designed for passenger transport
- Harrison power loom (1851) produced the bulk of the world's cotton cloth during the First Industrial Revolution
- Westinghouse alternating current system (1887) brought electrical power and lighting to homes and workplaces
- Hoover suction sweeper (1908) revolutionized domestic cleaning
- Lumière cine projector (1896) and Marconi radio (1897) together heralded the dawn of the media age
- Baird "Televiso" (1930), the first television set
- More recently, the Motorola DynaTAC cellphone (1983) ensured that we would always be able to "phone home."

***Fifty Machines that Changed the Course of History*** is perfect for history buffs and anyone who is fascinated by the complexity and beauty of mechanical devices.

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**Fifty Machines that Changed the Course of History (Fifty Things That Changed the Course of History) By Eric Chaline Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

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This volume showcases machines such as the Jacquard loom, which automated the silk-weaving industry; the Hoover Suction Sweeper, which was the first upright electric vacuum; and the Hayes SmartModem, the first fully automated modem. The 50 entries are arranged in chronological order and range from two to six pages long. Entries are pleasing to the eye with photographs, illustrations, time lines, and quotes separate from the text. The tone of the text is readable and conversational, placing each machine and its creator within a historical context. The volume concludes with lists of books for further reading and useful websites and an index. Recommended for school and public libraries. --Blaise Dierks

### Review

Chaline brings a sociologist's eye for detail to this engrossing book... fascinating...above the usual lineup of reference books... *Fifty Machines* works fine as a cover-to-cover read, but it is endlessly browsable. (Sam Bloom, Blue Ash Library, Cincinnati, OH *School Library Journal*)

An admirable, concise, well-organized, and accurate exploration of 50 machines that have proven pivotal in human civilization from 1760 to the present... Entries are a minimum of two pages to a maximum of six pages with well-chosen historic pictures of the artifacts themselves supplemented by depictions of the inventors, the schematics of their devices or other matters of historical interest, and a clearly written narrative. Images closer to the present are often in full color. A frequently used timeline visualizes the flow of technological innovation and the ways in which new inventions build upon prior ideas. (Dennis W. Cheek, Executive Director of the National Science Books and Film 2013-05-01)

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Best Books for Junior High and YA 2013 (*Science Books and Film* 2014-01-01)

Photos, time lines, and sidebars all make this a great reference book. (*Calliope Magazine* 2014-04-01)

### About the Author

**Eric Chaline** is a journalist and writer specializing in history, philosophy and religion. He has published numerous books, including *Fifty Animals that Changed the Course of History*.

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**Joshua Castillo:**

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