

## How to figure birth dates

From "Compendium of Historical Sources"

By Ronald Bremer

"Often tombstones have a notation such as "Died 15 June 1872, Aged 77 years, 10 months, 3 days." How do you determine the correct birth date?

First of all, make the sequence read days, months, year: thus 15-6-1872 minus 3-10-77.

Since the 10<sup>th</sup> month cannot be subtracted from the 6<sup>th</sup>, borrow 12 months from the year of death, making the year 1871 and the month 18.

**NOTE: If you borrow from the month to make days, borrow 30 days, even though the month might have 31 days.**

The equation now looks like: 15-18-1871 minus 3-10-77. Begin the calculations on the right hand side. Therefore, 77 years from 1871 means that the person was born in 1794. Subtracting 10 months from 18 gives you eight months, or August. So the correct date of birth was 12 August 1794."

15-18-1871

- 3-10-0077

12-08-1794    The birth date is August 12, 1794