

Mark Twain Resources for Elementary Students: Timeline of Twain's Lifespan.

By Michelle Halperin

1. Reproduce both the "Important Historical Events" list and the blank timeline grid for students. I recommend enlarging the timeline to an 11x17 format in order to give students enough space for all the events.
2. Create a flipchart of the blank timeline, and familiarize students with the layout of the timeline. Each column represents one decade, so 1800 would include all years from 1800-1809. The column 1810 would include all years from 1810-1819 and so forth. If a specific year is noted, a point can be placed in the column that would contain that year. For example Elmira College is founded in 1855, so a point would go in the middle of the 1850 column and be labeled. When representing a life span or a timespan, place a point in the column of the start and end dates, connecting the two with a line, labeling the line. (See the key for guidance.)
3. Guide students through the placement of years on the timeline (modify as needed.)
4. After completing the timeline, ask students to highlight the years that Mark Twain lived. Ask guided questions such as:
 - Who and what might Twain have read about in the newspaper?
 - What might he have seen when visiting Elmira?
 - What are different ways Twain could have traveled as a boy? As an adult?
 - How could some of these events and people shaped Twain point of view?

Mark Twain lived from 1835-1910. During those years (and the years just prior and after his lifetime) many significant people and events impacted life in America. Using a ruler, and various colored pencils, create a time line showing not only Twains life, but the important people and events he would have been aware of in his lifetime.



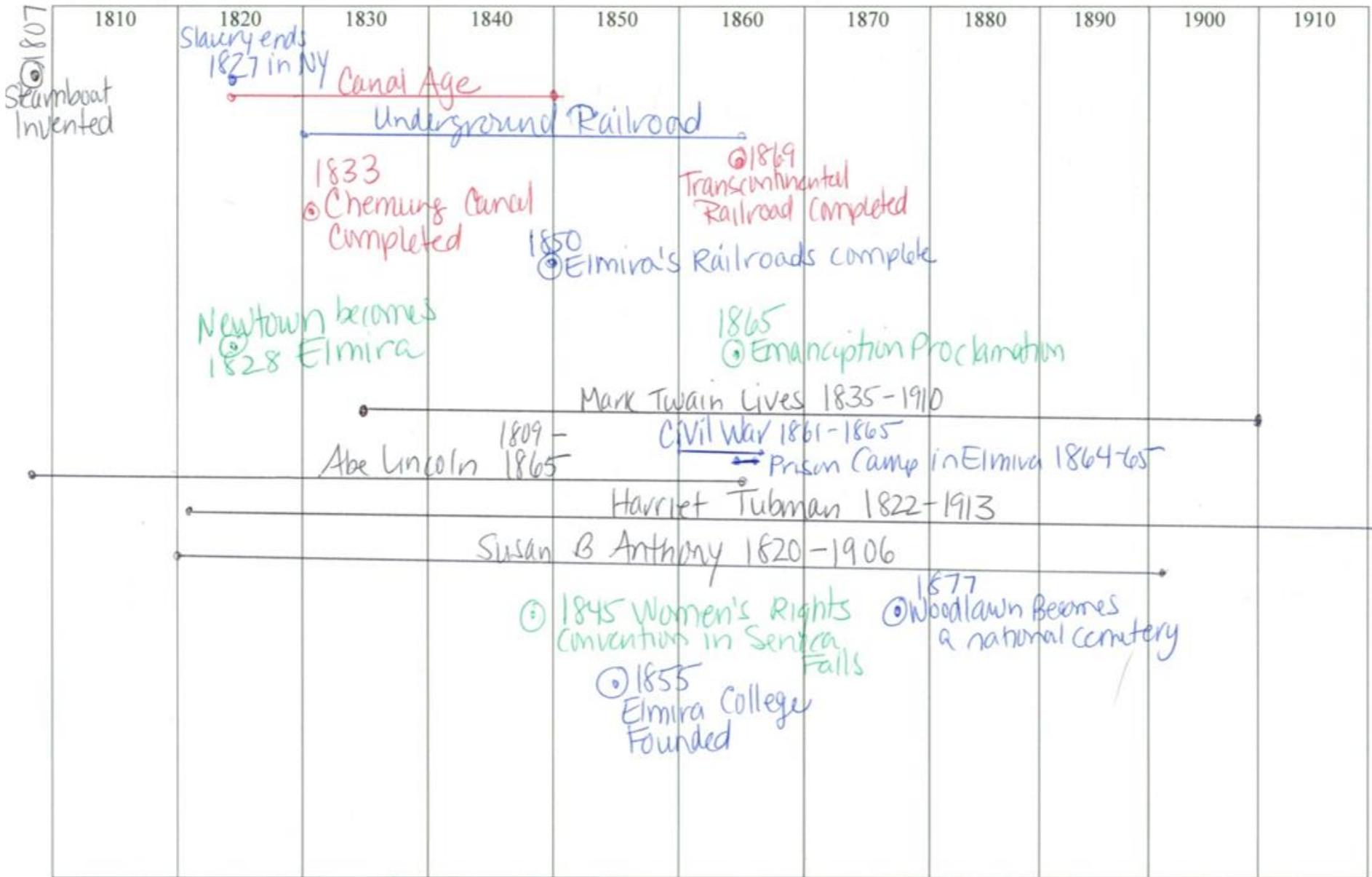
Questions to ponder: How might some of these people and events impacted Twain? Do you think his writing may have reflected anything represented on this timeline?

Important Historical Events

Slavery ends in New York State	1827
Steamboat invented	1807
The Canal Age	1825-1850
Transcontinental Railroad complete	1869
Newtown becomes Elmira	1828
Civil War	1861-1865
Elmira's Railroad lines are complete	1850
Underground Railroad operates	1830-1865
Civil War Prison Camp operates in Elmira	1864-1865
The Chemung Canal is completed (connects Chemung River to Seneca lake)	1833
Woodlawn becomes a National Cemetery	1877
Elmira College founded (first women's college granting degrees equal to men's)	1855
Mark Twain lives	1835-1910
Abe Lincoln lives	1809-1865
Susan B. Anthony lives	1820-1906
Harriet Tubman lives	1822-1913
Emancipation Proclamation frees all slaves	1865
13 th Amendment passed, prohibits all slavery	1865
19 th Amendment passes, women get the right to vote	1920
Women's Rights convention held in Seneca Falls, NY	1848

Key:

A Mark Twain Timeline:



1920: Women can vote