1.5.2 TIMELINE

TIMELINE ON THE HISTORY OF BERLIN AND THE BERLIN WALL (1945-1990):

1945

May 1945	The Red Army captures Berlin and with the end of World War II, on May 8, 1945, Berlin is divided into four sectors: the American, British, and French the West; the Soviet in the East.

1946

October 29, 1946	A 30 day valid Interzonenpass or Inter-zone passport is required to travel between the sectors in Germany. It was still possible to cross between the two sectors, although it was becoming increasingly dangerous.

1948

June 23, 1948	Currency reform in Berlin, Berlin is divided into two different currency zones.
June 24, 1948	The Soviet Union begins the Berlin blockade.
June 25, 1948	The United States begins the Berlin Airlift to keep Berlin supplied with food and fuel.

1949

April 4, 1949	The United States, Canada and Western European countries sign the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Washington.
May 12, 1949	End of the Berlin blockade.
May 24, 1949:	Founding of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany).
September 30, 1949	End of the Berlin Airlift.
October 7, 1949	The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) is proclaimed in East Berlin.

1952

April 1, 1952,	East German leaders meet with Stalin in Moscow. At the meeting Stalin's foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov proposes that the East Germans should "introduce a system of passes for visits of West Berlin residents to the territory of East Berlin [so as to stop] free movement of Western agents" in the GDR.
May 26, 1952	Border between East and West Germany and between East Germany and West Berlin is closed. Only the border between East and West Berlin is still opened.

1953

June 17, 1953	Riots by East Berlin building workers against the working conditions are suppressed by the Red Army.
November 14, 1953	The Western Powers waive the Interzonenpass, the Soviet Union follows but East German citizen need a permission to travel to the West.

1957

December 11, 1957	Leaving East Germany without permission is forbidden and violations are prosecuted with prison up to three years.

1960

November 30, 1960	Meeting between Nikita Khrushchev and Walter Ulbricht. "We must create the conditions so that the GDR economy will not be vulnerable to our enemies. We didn't know that the GDR was so vulnerable to West Germany. This is not good; we must correct this now." (W. Ulbricht).
1960-1989	The *Schießbefehl* (order to fire) is in place in various forms for all these years. It's a standing order that instructs border patrols of East Germany to prevent border penetration by East German citizens by all means including killing the violators. Only in 1982 is this practice formally legalized by §27 of the border law.

1961

June 15, 1961	First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of the GDR and Staatsrat chairman Walter Ulbricht states at an international press conference: "Niemand hat die Absicht, eine Mauer zu errichten!" (No one has the intention to erect a wall). It was the first time the colloquial term Mauer (wall) was used in this context.
July 25, 1961	President John F. Kennedy gives a speech just days before the border between East and West Berlin is closed. He stresses the need for NATO countries to hold onto West Berlin and says any Soviet attack on Berlin would be equivalent to an attack on NATO. *"Those who threaten to unleash the forces of war on a dispute over West Berlin should recall the words of the ancient philosopher: 'A man who causes fear cannot be free from fear." (John F. Kennedy)*
August 4, 1961	Nikita Khrushchev reacts to President Kennedy's speech to the leaders of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Khrushchev was preparing to seal the borders of East Berlin with a concrete wall, but the plan was kept top secret. The speech betrays Khrushchev's concern with the new Kennedy government and the possibility of a war beginning with confrontation in Berlin -- and possibly ending in nuclear destruction. *"You convinced yourself that Khrushchev will never go to war ... so you scare us [expecting] us to retreat. True, we will not declare war, but we will not withdraw either..." (Nikita S. Khrushchev)*
August 13, 1961	The Berlin border between East and West Berlin is closed. The zonal boundary is sealed in the morning by East German troops. "Shock workers" from East Germany and Russia seal off the border with a barrier of barbed wire and light fencing that eventually became a complex series of walls, fortified fences, gun positions and watchtowers heavily guarded and patrolled. In the end, the Berlin Wall was 96 miles (155 km) long and the average height of the concrete wall was 11.8 ft (3.60 m). Over the course of the Wall's existence, 133 people were confirmed killed trying to cross into West Berlin according to official sources, while a victims' group puts the number at over 200 dead. There were also some 5,000 successful escapes into West Berlin. The August 13 operation lasted 24 hours.
August 14, 1961	Brandenburg Gate is closed.
August 15, 1961	Conrad Schumann, the first East German border guard, escapes by jumping the barbed wire to West Berlin. The first concrete elements and large square blocks are used on this date. Within the next months the first generation of the Berlin Wall was build up: a wall consisting of concrete elements and square blocks.
August 16th, 1961	The barbed wire barrier is being removed and replaced with a wall of concrete blocks. This first Wall around Berlin was two meters high, made from different building materials assembled into a rough construction.
August 26, 1961	All crossing points are closed for West Berlin citizens.

1962

June 1962	A second Wall is being built to prevent escapes to the West. The first Wall is improved over the next years and it becomes difficult to distinguish between the first and the second generations of the Wall.
August 17, 1962	Peter Fechter, 18, a bricklayer from East Berlin, is shot and left to bleed to death in full view of western media. Bystanders in the West tried to rescue him, but were prevented from it at gunpoint.

1963

June 26, 1963	President J. F. Kennedy visits Berlin and declares: "Ich bin ein Berliner." ("I am a Berliner.")
December 17, 1963	After 7 rounds of negotiations between the Senate of Berlin and the East German authorities, an administrative agreement is signed allowing West Berliners to visit their relatives in East Berlin on a limited basis.

1965

1965	A new Wall generation, the third, is introduced to replace the old construction. The new one consists of concrete slabs laid between H-shaped steel concrete supports. A round, 0.40 meter large concrete tube capped the wall making it more difficult to climb over.

1971

September 3, 1971	The Four Power Agreement over Berlin is reached. It charges the governments of West Berlin and the GDR with negotiating an accord that would regulate access to and from West Berlin from the FRG and secure the right of West Berliners to visit East Berlin and the GDR.

1972

May 1972	The Transit Agreement is reached that arranged the matters raised in the Four Power Agreement and also secured the rights of GDR citizens to visit the FRG, but only in cases of family emergency.
December 1972	The Basic Treaty is signed in which both German states committed themselves to developing normal relations on the basis of equality, guaranteeing their mutual territorial integrity as well as the border between them, and recognizing each other's independence and sovereignty. They also agreed to the exchange of "permanent missions" in Bonn and East Berlin to further relations.

1973

May 1973	East and West Germany establish formal diplomatic ties.
October 1, 1973	An explicit firing order is issued to a special team of Stasi agents tasked with infiltrating regular units of border guards to prevent their colleagues from defecting. *"It is your duty to use your combat … skills in such a way as to overcome the cunning of the border breacher, to challenge or liquidate him in order to thwart the planned border breach. … Don't hesitate to use your weapon even when border breaches happen with women and children, which traitors have often exploited in the past."*

1975-76

1975-1976	Construction of the infamous 'Stutzwandelement UL 12.11', known also as Grenzmauer 75 (Border Wall '75) begins. This new installation – a second wall – penetrated deeper into East German territory and included a touch-sensitive, self-firing fence. The product of a large-scale development and testing program, it was made of L-shaped sections of pre-cast concrete used by farmers to build open silos. Each section was 3.60 meters high and 1.20 meters wide and was topped off by a smooth asbestos-concrete pipe 40 centimeters in diameter. Consequently, the Wall becomes harder to penetrate. Yet this did not put an end to attempted escapes. As a result, East German authorities increase their control of the border structures.

1987

June 12, 1987	President Ronald Reagan visits Berlin and calls on Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall.

1989

February 6, 1989	Chris Gueffroy is the last person to be killed trying to cross the Wall.
August 23, 1989,	Communist Hungary removes its border restrictions with Austria.
September 10, 1989	The Hungarian government opens its border for East German Refugees. More than 13,000 East Germans escape into Austria.
November 4, 1989	An estimated one million people attend a pro-democracy demonstration in East Berlin's main square. Within days, the East German Government resigns.
November 9, 1989	The East German government announces that visits in West Germany and West Berlin will be permitted. Thousands of East Berliners pass into West Berlin as border guards stand by. People begin tearing down the wall which is opened.
December 22, 1989	The Brandenburg Gate is opened.

1990

October 3, 1990	Germany is formally reunited.

Source: http://www.coldwar.org/articles/60s/BerlinWallTimeLine.asp

Divided City of Berlin (1945-1989)

Berlin Wall (1961)

Source: en.wikipedia.org