

A Week of Genealogy: TIMELINES

Margaret M. McMahon, Ph.D.

Constructing a timeline forces you to focus on an ancestor in the context of his or her life events and locations. It helps you reason whether a record is actually your ancestor's, points where to look for other records, and the timeframe to find the records. For example, knowing the address where your ancestor lived during a census year helps target a census search.

You have to decide whether to include unproven details in your timeline. If you include unsubstantiated details, clearly mark the facts that are proven and those that are unproven. Remain flexible during your search for records, because significant events may happen at other family members' locations or while on a trip.

The timeline can be drawn using pen and paper. You can use an electronic program like Word, Excel, or commercial timeline software. The idea is to represent an ancestor's life in a line and add life events. Start with birth at the start of the line, and death (and burial) at the other end of the line. Each event should be positioned along the line in chronological order, with the name of the event and the location where it occurred. Add the other details you know: residences, military service, employment, and schools. As you locate new records, update the timeline to include the

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new details. You might consider including historical events on the timeline to add context to an individual's history. For example, after a natural disaster, an individual or family may change residences or home towns. You can also include historical data on a separate parallel timeline below or next to your timeline.

The timeline in Figure 1 was built using data collected from Robert Frost's entry on Wikipedia.

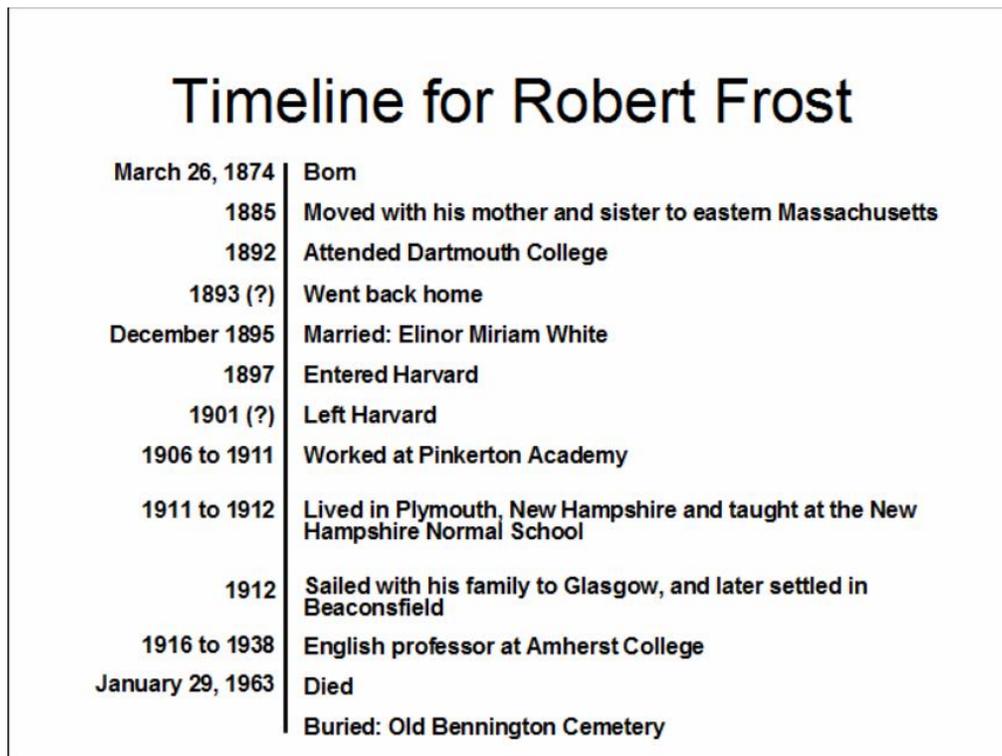


Figure 1. Timeline for Robert Frost.

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Websites:

How To Make a Timeline

http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/timeline.html

World History

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001196.html>

1900–1999 (AD) World History

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0001251.html>

How to set up a timeline in Excel

<https://www.officetimeline.com/excel-timeline>

The above excerpt is from the Second Edition of "A Week of Genealogy".

Purchase the book at <https://www.createspace.com/6047516>

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<http://aweekofgenealogy.com>

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Give it a try. Print out this sheet and enter the basic information for an ancestor. Fill in information about residences, military service, or any other important information.

Timeline for _____

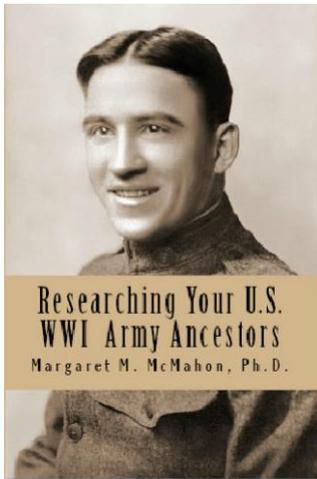
| | | |
|--------|---|------------------------|
| _____ | — | Born in _____ |
| (year) | | |
| _____ | — | School _____ in _____ |
| (year) | | |
| _____ | — | Married _____ in _____ |
| (year) | | |
| _____ | — | Died in _____ |
| (year) | | Buried _____ |

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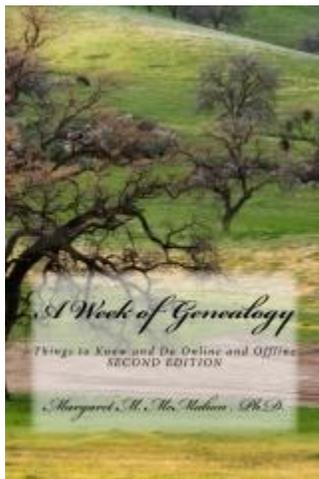
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“Researching Your U.S. WWI Army Ancestors”



With the approaching centennial of the United States' involvement in the War to End All Wars (World War I), our thoughts turn to those ancestors who defended our freedom. This book will show you how to learn about the military service of your U.S. Army ancestors using archives, online resources, social networking and other resources. Learn ways to share what you learn to with others.

“Researching Your U.S. WWI Army Ancestors” can be purchased through Amazon's CreateSpace [online](#).

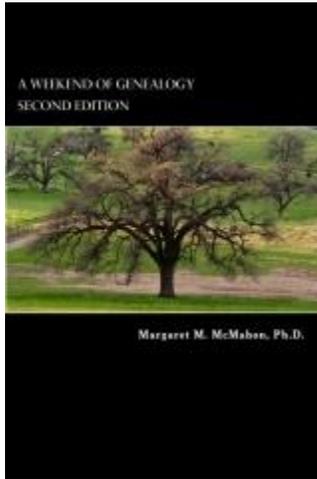


“A Week of Genealogy: Things to Know and Do, Online and Offline” contains seven days of activities and what to do before and after your week of genealogy. Learn about vital records, cemeteries, newspapers, military records and more.

The Second Edition of **“A Week of Genealogy”** can be purchased through Amazon's CreateSpace [online](#).

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“A Weekend of Genealogy: Things to Know and Do, Online and Offline” focuses on a weekend of genealogical research activities centered on the U.S. Federal Census and Internet searching. Activities to do before and after the weekend are also included. The book includes hints, websites, and search terms useful for your research activity.

The Second Edition of **“A Weekend of Genealogy”** can be purchased through Amazon’s CreateSpace [online](#).

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