

The Everyday Life of Our Ancestors

C. Ann Staley, CG®, CGLSM
Email: ann@cannstaley.com
Website: <http://cannstaley.com>

We sometimes forget that our ancestors had flesh & bones & stories to tell. Our ancestors led lives, just like us - only different. Using our life as an example, how can we parallel it to theirs? They ate and drank, married and had families, dressed, had trades and occupations, practiced a religion, dabbled in the arts and sciences, participated in politics and economics, etc. Placing our ancestors into their historical context & adding the personal details takes time, but it can be done.

Placing your ancestor in a timeline.

A. What is a timeline? A Visual representation of events within a particular time.

Compile all of your ancestor's life events into strict chronological order within the type of timeline chosen.

B. Types of timelines - Family, Church, Geographic Area, History (U.S. & World), Military, Science, Social, Sports, Disasters, etc.

1. "Those Were the Days." *440 International*. <https://440int.com/twtd/today.html>
2. Carruth, Gorton. *The Encyclopedia of American Facts & Dates*. 8th Edition. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1987.
3. *Craig's Internet Links*. <http://links.cncwebsite.com/AGEPage/Top40.htm> [This one provides a list of songs popular during the life time. At the bottom are more choices.]
4. "The Calendar Home Page." *CalendarHome.com*. <https://calendarhome.com> [You can view a month or year calendar for any year 1 to 10,000 A.D. All leap years and calendar changes are accounted for. You can also print out perpetual calendars. Under "Calculate" there are other calculators for dates.]
5. "Timelines: History, Science, People, Disasters." *Fact Monster*. <https://www.factmonster.com/us/timeline-archive> [Timelines for World History, Country History, U.S. History, Society & Culture, Disasters, etc.]
6. "This Day in History." *History Channel*. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history> [What was happening on a specific day in the life of your ancestor?]
7. "Timelines." *Internet4Classrooms*. <https://www.internet4classrooms.com/timelines.htm> [Various timelines for historical events and times, science & technology, and links for making and customizing your own timeline.]
8. "Timeline: U.S. Military Actions and Wars, 1775-1994." *PBS.org*. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/us-military-actions-and-wars-1775-1994/>
9. "Historic Events & Birthdates that occurred on a SELECTED day of the year." *Scope Systems*. <http://www.scopesys.com/anyday/> [Find lists of famous people who were born or died on any date, religious observances, holidays, religious history and POW/MIA information.]

Finding Historical Context

A. Read, Read and Read some more

B. Put your ancestor in THEIR

Cultural context, Historical context, Geographical context

Books and Articles - Read everything you can about your areas of research and your topics of interest.

10. Beine, Joe. *Online County Histories, Biographies & Indexes - USA*. <https://www.genealogybranches.com/countyhistories.html>
11. Colletta, John Philip. *Only a Few Bones: A True Account of the Rolling Fork Tragedy and Its Aftermath*. Washington, DC: Direct Descent, 2000.
12. Colletta, John Philip. "Hazards of Histories." *Family Tree Magazine*, July 2011, pp. 29-32.
13. Davis, Robert Scott. *Georgia Black Book: Morbid, Macabre, & Sometimes Disgusting Records of Genealogical Value* (2 volumes) Greenville, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1982.
14. "Family History Books." *FamilySearch*. <https://books.familysearch.org> [This collection of more than 350,000 digitized genealogy and family history publications includes family histories, county and local histories, etc.]

15. *Internet Archive*. <https://archive.org/> [Non-profit; digital library offering free access to book, movies, music, archived web pages, and more.]
16. Mills, Elizabeth Shown. *Isle of Canes: A Historical Novel*. Provo, UT: MyFamily.com, 2004.
17. ———. *Historic Pathways*. <https://historicpathways.com>
18. Norris, David A. "Giddy Up! Your Ancestors' Horse-drawn Vehicles." *Family Chronicle*, July/August 2012, pp. 18-22.
19. Norris, David A. "Holidays, Quarter Days and Term Days." *Family Chronicle*, Nov/Dec 2012, pp. 6-10.
20. Philibert-Ortega, Gena. "From Their Kitchen to Yours." *FamilyTree Magazine*, March/April 2012, pp. 28-32.
21. Philibert-Ortega, Gena. "Quick Guide: Food History Websites." *Family Tree Magazine*, December 2012, p. 64.
22. *Project Gutenberg*. <http://www.gutenberg.org> [Over 57,000 free ebooks.]
23. Various authors. *The Writer's Guide to Everyday Life in . . . Series*. (Various publishers; various dates).
24. Walch, Timothy, compiler. *Our Family, Our Town: Essays on Family and Local History Sources in the National Archives*. National Archives Trust Fund Board: National Archives and Records Administration, 1987.

National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC) - An index to manuscript collections; Free cataloging program operated by the Library of Congress; Includes the author, title, description, notes, subjects, repository, etc.; Printed index volumes, 1-29 (1959-1993) also available on microfilm.

25. *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*. <http://www.loc.gov/coll/nucmc/>
26. Moss, Tyler, editor. "Archival portals to Locate manuscripts" *Family Tree Magazine*. December 2012, pp. 62-63.

Newspaper Research - Newspapers have been published in the U.S. for almost 300 years. The hardest problem with reading newspapers is staying focused on why you went to read it in the first place; there are so many interesting items to distract you. Look for vital record announcements; news on church, society organizations & community projects; politics, legal notices, estate settlements, etc.

27. Barber, Phil. *A Brief History of Newspapers*. <http://www.historicpages.com/nprhist.htm>
28. Beine, Joe. *Historical Newspapers and Indexes On The Internet - USA: A Genealogy Research Guide*. <http://www.researchguides.net/newspapers.htm>
29. "Your Guide to Using Newspapers for Genealogical Research." *Bobbie's Genealogy Classroom*. <http://www.barbsnow.net/Newspapers.htm>
30. Carter-Walker, Fran. *Searching for American Newspapers*. Bradenton, FL: Privately printed, 1995.
31. "Search the World's Historical Newspaper Archives." *Elephind.com*. <https://elephind.com>
32. Gregory, Winifred, editor. *American Newspapers 1821-1936: A Union List of Files Available in the United States and Canada*. New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1937.
33. Library of Congress. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>
34. Midkiff, Miriam Robbins. *Welcome to the Online Historical Newspapers Website*. <https://sites.google.com/site/onlinenewspapersite/Home>
35. Milner, Anita Cheek. *Newspaper Indexes: A Location and Subject Guide for Researchers*. 3 volumes. Metuchen, NJ and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1977, 1979, 1982.
36. National Endowment for the Humanities. *NEH Announces the Winners of the Chronicling America Data Challenge*. <https://www.neh.gov/news/press-release/2016-07-25> ["...contest challenged members of the public to produce creative web-based projects using data pulled from Chronicling America..."]; Winners: America's Public Bible: Biblical Quotations in U.S. Newspapers, American Lynching: Uncovering a Cultural Narrative, Historical Agricultural News, Chronicling Hoosier, USNewsMap.com, Digital APUSH: Revealing History with Chronicling America.]
37. *Old Fulton New York Post Cards*. <http://fultonhistory.com/Fulton.html> [Wonderful website for New York historical newspapers. Claims over 44 million digitized pages.]
38. *United States Newspaper Program*. <https://www.neh.gov/us-newspaper-program> [National effort to locate and preserve U. S. newspapers on microfilm.]

WPA Historical Records Survey (HRS) - This activity was part of the Works Progress Administration (later changed to Work Projects Administration) (WPA). They surveyed a large number of federal and private documents. Some examples are Survey of County Records, Survey of Church Records, Manuscripts Survey, Inventory of State Records, Municipal Records, etc.

39. Carter-Walker, Fran. W.P.A. *Works Progress Administration: Surveys, Inventories, Guides*. Rutland, VT: Offset Printing, 1996.
40. Child, Sargent B. and Dorothy P. Holmes. *Checklist of Historical Records Survey Publications; Bibliography of Research Projects Reports*. Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1969.
41. Hefner, Loretta L., compiler. *The WPA Historical Records Survey: A Guide to the Unpublished Inventories, Indexes, and Transcripts*. Chicago: The Society of American Archivists, 1980.
42. Heisey, John W. *Works Projects Administration: Sources for Genealogists*. Indianapolis: Heritage House, 1988.
43. The Library of Virginia. "Virginia Historical Inventory." *Legacies of the New Deal in Virginia*.
<http://www.lva.virginia.gov/exhibits/newdeal/vainventory.htm>
44. Division of Library & Information Services. "Collections." *Florida Memory Project*.
<https://www.floridamemory.com/collections/> [Includes "WPA Church Records", "WPA County Histories", and "WPA Stories".]

Homelife, Weather and the Farmer's Almanac

45. Crannell, Linda. *The Poorhouse Story*. <http://www.poorhousestory.com> [Provides a clearinghouse for information about 19th century American Poorhouses.]
46. Friedman, S. Morgan. *The Inflation Calculator*. <https://westegg.com/inflation/> [The inflation calculator is a tool that can be used to estimate a value amount for your ancestors' worth in today's value.]
47. *Acanthus Books*. <http://acanthus-books.stores.yahoo.net/> [Books about how our ancestors lived; recipes; how they kept house; etc.]
48. "Weather and Historical Weather." *Spies Online*. <http://www.spiesonline.net/weather.shtml> [Source of information on major weather historical events.]
49. Watson, Benjamin A. & others. *The Old Farmer's Almanac: Book of Weather and Natural Disasters*. Dublin, NH: Yankee Publishing, Inc., 1997 [Originally published by Random House, Inc., New York, 1993.]
50. Weather - Search for other terms such as "dust bowl", "historical hurricanes", "historical storms", "historical earthquakes" "1870..1880" [date range search], etc.
51. White, Martha & others. *The Old Farmer's Almanac Home Library Series. Traditional Home Remedies: Time-Tested Methods for Staying Well - the Natural Way*. Dublin, NH: Yankee Publishing, Inc., 1997.
52. Williams, Jack. USA Today. *The Weather Book: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to the USA's Weather*. New York: Vintage Books, 1992.
53. Yankee Publishing Inc. *The Old Farmer's Almanac*. <https://www.almanac.com>

Ancestral Photographs, Postcards, etc.

54. *Dead Fred Genealogy Photo Archive*. <http://deadfred.com> [Another website for storing and sharing photos, family stories, and recipes.]
55. Fisher, Joy. *Penny Postcards*. <http://www.usgwarchives.net/special/ppcs/ppcs.html> [Postcards are categorized by State.]
56. *Google Image Search*. <https://www.google.com> [Click on "Images". Great place for looking for photographs.]
57. "American Memory Project (U.S. History & Culture)." *Library of Congress*.
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/> [Provides more than 100 collections and more than 9 million individual items.]
58. "Prints & Photographs Online Catalog." *Library of Congress*. <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/> [Consists "of more than 14 million items".]
59. "Research Our Records." *National Archives and Records Administration (US NARA)*.
<https://www.archives.gov/research> [Includes photographs.]

What Did Your Ancestor Wear?

60. Gernsheim, Alison, compiler. *Victorian and Edwardian Fashion: A Photographic Survey*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1981.
61. "The History of Costume." *Halloween Express*. <https://www.halloweenexpress.com/history-of-costumes/>
62. Lambert, Tim. *A Brief History of Clothes*. <http://www.localhistories.org/clothes.html>
63. Maginnis, Tara. *The Costumer's Manifesto*. <http://www.costumes.org/>
64. Shubert, Betty Kreisel. *Out-of-Style: A Modern Perspective of How, Why and When Vintage Fashions Evolved*. Mission Viejo, CA: Flashback Publishing, 2013.

65. Sweezy, C. Otis. *The History of Costume-Text Index #1 by Braun & Schneider - C.1861-1880*. <http://www.siue.edu/COSTUMES/> [A collection of fashion plates. The site name has to have the capitalization.]

Occupations

66. Reader's Digest. *The 20th Eventful Century. Inventions That Changed the World*. Pleasantville, NY: The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1999.
67. RootsWeb. *A List of Occupations*. <https://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~usgwkidz/oldjobs.htm>
68. Savage & Polite's. *Clockmaking Bibliographic Resources*.
<https://www.anticueclockspriceguide.com/biblio.php>
69. *The MacTutor History of Mathematics Archive*. <http://www-history.mcs.st-and.ac.uk/> [Mathematicians' anniversaries and biographies.]

Court Records - Order Books cover the day-to-day business of the court in chronological order by Court dates; Coroner Reports are issued when an inquest is held to investigate an unusual/unknown circumstance related death; Probate records cover Wills, Settlement of Estate, Guardianship papers, etc.; Records submitting an "insane" person to an institution; Executions & Lynchings; Prison Records; etc.

70. Carter, Fran. *Searching American Probate Records*. Bountiful, UT: American Genealogical Lending Library, 1993.
71. "The database of executions in the United States of America." *DeathPenaltyUSA*. <http://deathpenaltyusa.org>
72. "Category Archives: Convict Transportation." *Early American Crime*.
<http://www.earlyamericancrime.com/category/convict-transportation>
73. Ingle, Cyndi. "Prisons, Prisoners & Outlaws." *Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet*.
<https://www.cyndislist.com/prisons>
74. "Genealogical Prison Records & Jail Records." *Ancestor Hunt*.
http://www.ancestorhunt.com/genealogical_prison_records.htm

Historical maps / Geographic Dictionaries (Gazetteers)

75. "Township and Range - Public Land Survey System on Google Earth." *Earth Point*.
<http://www.earthpoint.us/Townships.aspx>
76. *Google Earth*. <https://www.google.com/earth/index.html> [Download this free program, type in an address, and go right down to a map of the neighborhood.]
77. *Graphical Display of the Federal Township and Range System*.
<http://illinois.outfitters.com/genealogy/land/twprangemap.html>
78. Robertson, John. *Historical County Lines*. <http://his.jrshelby.com/hcl/>
79. United States Board on Geographic Names. *Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)*.
<https://geonames.usgs.gov/domestic/index.html> [On-line U. S. Gazetteer. Fantastic site for finding places in the U.S.]

The Auction

80. *Ebay*. <https://www.ebay.com/> [Look for Maps, Worlds Fair, Antiques, Scripophily, etc. Ebay will also let you set searches for 365 days; you can then renew them.]

Medicine

81. Chorzempa, Rosemary A. *MORBUS, Why and How Our Ancestors Died: A Genealogist's Dictionary of Terms Found in Vital Records with Descriptions of the Diseases as They Relate to the Health of Our Ancestors*. Chicago, IL: Polish Genealogical Society of America, 1991.
82. Kiple, Kenneth F. and Elaine Willis, editors. *Plague, Pox & Pestilence: Disease in History*. Sterling Publishing, 1997.
83. "History of Medicine Collections." *UCLA Library*. <http://guides.library.ucla.edu/library-special-collections/biomed> [Working on acquiring copies of Baby Books.]

All URLs accessed 5 November 2018.