

BEEFING UP

An Ancestor's Timeline

Jeanette Sheliga

jeanette@jeanettesgenealogy.com
JeanettesGenealogy.com

Overview

Select a “home base” where you are going to keep all of the information that you collect on a person in a chronological order. Some possibilities include: online trees, blog, binder, family history book, word processing or spreadsheet document, and genealogy software.

If your “home base” is an online tree, try to scan and upload your photos onto the tree and then add events to the timeline (be sure that you have read and understand the terms and conditions of the website that you are using). After the event is added, attach the accompanying media.

Why create a timeline? Some answers include:

- To see holes of documents that should have been added.
 - To help answer questions.
 - To help identify mistakes done in earlier research.
 - To better understand the life your research subject led.
 - To conduct reasonably exhaustive research which is the first step in the Genealogical Proof Standard.
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#1. Home Sources:

Collect all of the documents, photos, etc. that you have at home. Create digital copies (by scanning or taking photos) to help preserve the document should something happen to the original.

Add the home sources to your research subject's timeline. Try to date when the source was created, even if it is an approximate time frame. Add what you might know about the home source (such as who, when, where, etc.) to the description.

#2. Interview Family

If possible, contact others to help you collect and add details to the description of the home source. A family member or friend of the family might have more documents or photos and stories. Stories are sources, too!

#3. Birth, Marriage, Death

To help find events to add to your research subject's timeline, you need to have an idea of when and where they were born, lived, and died. Even if the timeframe is approximate, that would be a good starting point. Second, try to find independent sources to corroborate dates and places that you find - even years etched in stone can be wrong.

#4. Census Records

Try to locate and attach every census record (federal, state, and special) to the profile of your research subject. After doing so, extract all of the information out of the document and compare to other details you have uncovered about the person.

Census Comparison Worksheet: <https://ancestorroundup.com/census-comparison-worksheet/>

#5. In-Between the Census

Add as much as you can find in other records collections to your subject's timeline. Sources such as newspapers, directories, voter lists, tax lists, yearbooks, etc. can help to fill the years in-between the census with events that you can add to the timeline.

Notes: