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Building A Personal Timeline

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Strictly speaking a chronology is a sequence of events dealing with a single person, family, or organization. A timeline compares a chronology to other events at large. Both chronologies and timelines are by nature sequential and matched against a calendar. Although a distinction is made here between a chronology and a timeline, in casual speech the two are often used interchangeable.

The first step in creating a timeline is to record a sequence of personal events (a chronology). The events can focus on a single aspect of one's life such as education, employment, travel, transportation (starting with stroller, roller skates, skateboard, bicycles, motorcycles, cars, trucks, airplanes), books written, personal photographs, or even spoons acquired for a collection. Or, the sequence of events can be a mixture of personal achievements from different subjects.

The second step is to decide what to compare the personal events to. General chronologies of the world exist for a multitude of topics including political or religious history, inventions, commercial products, western migration, plagues, wars, weather patterns, advances in physics, ship designs, trains, tools, civil law, art, literature, and just about any other topic you can think of. Chronologies of this type are published in a number of ways. Many are in history books that cover the topic of interest. Many are in encyclopedias. There were many published in magazines for the year 2000. Many are available on the Internet and can be found by using searchengines for terms like timeline, history, chronology, plus the keyword for the topic of interest (train history, train timeline etc.

If you find pictures at a website on the subject of interest and you would like to include them in your personal timeline, right-mouse on the picture and select Save-Picture-As with the left-mouse. Then save it to a folder on your hard-drive as you give it a file name of your choice for future reference.

The third step is write "snippets" of information about your life to expand your chronology into an interesting story. Personal Historian software assists you in writing a history about yourself in "bits and pieces" and includes timelines, historical facts, cultural trivia, and memory triggers. Results are conveniently savable and printable in chronological order in your word processor. Available at www.cgslink.com.

{Watch for the Booth's weekly article in the "Senior Sampler"}