The Mongols
The Early Mongolians

• Began as nomadic horsemen on Mongolian Steppe
  – Primarily herders
  – Very good with shooting bows from horseback

• Mongols split between different nobles and warlords
Social Stratification

• Mongols were hardy men and women
  – Women highly influential and respected
• Their social organization revolved around clans
  – Clan chief was a “primus inter pares” (first among equals)
Mongol Unification

• Temüjin (“Man of Iron”)
  – In 1202, his forces defeated the Tatars
  – In 1206, he took the title of Genghis Khan (“Oceanic Ruler”)
• Continued expansion until death in 1227
Expansion Under Genghis Khan

- Genghis Khan invaded Northern China
- Seized Turkistan and Afghanistan
- Invaded Persia
Genghis Khan: The Legacy

- Unknown number of Children
  - 16 million direct descendant's today
  - Rape and marriages were part of spoils of war
    - Kublai Khan had 22 documented sons
- Responsible for roughly 40 million deaths
Expansion after Genghis Khan

• Took advantage of troubled Empires
  • China, Korea, Vietnam, Central Asia, Burma, Caucuses, Russia, Middle East, Eastern Europe
    – Never Japan, India or South East Asia
Expansion of the Mongol Empire
The Mongols extended their hegemony over a major part of the Eurasian landmass, from the Danube to the Pacific for the better part of two centuries.
Expansion to Western Europe Stalled

- At the City of Liegnitz (Poland), they defeated a German army of heavily armored knights.
- They threatened Vienna, the door to Western Europe.
  - Lost major battle in 1260.
The End of Expansion and the Division of The Mongol Empire

- Kublai Khan (1260-1294) emerged as the dominant contender to the throne
- Division of the Empire in four Khanates
Pax Mongolica ("Mongol Peace")

- Peace and Progress
  - Religious Freedom
  - Artistic Golden Age
- Contacts Between East and West
  - Only one passport needed to go throughout empire
    - Ibn Battuta
- Trade between Africa, Asia and Europe was facilitated
  - So Mongols could tax it
To encourage trade in their empire, Mongols implemented two main policies:

- They lowered tolls in the commercial cities
- Provided special protection for merchants’ goods

Encouraged foreign traders to visit

- Marco Polo
Ibn Battuta and Marco Polo’s Travels
John of Plano Carpini kneeling before Mongol rulers in China (circa 1246)
The Mongol Legacy

• However, Mongol rule promoted commercial contacts between the West and the East
• It brought to Europeans the knowledge of explosives, printing, medicine, shipbuilding, and navigation
• In the Middle East, they furthered art, architecture, and historical writing
• To China, they brought Persian astronomy, ceramics, and Sorghum (a new crop from India)