

Family Timelines

One way of recording family history in a concise, informative and comprehensive way is to layout the research you have done in a date order. There are many examples available of how it might be done best. Most, via a simple 'Google' search of 'Timelines'.

They can be arranged to run vertically or horizontally, via a Spreadsheet or word processing package or PowerPoint Presentation. Perhaps the simplest are illustrated left:

Coyle Family Timeline	
Date	Event

Vertical/Portrait

Coyle Family Timeline					
Date					
Event					

Horizontal/Landscape

One advantage of using a simple Word Processor, is that the order of dates can be sorted easily and be continuously updated. Starting at today's date takes account of recent events and acts as an interest raiser for those members of the Family who might find your life's work a little less interesting that you! I suggest you start at the current date and work down or to the right. Other columns and Rows might be added, to give more information too, as these on the right.

Eventually you might consider more sophistication by putting in 'Hyperlinks' to more information, photographs or documents.

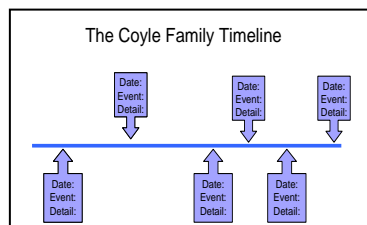
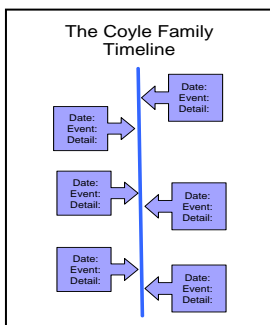
If you are familiar with PowerPoint, then you might enhance the Timeline by the use of graphics – block arrows, wordart, etc.

Coyle Family Timeline		
Date	Event	Info/Photo

Coyle Family Timeline					
Date					
Event					
Info/Photo					

For Excel users there are examples and instructions on how to create a Timeline in Excel at: <http://www.vertex42.com/ExcelArticles/create-a-timeline.html> There is also a downloadable simple template courtesy of 'GenealogyDecoded' at: <http://genealogydecoded.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Simple Ancestor Timeline Table with Source List.xls>

A further advantage in using standard office software means that you can publish your work easily in hard copy book form or as a web page for a website.



Samples using standard 'Block Arrows' in 'Word'.

There are also a number of Software packages that can be bought for the purpose. I haven't used them myself, but they are well reviewed online. Cyndi's List provides links to dedicated Family History Timeline software and templates, at: <http://www.cyndislist.com/software/tools/timelines/> .There are more examples at

'ProgenyGenealogy' at: <http://progenygenealogy.com/products/timeline-charts/genelines-sample-charts.aspx> and at 'Simile Widgets' <http://www.simile-widgets.org/timeline/> others

at; <http://genealogy.about.com/od/timelines/a/genealogy-research-timelines.htm> with step by step instructions at: <http://www.thearmchairgenealogist.com/2013/09/four-steps-to-family-history-timeline.html>

Many of the Family History programs available also provide the facility to produce Timelines and its worth checking to see if one is built in. Programs like 'The Master Genealogist', 'Reunion', 'Legacy', 'Family Tree Maker' and 'Roots Magic' have a built in Timeline Chart or view available within, depending on the version you have.

A further dimension can be added to provide colour and context to a Timeline by adding in or comparing the family Timeline with a chronology of local, regional, national or even international events. Wondering why an ancestor or his family move location, change job, changes in technology or may all be answered by looking at corresponding events in history. It may event provide the solution that 'brick wall' you may have faced.

All the very best with your endeavours.

MPC

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