

2 LOOKING AT HOME

ACTIVITY 1

Create a timeline and gather information that can prove who you are

Family history is not just about your ancestors. It's also about you. You are making history just like your ancestors did. Think about it. We all are born and someday we will die. Between the events of birth and death, other events did take place in the life of your ancestors. And, some of the same kinds of events have taken place in your life.

Follow the instructions to the right and use the TIMELINE handout to write some of the important events in your life. Then, find documents about yourself at home to prove that three of the events happened.

ACTIVITY 2

Begin filling out a family group record

Key points to follow:

- Write your father's full name, and information about him, in the spaces under HUSBAND - just like you did on the pedigree chart.
- Write your mother's full "Maiden" name, and information about her, in the spaces under WIFE.
- Write the full name and information about each child born to your parents under CHILDREN. List each child (living or dead) in the order of his or her birth.
- Write dates using day, month, year (05 MAY 1946). Calculate unknown dates if possible. For example, a person age 2 in 1926 was born in 1924. Write: 1924 (age 2 in 1926).
- Use the abbreviation for about (abt.) before the year to approximate the year if necessary (Write: abt. 1946).
- Write place names as completely as possible (city, county, state).

ACTIVITY 3

Gather information about your ancestors

- Just like the documents that were created about you, there are hundreds of official documents that exist and contain information about your own family, living relatives and deceased ancestors. Begin by gathering information in your own home (with the help of family members).
- If there are documents and records about your ancestors, in your home and in the homes of your relatives, you will want to copy them by hand or photocopy them. Be very careful if you are given the chance to handle very old documents or photographs. If you are real lucky, maybe your relative will give you the actual document, record, picture, etc. to keep.
- Use the handout titled FAMILY AND HOME INFORMATION SOURCES CHECKLIST, as a guide to sources of information.

Follow the instructions and example below to prepare your timeline.

Write your birthdate on the first diagonal line.
 Write each birthday year next to the age.
 Draw vertical lines below the timeline and describe important events or experiences in your life, such as: ■ places where you lived ■ schools attended ■ births of brothers/sisters ■ awards/recognition ■ illnesses/injuries ■ jobs held ■ deaths of family/friends ■ news events that affected your life ■ first meeting with good friend ■ vacations ■ etc.
 Number each event you described, beginning with your birth.
 Draw a vertical line and write the date you complete the timeline.

If you do not have any information to record in a specific space (e.g., death date or death place), do not write anything in that space. On the back of the family group record is a space provided to write the source of your information. You should record all your sources of information.

