

Historical Context and Social History for Family Historians

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Key Concepts:

- Social History
- Historical Context
- Material Culture
- Historical Analysis and Interpretation

Methods:

- Determine Chronology: Determining the chronology of the events in an ancestor's life is one of the first steps to a more nuanced historical understanding.
- Create a Timeline: Recording important dates and events will help organize your research and shed light on areas that need more research.
- Significant Historical Events: Create a list of significant historical events that occurred during your ancestor's lifetime.
- Organize your notes and research questions: Make a chart, outline, or graphic organizer to determine what historical information is of greatest interest.

- Artifact analysis: Evaluate personal artifacts, memorabilia, heirlooms, and objects to study the material culture of your ancestors.
- Build Historical Context: Learn about the lives of other people who lived during the same time-period as your ancestors.

Sources:

- Books & Journals
 - Digitized Books:
 - Internet Archive
 - HathiTrust Digital Library
 - Family Search E-Books
- Images, audio, video
 - Historical documentaries
 - Oral histories
- Maps & Gazetteers
- Letters & Diaries
- Dissertations, Theses, Articles
- Newspapers
- Online Resources
- Magazines & Periodicals

Topics:

- Clothing & Fashion
- Childhood
- Customs & Traditions
- Food & Cooking
- House & Home
- Work, Wages, Economy

- Occupations
- Public & Personal Health
- Community, Government, & Religion
- Education, Language, & Literacy
- Immigration & Migration Stories

Writing a Family History:

- Locations
- People (characters)
- Events

Recommended Resources:

Websites:

- 100 Milestone Documents
<https://www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?flash=true&page=milestone>
 - This website has a list of 100 documents that highlight significant historical events in US History from 1776 to 1965.
- History Matters: The US Survey Course on the Web
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu>
 - A project of the American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning of the City University of New York. This site has curated thousands of primary sources pertaining to the everyday lives of Americans through US History.

Books:

Daily Life in the Colonial South (2013)

By: John T. Schlotterbeck (Call no. R 975.01 S345D)

Daily Life on the Nineteenth Century American Frontier (1998)

By: Mary Ellen Jones (Call no. R 978.02 J78D)

Frontier Family Life: A Photographic Chronicle of the Old West (1998)

By Marianne Bell (Call no. R 978 B434F)

Home Front: Daily Life in the Civil War North (2013)

By Peter John Brownlee (Call no. R 973.7 H765)

Daily Life During World War I (2002)

By Neil M. Heyman (Call no. R 940.3 H618D)

What Jane Austen ate and Charles Dickens Knew: From Fox Hunting to Whist: The Facts of Daily Life in Nineteenth-Century England (1993)

By Daniel Pool (Call No. R 820.9 P821W)

Virginia in the War Years, 1938-1945: Military Bases, the U-Boat War and Daily Life (2014)

By Joe Freitus (Call no. R 975.5 F866V)