

Deep Time Timeline — Big Bang to Hamilton 2026

DEEP TIME TIMELINE

From the Big Bang to Hamilton, 2026

“The Tenth in Context”

Speculating With The Tenth / Excavating 2125 — Alejandro, Sheridan BXD 2026
Formatted as a landscape spread or exhibition wall piece

“We are not the first story. We are not the last. We are the generation that had to choose.” — Hamilton, 2026

THE TIMELINE

13.8 BILLION YEARS AGO — THE BEGINNING

The Big Bang. All matter, energy, space, and time emerge from a single point. Nothing exists before this moment. Everything that will ever happen — including Hamilton — begins here.

13.2 BILLION YEARS AGO — FIRST STARS

The universe cools enough for hydrogen to collapse into stars. The first light ignites in the dark. Inside these stars, heavier elements are being forged — carbon, oxygen, iron, copper. The atoms that will become the Orenda Coil are born inside a dying star.

4.6 BILLION YEARS AGO — THE SUN FORMS

A cloud of gas and dust collapses into our solar system. The Sun ignites.

4.5 BILLION YEARS AGO — EARTH FORMS

Accretion. Impact. Molten chaos. The third rock solidifies. The planet that will become home is still an ocean of magma.

4.1 BILLION YEARS AGO — THE OCEANS

Water arrives — carried by comets, exhaled by volcanoes. The Great Lakes basin does not exist yet. It is still compressed deep inside the continental crust.

3.8 BILLION YEARS AGO — FIRST LIFE

In warm shallow water, somewhere, a molecule replicates itself. The first ancestor of everything alive today. It has no name, no language, no city. It simply persists.

2.4 BILLION YEARS AGO — THE GREAT OXYGENATION EVENT

Cyanobacteria produce so much oxygen they poison the atmosphere. The largest extinction in Earth's history. Also: the conditions that make complex life possible are created. Catastrophe and emergence are the same event.

541 MILLION YEARS AGO — THE CAMBRIAN EXPLOSION

Complex multicellular life diversifies explosively. Eyes. Shells. Predation. Movement. The ancestors of vertebrates — and eventually humans — branch off here.

450 MILLION YEARS AGO — THE NIAGARA ESCARPMENT FORMS

The ancient Silurian Sea deposits limestone across what will be southern Ontario. This rock shelf — the Niagara Escarpment — will one day define the topography of Hamilton. The city's geography is half a billion years old.

350 MILLION YEARS AGO — FIRST FORESTS

The Carboniferous period. Giant fern trees cover the land. Their compressed remains become coal. Hamilton will be built on coal, steel, and the fossil record of these trees. The industrial city will burn its deep past for energy.

66 MILLION YEARS AGO — THE MASS EXTINCTION

An asteroid strikes the Yucatán. 75% of species on Earth vanish, including non-avian dinosaurs. Mammals — small, nocturnal, surviving in the margins — inherit the world.

55 MILLION YEARS AGO — PRIMATES DIVERGE

The mammalian line that will produce humans branches off. Still tree-dwelling. Still small.

6 MILLION YEARS AGO — THE HUMAN LINE SEPARATES

The lineage that will become *Homo sapiens* diverges from chimpanzees. We are not the endpoint of evolution. We are one recent branch on an ancient tree.

300,000 YEARS AGO — *HOMO SAPIENS* EMERGES

In Africa. Language. Tool use. Narrative. The species that will speculate about its own future exists.

70,000 YEARS AGO — OUT OF AFRICA

Homo sapiens begins migrating across the planet. The Toba supervolcano eruption nearly ends the species — population drops to perhaps 10,000 individuals. We almost don't make it.

15,000 YEARS AGO — FIRST PEOPLES ARRIVE IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Following the retreating glaciers north. The Laurentide Ice Sheet — 3 kilometres thick — has been carving the land for millennia. As it melts, it reveals the basin that will become the Great Lakes. The first humans to walk the land that will be Hamilton arrive here. They have been here for ten thousand years before the word “Canada” exists.

11,000 YEARS AGO — LAKE ONTARIO FORMS

The glacial meltwater fills the basin. Lake Iroquois — the ancestor of Lake Ontario — forms. Hamilton sits at its western shore.

1,000 BCE — HAUDENOSAUNEE CONFEDERACY ROOTS

The peoples of the Haudenosaunee begin organizing what will become one of the most sophisticated democratic governance systems in human history. The Dish With One Spoon Covenant — shared stewardship of shared land — is embedded in their law. The Dish Protocol of 2092 has roots here.

C. 1450 CE — THE GREAT LAW OF PEACE

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy formalizes the Great Law of Peace — a constitution built on consensus, representation, and environmental responsibility. Benjamin Franklin and the American Founding Fathers will study this document when designing their own democracy. History often forgets the source.

1535 — EUROPEAN CONTACT

Jacques Cartier arrives in the St. Lawrence. The diseases that arrive with European contact will kill an estimated 50–90% of Indigenous populations over the following century. The Dish Protocol's 2092 governance is also a reckoning with this.

1784 — HAMILTON AREA SETTLED BY LOYALISTS

United Empire Loyalists arrive in the Niagara Peninsula. The land is called “head of the lake” — the western tip of Lake Ontario. The Haudenosaunee are dispossessed through a series of treaties that will be contested for the next two centuries.

1816 — HAMILTON FOUNDED

George Hamilton purchases land at the “head of the lake.” A town is platted. Population: a few hundred. The city that will become “the Ambitious City” is born.

1850s–1900s — THE INDUSTRIAL AGE

The railway arrives. The harbour is dredged. Steel mills begin to appear along the waterfront. Hamilton becomes the Steel Capital of Canada. Stelco. Dofasco. Furnaces burning 24 hours a day. The harbour — once a living ecosystem — begins to die. This is the city that Hamilton 2092 is repairing.

1987 — HAMILTON HARBOUR DESIGNATED AN AREA OF CONCERN

Under the Canada-US Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, Hamilton Harbour is formally designated one of 43 Great Lakes Areas of Concern. The damage is documented. The remediation begins — slowly. Randle Reef: 650,000 m³ of contaminated sediment. A century of industry compressed into sludge.

2000s–2010s — DEINDUSTRIALIZATION + REVITALIZATION

The steel mills shrink. Stelco enters creditor protection. Hamilton begins its transition — from steel city to post-industrial city. The creative economy. The food scene. The arts. The question of what comes next is still open.

2015 — THE PARIS AGREEMENT

195 nations agree to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The targets are not met. The timeline toward Hamilton 2092's ecosocialist transition accelerates its urgency.

2022 — RANDLE REEF CAPPING COMPLETE

The largest sediment remediation project in Canadian Great Lakes history finishes. 650,000 m³ of contaminated sediment sealed beneath an engineered cap. Hamilton Harbour begins to breathe again. The remediation generation starts here.

2026 — NOW

Hamilton, Ontario. 13.8 billion years after the Big Bang.

Population: ~580,000. The steel mills are quieter. The harbour is healing. A student at Sheridan College is building a speculative world set 66 years from now — asking what kind of city Hamilton chooses to become for the Tenth generation.

13.8 billion years of cosmic history. 66 years of possible future.

The Tenth.

DESIGN NOTES FOR LAYOUT

As a landscape spread (guidebook insert or fold-out): - Timeline runs left → right across a 2-page spread - Eras shown as colored bands (deep cosmic black → geological grey → earthy biological tones → Hamilton amber) - Each era has a single bold date and

a single sentence — stripped to essence - Scale compression is the graphic challenge: 13.8B years on one spread, with 2026 as a tiny sliver at the far right - The final entry “NOW” sits almost off the right edge — almost invisible — which is the point

As an exhibition wall piece: - Floor-to-ceiling vertical print, 2–3 metres tall - Dates descend from top (Big Bang) to bottom (2026) - Visitors stand at the bottom, looking up at their own origin - The physical act of looking up = the act of reckoning with deep time

As a standalone poster: - Black background, amber + white type - Logarithmic scale so each “era” is roughly equal height - Hamilton 2026 at the bottom — just a few centimetres despite being home

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