# Pre-1900 Non-Religious Estimates of the Age of the Earth

| Basis | Author | Time of estimate | Age of Earth (years) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Decline of sea level | Benoit de Maillet | 1748 | >2,000 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Earth | Comte de Buffon | 1774 | 0.075 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Sun | H. L. F. von Helmhottz | 1856 | 22 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | J. Phillips | 1860 | 38–96 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Earth | Lord Kelvin | 1862 | 20—400 [98] x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Sun | Lord Kelvin | 1862 | 10—500 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Earth | S. Haughton | 1865 | >1,280 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | A. Geikie | 1868 | 100 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Earth | P. G. Tait | 1869 | 10—15 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | T. H. Huxley | 1869 | 100 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Earth | Lord Kelvin | 1871 | <100 x $10^6$ |
| Earth tidal effects | Lord Kelvin | 1871 | <1,000 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | S. Haughton | 1871 | 1,526 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Sun | P. G. Tait | 1876 | <20 x $10^6$ |
| Earth tidal effects | P. G. Tait | 1876 | <10 x $10^6$ |
| Ocean Sulfate accumulation | T. M. Reade | 1876 | 25 x $10^6$ |
| Ocean Chloride accumulation | T. M. Reade | 1876 | 200 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | T. M. Reade | 1876 | 53–526 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | S. Haughton | 1878 | >200 x 10 |
| Limestone accumulation | E. Dubois | ? | >1,000 x $10^6$ |
| Earth—Moon tidal retardation | G. Darwin | 1879 | >54 x $10^6$ |
| Limestone accumulation | T. M. Reade | 1879 | 600 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | A. Winchell | 1883 | 3 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | J. Croll | 1889 | 72 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | M. A. deLapparent | 1890 | 67–90 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Sun | S. Newcomb | 1892 | 18 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | H. H. Hutchinson | 1892 | 600 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | A. Geikie | 1892 | 73-680 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | W. J. McGee | 1892 | 15,000 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | A. R. Wallace | 1892 | 28 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Earth | C. King | 1893 | 24 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | C. D. Walcott | 1893 | 35–80 [55] x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | T. M. Reade | 1893 | 95 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | T. M. Reade | 1893 | 100-600 x 106 |
| Sediment accumulation | W. J. McGee | 1893 | 10–5,000,000 [6,000] x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | W. J. McGee | 1893 | 1,584 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | W. Upham | 1893 | <100 x$10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | W. J. Sollas | 1895 | 17 x $10^6$ |
| Cooling of Earth | Lord Kelvin | 1897 | 20—40 x $10^6$ |
| Earth tidal effects | Lord Kelvin | 1897 | <1,000 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | J. J. Sederholm | 1897 | 35–40 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | J. G. Goodchild | 1897 | 1,408 x $10^6$ |
| Earth—Moon tidal retardation | G. Darwin | 1898 | >56 x $10^6$ |

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|---|---|---|---|
| Cooling of Sun | A. Ritter | 1899 | 4.4—5.8 x $10^6$ |
| Ocean Sodium accumulation | J. Joly | 1899 | 80—90 [89] x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | A. Geikie | 1899 | 100 x $10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | W. J. Sollas | 1900 | 26.5 x $10^6$ |
| Decline of sea level | Benoit de Maillet | 1748 | >2,000 x $10^6$ |
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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sediment accumulation | J. G. Goodchild | 1897 | $1{,}408 \times 10^6$ |
| Sediment accumulation | A. Geikie | 1899 | $100 \times 10^6$ |

From “The Age of the Earth”, G. Brent Dalrymple, Stanford University Press, 1991, Table 2.1, pp14-17