Ballet History

Ballet in Italy
Origination

- Renaissance Courts in 15\textsuperscript{th} Century
- Took on much pageantry serving as entertainment to the upper class
- Men did much of the performing
- Lavish costuming, gesturing and music
Moving Out

- Catherine de Medici (an Italian) married Henry II (French heir to throne) and shared her love for dance
- First ballet production was *Ballet Comique de la Reine* in 1581
17th Century – France and Court Dance

- Ballet became popular in France in the 17th Century
- King Louise XIV established Academie Royale de Danse in 1661 and later became known as Paris Opera Ballet
- First mention of 5 positions was by Pierre Beauchamp
Court Dance Continued

- Jean-Baptiste Lully served in French Courts
- He created *Sun King* and cast King Louis XIV as a performer
- Was the first to utilize musical phrasing with choreography
First ballet school appeared in France and was taught by Juliette Blanche. Terminology was codified through this school. French terminology still most prevalent today.
18th Century Growth

- Moved much toward Opera form
- Jean-Georges Noverre (1760) staged *Lettres sur le danse et les ballets* and was known as ballet de a’ction
- First time dancers were portraying character and telling stories
19th Century Changes

- Shift away from aristocrats
- Marie Taglioni was one of first ballerinas to experiment with pointe work
- Women were now seen as key figure in ballet
- First sight of “light” movement
19th Century Continued

- Ballets began to revolve around uncanny spirits and romanticism
- *La Sylphide* is oldest romantic ballet still danced today

Marie Taglioni
first person on pointe
Continued Growth in Europe

- Ballet in Russia became popular in late 19th Century
- Marius Petipa was most noted for his work with Tchaikovsky (music composer) to produce:
  - Sleeping Beauty (1890)
  - The Nutcracker (1892)
  - Swan Lake (1895)
European Influence

- Also the first sight of the “tutu”
- Sergei Diaghilev brought ballet back to Paris forming *Ballets Russes* creating such works as:
  - Firebird
  - The Rite of Spring (created controversy due to human sacrifice theme)
Russian Influence Continued

- Michael Fokine followed Petipa as a great choreographer of the time
- Famous pieces with Russian influence from time period:
  - *Romeo and Juliet*
  - *Cinderella*
US Growth

- Fokine left Russia and brought the growth of ballet to the US by settling in New York.
- His choreography in the US includes:
  - Cleopatra
  - The Dying Swan (performed by Anna Pavlova)
US Notables

George Balanchine is attributed with the continued growth in the US.

He opened ballet schools in Chicago and New York.

Contributed with preserving ballet as an art form.