Schleiermacher was a true polymath. This timeline outlines the scope of his interests and areas of competency. From hermeneutics to politics, philosophy to ecclesiology, art history to preaching, and of course in theology, he consumed and integrated vast amounts of experiential and formal learning. To all of his work he brought a prodigious intellect and innovative thinking. He poured out the results of his efforts in the pulpit of Trinity Church Berlin, his written works, his course lectures, and his relationships with kings and friends alike.

It is clear from his biographers and his writings that personal relationships were the foundation of Schleiermacher’s life. He loved women, to the point of scandal in his early years when he gave his heart to a married woman. Moreover he depended on his wife and cherished women friends as intellectual and social companions throughout his life. The grounding of his being in relationships began in his time among the Moravians and guided his work all his life. Colleagues in the academic world, friends in the Berlin Salons, a large and extended family, parishioners, and students nurtured his heart and enabled his intellect.

Schleiermacher was born into a world of dramatic change. Enlightenment was yielding to Romanticism, the American and French Revolutions challenged monolithic, entrenched political systems, and the Industrial Revolution was in full swing. The events of his age were monumentally transformative. This timeline plucks out some of these, hopefully representative of the culture-shaking events that influenced Schleiermacher and his audience. All this invites in-depth exploration of themes such as:

- the relationship between the Reformed and Lutheran churches at that time, including the movement to reform the Protestant liturgy and to reconceive the role of the sovereign in that endeavor;
- the history of Prussia as part of the German Empire, but by no means synonymous with it, including Prussian militarism and Schleiermacher’s identity as a son of Prussia;
- the salon culture in Berlin in the late 18th and early 19th centuries;
- the influence of pietism, mysticism, and romanticism on Schleiermacher;
- liberal influences that challenged the oligarchies dominating the European order at the turn of the nineteenth century;
- the role of women in that era; and
- the role of, and attitudes toward, Jews in academic, political, and social circles.

Several prominent biographical works concerning Schleiermacher are cited throughout with reference to the author’s last name and a page number. Full references to those works are supplied at the end of this timeline.

- Jennifer A. Coleman
  Boston University, 2012
Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher Time Line: 1768 – Sep 1785

Nov 21 1768: Born Breslau, Prussia (Today, Wroclaw Poland)
Baptized: Nov 27 1768 Reformed Church, Breslau.

1679: Family Moves to Pless, Upper Silesia.
Father’s service area for Royal Prussian Army.

1778: Father moves family into Moravian Community at Niesky (Upper Lusatia).
Community on Herrnut estate donated by Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700 – 1760).

Jun 14 1783 – Sep 17 1785: Moravian Paedagogium at Niesky. College for future members of Moravian Brethren. Due to large number of English students, FDS learns English. Ages 14-16 y.o.

1778-81/82: Boarding School, Pless. Splits time b/w school and home. Ages 12-14 yo.

Mother: Katharina-Maria Stubenrauch
Daughter of Court Chaplains at Reformed cathedral in Berlin. (1736 – 1783).

Father: Gottlieb
Reformed Minister and Chaplain in Royal Prussian Army. (1727 – 1794).

Charlotte (1765 – 1831)

Carl

Friedrich (1768 - 1834)

“His life at Niesky... involved three underlying motifs important for his later development: the intense, almost enraptured, sharing in the devotion to Jesus..., the happy experience of sharing in common studies with youthful comrades, and the current humanistic education which made the pietistic educational efforts at Niesky superior to those of Halle pietism.” (Redeker, 9)
Sep 17 1785 – Sep 22 1785: Five-day walking tour with several other students from Niesky to Barby.

1785-87: Moravian Seminary at Barby. FDS befriends Von Albertini. Forms a circle of friends who resist strict controls at Barby and smuggle in Goethe, Höltz, and other German poetry.

Sep 17 1785 – Sep 22 1785: Five-day walking tour with several other students from Niesky to Barby.

1789: Drossen. Uncle accepts a pastorate at Drossen and FDS moves there with him. Continues studies independently (Kant, Plato, Aristotle, English & French).

1786. FDS’s father remarries and begins large 2nd family.


Feb 6 1787: Response. Father rejects FDS: “[W]ith heartrending grief I discard thee!” Yet he agrees to provide FDS with financial support for 1½ years at Halle. LS Vol. I, 50-53.

“The winter of 1789/90 in Drossen was by far the lowest point in Schleiermacher’s personal history. He was filled with skepticism and resignation. In addition the state of his health was poor” (Redeker, 9). “Subsequent events showed that one of the main reasons for this trough in his thoughts and spirits was simply lack of congenial company.” (Clements, 18)

About his time among the Moravians, FDS writes: “Here it is that for the first time I awoke to the consciousness of the relations of man to a higher world. ... Here it was that that mystic tendency developed itself, which has been of so much importance to me, and has supported and carried me through all the storms of scepticism. ... [A]fter all I have passed through, I have become a Herrnhuter [i.e. pietist] again, only of a higher order.” (Gerrish, 26-27) http://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/thismonth/09%20feb%20schleiermacher.pdf
Late 1790

Oct 1790: Schlobitten, East Prussia. Tutor for 3 years in household of Count Wilhelm Dohna, to the Count’s younger sons.

Sep 1790: Berlin. FDS (21 yo) travels to Berlin; passes first theological examination before Directorate of the Reformed Church.

Late 1790: Rift w/ Father Heals. Uncle’s interventions and FDS taking his first Theological Exams, restores relationship b/w father and son.

1791


1791 – 1793: Preaching & Writing. FDS begins to preach (New Year’s sermon of 1792) and to send his sermons to his father and uncle. Begins writing what would become Soliloquies and essays (On the Freedom of Man).

1794

Mar 31 1794: Berlin. FDS completes second theological examination before Directorate of the Reformed Church.

1794: Berlin. Works briefly in Friedrich Gedicke’s pedagogical seminar.

1794: Landsberg on the Warthe. FDS ordained as Asst. Pastor (“Adjunct”) to his Uncle’s Brother-in-law, at a reformed pastorate.

1795

Sep 1794: Landsberg on the Warthe. FDS begins translating sermons of Hugo Blair (1717-1800, Scottish) and Joseph Fawcett (1758-1804, English). FDS studies Spinoza, Fichte, and Kant.


1796

Father Dies Sep 2 1794

“Here was a warm, pious, refined and intellectually lively domestic circle in which Schleiermacher began to flourish again both personally and intellectually.” (Clements, 18)
1796: Marcus & Henriette Herz. “Henriette Herz’ house had become one of the centers for contemporary Berlin society.” She was FDS’ lifelong friend and correspondent. (Redeker, 28-29)

1797: Friedrich Schlegel. Schlegel was a leading figure in the Romantic movement. “A mutually enthusiastic friendship immediately sprang up between the two.” (Sykes, 8) They shared an apartment for a few months and began translating Plato together.

Sep 1796 – 1801: Berlin. FDS appointed as Reformed Minister to Charité Hospital, close to Berlin’s urban center.

1798: 1800: Soliloquies. Published anonymously. 2nd ed. 1810.

1800: Eleonore Grunow. FDS fell in love with EG, who was in a childless and supposedly loveless marriage to a Berlin minister. “The attachment was mutual – virtually a secret betrothal.” LS Vol I, 142-44. (Clements, 21)


1801: Ernst von Willich. FDS meets and befriends Ernst and Henriette von Willich. He was deeply affected by their relationship and marriage. LS Vol. I, 144 et. seq.

“Germany at the turn of the century was a paradox to the world. It was breathtaking in its cultural advance – and in its political backwardness. A people who could produce a Lessing, a Kant, a Goethe, a Schiller, and a Beethoven still could not produce a constitution … resembling a form of representative government. It was still a conglomerate of separate principalities, many of them tiny city-states and princedoms.” (Clements, 27)

“With this move to Berlin his youth and time as a student ended. He was not quite twenty-eight years old when he delivered his inaugural sermon on September 18, 1796.” (Clements, 24)
1802: Minister to Court-Church in Stolpe, Pomerania (Today north-west Poland). Minister to several small reformed churches in the area. Continued translating Plato.

1802: Left Berlin, in part, to force E. Grunow to choose between him and her husband.

1803: Outlines of a Critique of Previous Ethical Theories. “After the intoxication of his intuitive romantic period in Berlin came the sobering activity of quieter and more demanding methodical work.” (Redeker, 74)

1804: Begins publishing translations of Plato. This continues in a series of publications through 1828.

1804: Appt. by Prussian Throne to Halle University. Named Professor of Theology and University preacher. FDS lectured on a wide variety of subjects including: philosophy, systematic theology, New Testament, and hermeneutics. (Clements, 25)


1804: Commentary on the First Epistle to Timothy. Argues against Pauline authorship on internal, stylistic [historical-critical] grounds.

1805: Eleanore Grunow decides not to divorce her husband.

Summer 1805: FDS meets Goethe, on visit to Halle. LS, Vol. II, 35-36.


1806: Commentary on the First Epistle to Timothy. Argues against Pauline authorship on internal, stylistic [historical-critical] grounds.
1806: Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher moves to Berlin, leaves Halle and returns to Berlin. Obtains miscellaneous teaching positions.

Oct 1806: Napoleon routs Prussian forces at Auerstadt and Jena. FDS’s house plundered and occupied by French troops. Halle University dissolved by Napoleon.


2/1807: Ernst Von Willich dies, Henriette widowed with an infant daughter and pregnant with a son.

1808: FDS involved in “practical politics.” Joins Prussian patriots to oppose Napoleon. Travels and recruits for this cause. (Redeker, 91)

1808: Occasional Thoughts about Universities in the German State.

May 18 1809: 40 y.o. FDS MARRIES Henriette von Willich, 21 y.o.

1809: Minister at Trinity Church. FDS remained in its pulpit until his death.

1809: Berlin: Professor of Theology and first Dean of Faculty. “The extent of his educational activity was astonishing ... in addition to his teaching he filled the pastoral office at Trinity Church, ... he was secretary for the Prussian Academy, ... he was otherwise called upon as an author and scholar,” and maintained family and social relationships. (Redeker, 99)

1810: Berlin University: Fellowship, Prussian Academy of Sciences.

1810: Berlin University: Professor of Theology and first Dean of Faculty. “The extent of his educational activity was astonishing ... in addition to his teaching he filled the pastoral office at Trinity Church, ... he was secretary for the Prussian Academy, ... he was otherwise called upon as an author and scholar,” and maintained family and social relationships. (Redeker, 99)

1811: Brief Outline on the Study of Theology.

1811: Fellowship, Prussian Academy of Sciences.

“Schleiermacher had never been politically inactive; but from this point he was fully committed to the rescue of Prussia and the rebuilding of Germany under its lead.” (Sykes, 11)
“[A] report of a particularly emotional occasion also conveys well the impact Schleiermacher made through his primary ecclesiastical activity, his preaching ministry at the Trinity Church week by week. In the pulpit, despite his slight, and slightly deformed, figure, he had a charismatic ability to sway a whole congregation through fervent delivery and profound wrestling with many of the most vital religious questions troubling people of the day.” (Clements, 32)
“One secret of his popularity was undoubtedly the breadth of his interests.” He was “a great nature lover and an indefatigable hiker,” a man of “deep seriousness… who yet lived a life of joyous freedom.” The breadth of his academic, political and ecclesiastical pursuits was formidable. (Sykes, 15) By some accounts, FDS’ greatest accomplishment was his work in establishing and forming Berlin University.

1703: St. Petersberg founded by Peter the Great. Russian Capital through 1918.

1705: Act of Union passed merging Scottish and English Parliaments and establishing Kingdom of Great Britain.

1713: Frederick Wm. I (1688-1740), becomes King of Prussia. Reigns 1713-1740.

1715: Louis XIV dies.

1718: New Orleans founded by French.

1720: Frederick III (1657-1713), Elector of Brandenberg, crowns himself “King in Prussia.” Reigns 1701-1713.

1733-38: War of Polish Succession

1738: John Wesley visits Herrnut.

1740: Frederick II (1712-1786), becomes King of Prussia. Known as “Frederick the Great,” he reigns 1740-1772. Dies without an heir.

1740-48: War of Austrian Succession by Fredrick II.

1750: Peak of “Little Ice Age.”

1756: Prussian: Franco Alliance at Versaille.

1756-64: Seven-Year War.

1759: Voltaire’s *Candide* criticizes Catholic Church.

1760: ENLIGHTENMENT
**Schleiermacher’s World (1765 – 1825)**

- **1768**: F.D.E. Schleiermacher born.
- **1768-74**: Turkish-Russian Wars.
- **1765**:
  - 1765:
  - 1770:
  - 1765:
  - 1772: First partition of Poland.
  - 1786: Frederick Wm. II (1744-1797), becomes King of Prussia. Reigns 1786-1797.

- **1793**: Second partition of Poland.
- **1790**: 1800:
- **1795**: Third partition of Poland.
- **1791**: Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*.
- **1793**: Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*.
- **1797**: Frederick Wm. III (1770-1840), becomes King of Prussia. Reigns 1797-1840.

- **1805**: Berlin Univ. established.
- **1810**: Berlin Univ. established.
- **1815**:
  - May 1814: Napoleon surrenders.
  - 1814-15: Congress of Vienna, redraws political boundaries of Europe.
  - 1818: Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.
- **1820**: 1815:

**Timeline Events**

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**Historical Periods**

- **Enlightenment**
- **Romanticism**
- **Industrial Revolution**
1834: F.D.E. Schleiermacher dies.

1830: July Revolution in France.

1825: Decemberist Uprising in Russia.


1834: Official end to the Spanish Inquisition.

1834: German Customs Union formed.

1834: Slavery Abolition Act, British Empire.

Beethoven’s Funeral, Vienna (Mar 29 1827): Beethoven buried from Trinity Church, Vienna. Some accounts of FDS’ life have it that the funeral was from Berlin’s Trinity Church, and that FDS presided. That was not the case.
1800-1899

Schleiermacher (d. 1834)

- David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874)
- Victor Hugo (1802-1885)
- G.W. Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)
- Heinrich Julius Holtzmann (1832-1910)
- Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872)
- Walt Whitman (1819-1892)
- Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889)
- Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)
- J.W. Goethe (1749-1832)
- Fichte (1762-1814)
- Edmund Husserl (1839-1938)
- Schelling (1775-1854)
- F.H. Jacobi (1743-1819)
- Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy (1828-1892)
- John Stewart Mill (1806-1873)
- Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)
- Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)
- Friedrich Engels (1820-1895)
- Karl Marx (1818-1883)
- William James (1842-1910)
- Barth (b. 1886)
- Tillich (b. 1886)


Schleiermacher, Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher’s *Soliloquies*. Translated by Horace Leland Friess. Open Court, 1926.

Timeline Bibliography


The End