

Adding Timelines to Your Genealogy Toolkit

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What is a Timeline?

Timelines are a way of presenting the sequence of events. When linked together, they provide the reader with incredible power to visualize the context of a particular event. Through the use of a timeline, you, the researcher, can better understand the world in which a particular ancestor lived and thus better understand your ancestor and the decisions he or she made. A life history set in a context of the times in which the individual lived is critical to understanding that person's life experiences, their joys and sorrows, their struggles in life and their accomplishments. A person's life can best be appreciated when placed in a context of the times in which they lived. The context of social, economic, political, and entertainment forces give the yardsticks or standards by which people measure themselves.

Steps to Creating a Timeline:

1. Gather all records on the family and assemble them by date.
2. Create an entry for each record.
3. Go back through the records and analyze them; add additional dates.
4. Conduct research – what was happening historically during the timeframe in which your ancestor lived?
5. Add information to timeline regarding historic events.
6. Analyze the events that occurred during the lifetime of your ancestors to “brainstorm” how your ancestors may have been influenced by those events.

Genealogy Programs:

- Legacy 3.0
- Family Tree Maker
- Genelines 1.2 (Progeny Software)
- Family Tree SuperTools
- Family Origins 9.0
- Generations Family Tree Liberty Edition 8.5
- The Master Genealogist v4.0d
- The Genealogy Timeline
Computer Management Corporation of the South
2436 Kathi Kim Street
Cocoa, FL 32926
\$49.95 + \$4.95 (shipping and handling)
- <http://cascoy.com/history.htm>
CHRONOS (contains a variety of historical data to which personal data can be added)

Websites You Can Use:

Timeline Forms

<http://www.ourtimelines.com>

<http://www.bugbear.net/family/forms/>

<http://www.yogs.com/general/forms.html>

Researching Historical Data

<http://wikipedia.org>

<http://www.cyndislist.com/timeline.htm>

<http://www.2.canisius.edu/~emergy/time.html>

Alternatime (this link will guide you to timelines on a variety of subjects)

<http://web.superb.net/boy/age1.html>

<http://www.americancivilwar.com/tl/timeline.html>

American Civil War timeline and maps

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/pacificwar/timeline.htm>

World War II in the Pacific

<http://members.theglobe.com/algis/>

History timelines

<http://www.about.com>

History timelines on a variety of subjects and themes

<http://www.historychannel.com/today/>

Enter a date and a list of events and/or subjects will appear

<http://www.scopesys.com/today>

History timeline and information on a variety of subjects

<http://www.gti.net/mocolib1/kid/food.html>

Food history and recipes

The History Place*

HyperHistory*

WhoWhatWhen*

*Type into GOGGLE address box to access these resources

Various search engines, including GOOGLE, DOGPILE, ASK, YAHOO, ALTAVISTA, etc.

Items to Consider:

- World News
- Weather events
- Farming conditions
- Local newspapers
- Epidemics
- Employment situations
- Magazines
- Novels
- Fashion
- Typical meals
- Family tradition
- Family legend
- Major inventions of the time
- Travel Conditions
- Disasters
- Social and religious conditions

Purpose of Developing a Family History Timeline:

- Place your family or an individual in history; gain significant insight into the life of your ancestors by learning about the times and places in which they lived
- Give careful consideration to events, circumstances, and situations that probably had an impact on a family or individual
- Help you think like your ancestor
- Point out or focus on any holes in your research or areas that need additional concentration
- Making sense of multi-family relationships; recognize how lives and relationships fit together
- Prove or disprove family stories
- Understand immigration, migration, and emigration
- Stay focused on what facts are needed
- Realize what you do not know
- Distinguish the differences between your ancestor and others with a common or similar name
- Analyze information to identify discrepancies and/or conflicting information
- Acquire a “to do” list of new records to research
- Locate “missing” ancestors

Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What were some of the great influences of the time period?
- What probably distressed or excited your ancestors the most during a given timeframe?
- What conclusions can you draw about how this individual thought about an event?
- What were the predominant articles in newspapers?
- What did magazines from the time period reveal about people?
- What was of interest in art, cultural events?
- What books were popular – being read?
- What plays [movies] were popular?
- What records are available during the time period?

Do not ever neglect the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, or HOW of research. And . . . be sure to document all your resources, including those used to place your ancestor in history.

Period Approximation Chart

Date Wanted	Known Information	Formula
Birth	Age at dated event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract age from date • Add 5 years to each side • Search 11 year period
Birth	Marriage Date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 16 years from date • Subtract 40 years from date • Search period between dates
Birth	Birth or Christening of child Female -- only child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 16 years from date • Subtract 50 years from date • Search period between dates
Birth	Female – several children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 16 years from date of first child • Subtract 50 years from date of last child • Search period between dates
Birth	Male – only child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 16 years from date • Subtract 70 years from date • Search period between dates
Birth	Male – several children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 16 years from date of first child • Subtract 70 years from date of last child • Search period between dates
Marriage	Age of dated event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate age 15 • Add 25 years to date • Search period between dates
Marriage	Birth or Christening of child: only child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 34 years from date • Add 1 year to date • Search period between dates
Marriage	Several children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subtract 34 years from date of last child • Add 1 year to date of first child • Search period between dates
Death		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculate birth date • Add 90 years • Search period between date last known alive and 90th year