

What Happened in 1803 – A Jane Austen Timeline

(Including Events Leading Up To 1803 and After)

By Vonnie R. Alto

Date	Jane Austen's Life	Significant Events	Category
December 16, 1775	Jane Austen is born in Steventon, Hampshire, England.	The American Revolutionary War for Independence against Britain begins (4/19/1775 – 9/3/1783).	Family History External Event: War
May 5, 1789 – November 9, 1799	JA is 14 - 24 years old.	The French Revolution overthrows the monarchy and establishes the French Republic.	External Event: War
1792-1802	During this time, JA is 17 - 27 years old.	French Revolutionary Wars, a series of military conflicts resulting from the 1789 French Revolution.	External Event: War
January 21, 1793	JA is 17 years old	King Louis XVI is executed by guillotine.	External Event
February 22, 1794	JA is 18 years old.	Cousin Eliza Hancock Feuillide's husband, is guillotined in Paris.	Family History
1795	JA probably starts writing <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> (originally titled <i>Elinor and Marianne</i> this year).		JA Writings
December 25, 1795 – January 15, 1796	JA's surviving letters begins (1/9/1796) when she meets Tom LeFroy at a ball when they were both 20 years old. After JA's scandalous dance with him, his aunt sends him away to London.		JA Love life: Letters
October 1796	JA begins writing <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (initially titled <i>First Impressions</i>) which she reads aloud to her family.		JA Writings
August 1797	JA finished <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (titled <i>First Impressions</i>). Rev Mr. Austen offers it for publication to Thomas Cadell which is rejected sight unseen.		JA Writings
December 31, 1797	JA is 22 years old.	Brother Henry Austen marries his cousin, the widowed Eliza de Feuillide in London.	Family History
December 1797 – January 1798.	JA meets the young Rev. Samuel Blackall (age 26) when she was 22 years old. Madam Lefroy invited him to visit her to replace her nephew in JA's affections. He visits the Steventon rectory where JA entertains him by playing the pianoforte.		Love Life
1798	JA probably begins writing <i>Northanger Abbey</i> (initially titled Susan) at Steventon.		JA Writings

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September 1798	9 months after meeting JA, Blackall wrote to Madam LeFroy that he wished to improved his acquaintance with Jane but JA is not interested in him.		Love Life
November 9, 1799 – June 18, 1815	JA is 24 - 39 years old.	The Napoleonic Era begins with Napoleon Bonaparte's coup d'état (overthrowing the Directory and establishing the French Consulate) and ends during the Hundred Days and his defeat at the Battle of Waterloo.	External Event: War
1799	JA finishes writing <i>Northanger Abbey</i> , originally titled <i>Susan</i> at Steventon. She meets Mr. Evelyn who she initially dislikes. He is a friend of her brother, Edward when she visits the Leigh Perrots in Bath.	On 8/14/1799. Mrs. Leigh Perrot was charged with stealing lace from a millinery shop in Bath and was put into prison while awaiting trial.	JA Writings
1800	JA changes the title of <i>First Impressions</i> (now known as <i>Pride And Prejudice</i>) because author Margaret Holland published her book with that same title. <i>Pride And Prejudice</i> was later published in 1813.	On 3/29/1800, Mrs. Leigh Perrot appeared in court and was acquitted. A pamphlet titled, <i>The Trial of Mrs. Leigh Perrot</i> was published by Benjamin Crosby of London and a Bath printer, Mr. Cruttwell. Later, Mr. Austen asked Mr. Cruttwell if he would publish <i>Northanger Abbey</i> who recommended the publisher, Benjamin Crosby of London.	JA Writings Love Life Family History
Autumn 1800	JA meets Mr. Holder who made his fortune in the E. Indies. They became friends. Later in 1801, she expected a marriage proposal and was annoyed that she didn't get one.		Love Life
December 16, 1800	On JA's birthday, her father surprised her by announcing that he is retiring and that the Austen family will be leaving Steventon after having lived there for 30 years; 25 years for JA.		Relocation
January 14, 1801	JA wrote to Cassandra at Godmersham that Rev. George Austen's library of 500 volumes must be sold.		JA Letters
Early May 1801	The George Austen Family and JA leave the rectory at Steventon. Rev GA goes to London. Mrs. GA, JA, and CEA go to Ithorpe.		Relocation
May 4, 1801	Mrs. GA and JA travel to Bath. They stay with James/Jane Leigh Perrot.		Leisure Travel

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	Rev GA and Cassandra follow later on after paying some visits.		
May 5, 1801	The rectory at Steventon is sold. Possible locations for renting a house in Bath are discussed.		Relocation.
May 8, 1801	JA meets Mr. Evelyn again and forms a better opinion of him. The possibility of a romance ends after Mr. Evelyn takes her out for a ride in his phaeton. Nothing comes of it.		Relocation
May 26, 1801	JA's last surviving letter of the period written to Cassandra.		JA Letters
May 27, 1801	Charles John Austen bought topaz crosses and gold chains for his sisters from his reward money as a captain.		Family History
Midsummer 1801 (late June)	Jane and family moves into Sydney Place for 3 ¼ years, then spend the summer touring in Devonshire, probably visiting Sidmouth and Colyton.		Relocation, 1 st Bath lodgings. Leisure Travel
Summer 1801/1802?	The Austens spend the summer in Devonshire by the sea. JA purportedly had a mysterious seaside romance with a clergyman whose brother was a doctor. Either he died suddenly or he left before they could see each other again the next summer.		Love Life
October 1, 1801	JA is 26 years old.	The preliminaries of peace between Britain and France is signed.	External event
March 25, 1802 – May 18, 1803	JA is 27 -28 years old.	Treaty of Amiens is signed giving a 14 month interlude of peace in the war between Britain and France. It was the only period of general peace in Europe between 1793-1814.	External Event: Peace
November 25, 1802	JA and Casssandra travel from Steventon to Manydown.		Leisure Travel
December 1802	JA works on revising <i>NA</i> (then titled <i>Susan</i>).		JA Writings
December 2, 1802	Suitor Harris Bigg Wither (age 21) proposes marriage to JA who is 27 years old which she accepts.		Love Life
December 3, 1802	The next morning, JA withdraws her engagement to Harris Bigg Wither. JA and Cassandra leave the house		Love Life Leisure Travel

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	immediately, driven back to Steventon by Harris's sisters.		
December 4, 1802	At Steventon, JA and Cassandra insists that James take them back to Bath today.		Leisure Travel
Spring 1803	JA makes a final check through the manuscript, <i>Northanger Abbey</i> (then known as <i>Susan</i>). Henry Thomas Austen's lawyer, William Seymour sells it for 10 pounds to the publisher Benjamin Crosby & Co of London with the promise of immediate publication. Crosby advertises it in <i>Flowers of Literature</i> for 1801-1802 (published 1803) as being "in the press" but is not published. It was listed as #15 on their list of "New and Useful Books."		JA Writings
May 16, 1803	JA is 28 years old.	Napoleon Bonaparte breaks the Peace of Amiens when he refused to sign a commercial treaty and instead imposed high tariffs on British imports. The British, refused to leave Malta. After only 14 months of <i>peace</i> , Britain once again declared war on France.	External Event
May 18, 1803 – November 20, 1815	JA is 28 - 40 years old.	War between Britain and France Resumes, now known as the Napoleonic Wars.	External Event: War
May 22, 1803	JA is 28 years old.	Napoleon issues orders that all English travelers in France are to be detained. Cousin Eliza de Feuillide Austen successfully escapes to England.	External Event: War Relocation
September 17, 1803	JA's parents arrive at Godmersham, presumably JA and CEA are with them. It may be during this visit that the Austen women each compose a set of " <i>Verses to Rhyme with Rose</i> ." JA transcribes all 4 verses onto one sheet of paper and later adds some more of her own verses on other subjects in July 1805 and September 1807.		JA Writings Leisure Travel
October 17/18, 1803	JA and Cassandra arrive at Ashe Rectory and visits with Madam LeFroy.		Leisure Travel
October 24, 1803	JA and Cassandra leave Ashe Rectory to return to Bath.		Leisure Travel

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November 5, 1803	The Austens visit Lyme (JA refers back to this event on October 4, 1808).	A large fire occurs in the center of the town.	Leisure Travel External Event
Late 1803	JA is 28 years old.	Ann/e Sharp/e is hired as a governess to JA's niece, Fanny Knight.	Family Friend
January 23, 1804 – March 18, 1805	JA is 29 - 30 years old.	Ann/e Sharp/e becomes governess to JA's niece, Fanny Knight and becomes a dear friend to JA.	Family Friend Love Life?
1804	JA begins writing <i>The Watsons</i> but does not finish it. Cassandra paints a watercolor portrait of JA's back view in blue dress with her face hidden by a bonnet, probably when the Austen family vacationed in Lyme Regis.		JA Writings. JA Portrait
September 14, 1804	JA resumes her letter writing with a letter written to Cassandra.		JA Letters
October 25, 1804	Rev. George Austen and family return to Bath and rent No. 3 Green Park Buildings East.		Relocation #2 nd Bath lodgings
December 16, 1804	On JA's birthday when she is 29 years old, her friend Madam Lefroy (age 56) dies from a fall off a horse.		Family Friend
January 21, 1805	Rev. George Austen dies and is buried in Bath.		Family History
1805 or later	JA makes a copy of <i>Lady Susan</i> on paper watermarked 1805.		JA Writings
March 25, 1805	Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra move out of their home in Green Park Buildings into 25 Gay St.		Relocation 3 rd Bath lodgings
January 29, 1806	Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra left their Steventon visit for Bath and found temporary lodgings in the unfashionable Trim Street.		Relocation 4 th Bath lodgings
July 2, 1806	Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra finally leave Bath. They visit Cofton, Adlestrop, Stoneleigh, and Hamstall Ridware.		Relocation
October 4, 1806	Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra arrived in Steventon.		Relocation
October 10, 1806	Mrs. Austen, JA, and Cassandra leave Steventon and move with Francis Austin and his wife, Mary Gibson to Southampton to live in temporary lodgings.		Relocation