Extinct Humans by Ian Tattersall and Jeffrey Schwartz is a complete view of the evolutionary history of genus Homo. The authors lead the reader from the earliest known Bipeds (the precursors to genus Homo) to modern Homo sapiens. Through a fossil record that is composed of jaw fragments and partial crania, the story of human evolution unfolds. We are lead from African origins into the far reaches of Europe and Asia as we encounter such species as **Australopithecus africanus**, **Homo erectus**, and **Homo neanderthalensis**. For those who are new to the subject there is an excellent opportunity for an introduction to fundamental ideas about evolution, and for those think they know it all the authors present an excellent representation of the fossil record for further research.

The authors present an introduction to the evolutionary framework that is necessary to understand the material that is presented. Areas such as genetic drift and mutation are explained as well as the traditional history of evolutionary theory such as the work of Charles Darwin. After a brief introduction to the evolutionary and biological factors that separate species, the authors begin an in depth look into the prehistory of hominids. They start by looking at early bipeds. These early specimens look more like apes than humans, but the major distinction that can be made is that they are walking naturally upright. The morphological differences between the species that walk on two feet and those that do not is clearly defined.

A continued examination of the fossil record shows the reader that there are ever increasing cranial capacities throughout history, and that the general morphological traits of the specimens tend to look more and more like modern humans. Of course, along the way there are some genetic dead ends,
species that seem to die out without leading to anything new, but the general point of this book is that each of these hominids is diverging further from the ancestors of what are today apes and they are developing into something that looks more like modern humans. This book contains a great deal of current, well-researched information. The authors are both scientists who have studied the material first hand in order to develop their own opinions and theories regarding the material. Their work does not represent their interpretations of other peoples published work. Too often texts can reflect a misunderstanding of the material by the author. In this collection, however, the material has been well collected and the research that has been recorded represents that of well-informed scientific minds. This is an excellent book for those who study human origins as well as those who have very little background in the subject. The photography in the book provides an excellent comparative history that cannot be found in most texts on the subject. Some of the information in the book does tend to be rather one sided, giving mainly the point of view that the authors themselves adhere to. For this reason, I would recommend further study encompassing more models of human evolution to anyone with greater interest in this area.