Using Timelines
To Break Down Brick Walls

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Timelines, which display events in chronological order, are an important part of the genealogist's toolbox for breaking down brick walls.

- Organize your thoughts
- Keep people and events straight
- Add context to your ancestors' lives
- Suggest sources of information
- Assist in analyzing information
- Use to answer specific questions
    - Why did my ancestor immigrate?
    - Which John Smith is my ancestor?
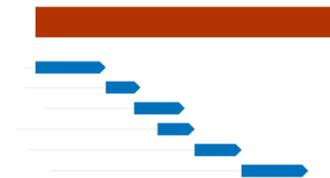
Timelines can include many types of events:

- Births, marriages and deaths
- Military actions
- Immigration history
- Migration trails
- Railroad maps

- Significant social events
- Disasters and epidemics
- Population changes
- Geographic boundary changes
- Technological developments
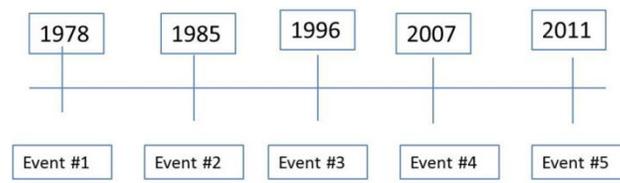
Finding Timelines

- A list of all timelines on Wikipedia - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_timelines
- Year-by-year listing of events - http://www.infoplease.com/yearbyyear.html
- Cyndi's list - http://www.cyndislist.com/timelines

- Use search terms such as: "timeline" and "chronology"
- Check government, educational institution and library websites

Timeline Tools

Timelines don't have to be fancy. Scribble an initial timeline by hand. Make a basic spreadsheet, grid, or use online templates. Check your family tree software for built-in options. Here are some ideas for getting started:

Date	Name	Event	Location	Source	Notes

or

Name	1850 census	1860	1870	1880	1900

You might enter ages, locations or whatever information you need to solve a problem.

Microsoft Office:
- https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Create-a-timeline-9c4448a9-99c7-4b0e-8eff-0dcf535f223c
- https://www.officetimeline.com/excel-timeline
- http://usabledesignmatters.com/fh/timeline_grid_templates/index.html

Fancier options:
- Our TimeLines.com – http://www.ourtimelines.com/index.shtml
- Preceden - https://www.preceden.com/
- Tiki-toki - http://www.tiki-toki.com/
- Timeglider - https://timeglider.com/
- TimelineMaker - https://www.timelinemaker.com/
- Timetoast - https://www.timetoast.com/
- Treelines - https://www.treelines.com/

For more choices, try: http://www.cyndislist.com/timelines/publications/

Look for:
- fee schedule
- privacy options
- ability to add photographs/ documents
- ability to imbed in a webpage
- download options
- printing options
- customization capabilities