

Using Timelines & Chronologies

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Terminology

- **Chronology:** a listing of the events in someone's life.
- **Timeline:** the study of records to establish the dates of past events ordered and displayed on a time scale.
- **Historical Timeline:** the study of *historical* records to establish the dates of past events ordered and displayed on a time scale.

Judy Jacobson, *History for Genealogists: Using Chronological/Time Lines to Find and Understand Your Ancestors*, Baltimore: Clear Company, 2009, p. 1.

History & Genealogy

Genealogy is the study of a human's past.
History is the study of the human past.



Genealogy lays the foundation
to understand a person and/or a family
using tangible historic evidence.



History lays the foundation to understand
an individual or a group of people in context.

Jacobson, Judy. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors*. Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.

Why use a Timeline in Genealogy?

- Summarize a person's life
- Focus on further research needed
- Demonstrate problems, i.e. a 5 yr old giving birth
- Aid in evaluating the quality of another researcher's work
- Divide an ancestor's life into workable parts, i.e. childhood, marriage, old age
- Demonstrate how lives interconnect
- Discover discrepancies and inconsistencies
- Eliminate possibilities when two or more individuals with the same name live in an area at the same time
- Suggest cause and effect when compared to historical data
- Ease in writing biography, memoir or obituary

Jacobson, Judy. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors*. Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.

Computer Generated Chronologies

- Family Tree Maker
- Legacy Family Tree
- The Master Genealogist
- RootsMagic
- Reunion



Most genealogy programs can automatically insert events from an individual's data to create an individual timeline.

Some programs can import additional information from national, state and county timelines.

How to Build a Timeline

- Identify objective
- Review records and decide which events to include
- Decide on units of time
- List events in chronological order
- Label dates
- Use historical resources to find out what's happening in community, town, county, state, region, country
- Decide on format



Jacobson, Judy. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors*. Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.

Annotated Chronology

- Date of the event
- Event name
- Locality
- Citation
- Transcription
- Age of individual at time of event

Geoffrey D. Rasmussen, Timelines and Chronologies, Utah Valley Technology and Genealogy Group, November 13, 2014.

Historical Context

A timeline permits us to better place our ancestor in an **historical context** and gives us a time ordered view of their life.

Historical context in the:

- Local community
- Town
- County
- State
- Region
- National



“Doing the history eliminates the mystery.”
--- Curt Witcher

Allen County Public Library, Genealogy Center Manager

Jacobson, Judy. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors*. Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.
Witcher, Curt, “Doing the History Eliminates the Mystery” topic presented at the Texas State Genealogical Society’s Annual Conference, September 7, 2012.

Epidemics

- People died from the diseases
 - People moved away from an infected area.
- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------|
| ○ 1841 | United States, esp. in the South | Yellow Fever |
| ○ 1845 | St. Louis, Missouri | Diphtheria |
| ○ 1847 | New Orleans | Yellow Fever |
| ○ 1847-48 | Worldwide | Influenza |
| ○ 1847-49 | North America | Cholera |
| ○ 1850 | United States | Yellow Fever |

Jacobson, Judy. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors*. Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.

Military Actions in the US

- 1846-1848 Mexican-American War
- **1861-1865 Civil War**
- 1864-1865 Cheyenne-Arapaho Wars
- 1866 First Sioux War
- 1868-1869 Southern Plains War
- **1869-1878 Two hundred major battles between US Army and the Indians**

Jacobson, July. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors.* Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.

Civil War Events

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1860 Dec 20 | Southern states began to secede from Union |
| 1861 Feb 4 | Confederate States of America were organized |
| Mar 2 | Lincoln sworn in as 16 th President |
| Apr 12 | Confederates attacked Ft. Sumter |
| May 6 | Confederates declared war on Union |
| Jul 21 | Confederates won first Battle of Bull Run |
| 1862 Apr 7 | Union won battle of Shiloh |
| Sep 15 | Confederates routed Union at Harper's Ferry |
| Sep 17 | Union won at Battle of Antietam |
| Dec 13 | Confederates took Fredericksburg |
| 1863 Jan 1 | Emancipation Proclamation |
| Mar | First Conscription Act |
| Jul 3 | Union victory at Gettysburg |
| Jul 4 | Union took Vicksburg |
| Nov 23-25 | Battle of Chattanooga |
| 1864 Feb 16 | Union won the Battle of Mobile |
| Sep 1 | Union took Atlanta |
| 1865 Apr 9 | Confederate States surrendered |
| Apr 12 | 27,805 Confederate soldiers passed by and stacked their arms |

Jacobson, July. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors.* Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.

Timeline Results

- What should I know when I'm done developing an genealogy timeline with history included?
 - The Story – who, what, when, where, how.....why
 - Historical Context – before, during, after
 - Historical Significance –How does this affect the story? How did it affect our ancestors? Why should we care?
 - Where to find primary sources
 - Further research topics

Jacobson, July. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors.* Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009.

Book References

- DenBoer, Gordon & John H. Long, ed. *Kentucky: Atlas of Historical County Boundaries*, New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1995, p.225.
- Jacobson, Judy. *History for Genealogists: using chronological time lines to find and understand your ancestors*. Baltimore, MD: Clearfield Publishing, 2009
- George P. Marsh, *Man and Nature, or Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action*, Ann Arbor, MI: Making of America, 2000

Websites & Resources

- Geoffrey D. Rasmussen, "Timelines and Chronologies," Utah Valley Technology and Genealogy Group, November 13, 2002.
<http://www.uvtagg.org/old.htm#2004>
- Historical Timelines
 - <http://www.history-timelines.org.uk/american-timelines/index.htm>
- Washington Territorial Timeline
 - <http://www.sos.wa.gov/history/Timeline/default.aspx>
- Civil War Timeline
 - <http://americancivilwar.com>
 - <http://www.historyplace.com>
 - <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/tl1861.html>
