S. C. Computer / Genealogy Class SIG
September 11, 2014
Karen Ristic

Seven Tips for Finding Your Ancestors through U.S. Cemetery Research

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Seven Tips for Finding Your Ancestors through U.S. Cemetery Research

1. Five Basic Categories of Cemeteries

2. Where to Look for Cemetery Records

3. Where to Look for Cemeteries Online

4. Recording Cemetery Data

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1. Five Basic Categories of Cemeteries

1. **Churchyard or Church-related Graveyards.** Early American and colonial settlers were often buried next to their church. Today, these churchyards can be found wherever there were settlements along the east coast of the U.S. (Bothkennar Churchyard, Sterling, Scotland)

2. **Public Cemeteries.** Public, or government owned cemeteries, are at the local, county, state, or national level that are maintained by tax monies. They include prisons and state hospitals/mental institutions. (Santa Maria Cemetery)

3. **Private/Family Cemeteries.** In the early 19th century, most rural families had family burial sites, usually on the farm first settled by the family in the area. (Smith private cemetery, VA)

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Five Basic Categories of Cemeteries (cont.)

4. **Commercial and Memorial Park Cemeteries**. Can be either not-for-profit or profit oriented entities. They are designed as a place for the general public, to experience outdoor recreation and art. (Palm Mortuary, NV)

5. **Military Cemeteries.** Can be found inside and outside of the US, at the site of a battle, within a military post, in veteran's cemeteries, and next to veteran's homes. (Arlington National Cemetery, VA)

Source: Legacy QuickGuide, *Cemetery Research* by Sharon Atkins

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2. Where to Look for Cemetery Records

a. **Church Burial Registers.** These records sometimes include the names of other family members. A problem may be that some have been placed in central church archives. You may have to hunt for them.

b. **Sexton's Records.** Officially called the Sexton's book, all municipal cemeteries, many large denominational facilities shared by two or more churches in a community, all commercially operated memorial parks have offices or official caretakers where you can expect to find a registry of burials.

c. **Cemetery Deeds.** Sales, transfers, and bequests of title to this property are given to the owner and kept by the sexton in separate cemetery deed books.

d. **Plat Records.** Before the efficient recording of burials, attempts were made to record earlier burials. Sometimes the actual location of the grave was lost and had to be reconstructed which was sometimes incomplete.

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Types of Records (cont.)

e. **Burial Permit Records.** Since 1920 state health departments have regulated burials for the licensed mortician obtains a permit from the city or county authority – another valuable source of burial information.

f. **Grave Opening Orders.** Most cemeteries preserve records of all grave openings.

g. **Family Bibles.** While family Bible records are more appropriate classified as home sources, they are also a primary source, sometimes the only source, for private burials.

h. **Death Certificates.** Sometimes at the bottom of the death certificate there is mention of the cemetery of burial.

i. **Inscriptions.** Often inscriptions can provide many vital details about the deceased: name, birth, death, family relationships

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3. Where to Look for Cemeteries

1. **Grave Locators**
   a. **American Battle Monuments Commission** http://www.abmc.gov/
   b. **Ancestry.com Has many military and other cemetery listings**
   c. **Arlington National Cemetery** http://www.LegacyURL.com/arlingcemlocator
   d. **Association of the Graveyard Rabbits** http://www.thegraveyardrabbit.com
   e. **Billion Graves** http://www.billiongraves.com
   f. **Cyndi's List** http://www.cyndislist.com
   g. **FamilySearch.org**
   h. **Find A Grave** http://www.findagrave.com
   i. **Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)** http://geonames.usgs.gov/apex/f?p=136:1:0
   j. **Google: location and cemetery Google.com**
   k. **I Dream of Genealogy Cemetery Records** http://www.idreamof.com/cemetery.html
   l. **State and County GenWeb sites** www.USGenWeb.com

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A Visit to a Scottish Cemetery

(want to take a trip to Scotland?)

Glenluce Cemetery.kml

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Visiting the Cemeteries

Glenluce, Scotland
William Torbron (1726-1771)
Karen's 4th Great Grandfather

Lenawee County, Michigan
Lucy Gage Torbron (1809-1870)
Karen's 2nd Great Grandmother

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4. Recording Cemetery Data

Planning a trip to a cemetery means you must go prepared. Things to bring:

1. Wetting tombstones with a **spray bottle with water** can make them more readable.
2. Use a **mirror** to reflect sunshine and throw shadows off inscriptions.
3. **Digital cameras** are great for capturing photos of tombstones because you can see in real time whether you've captured the image you want.
4. You'll need **grass clippers** to trim away grass that has grown over the gravestone.
5. **Soft paint brushes** work well to brush loose dirt off without harming fragile stones.
6. You may want to kneel on a **foam gardening kneeling pad** while taking eye-level shots of smaller stones.

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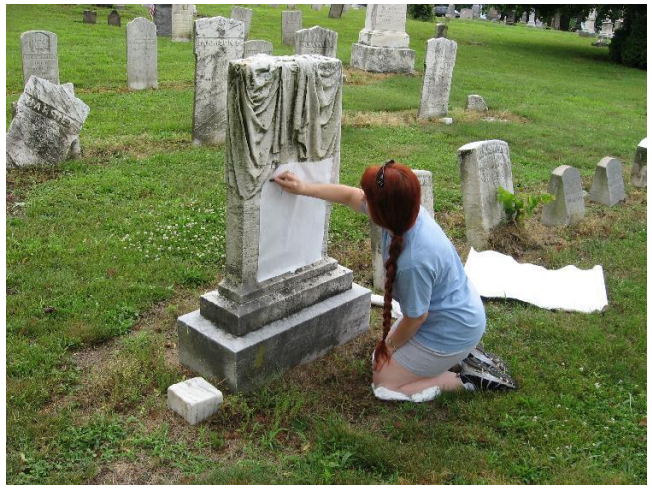
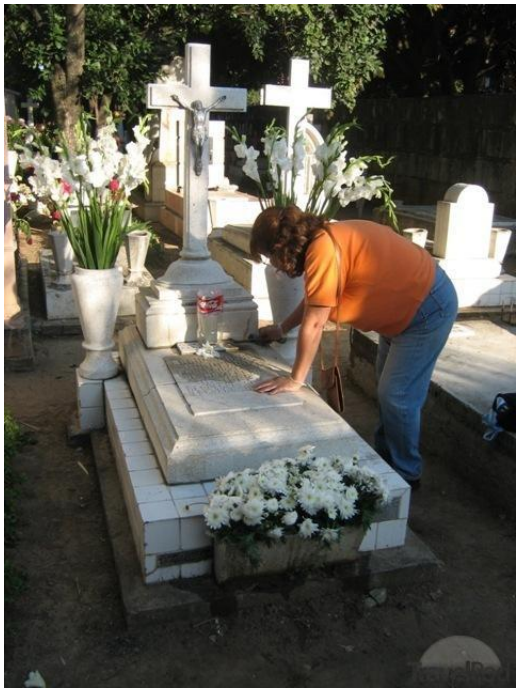
Recording Cemetery Data (cont.)

7. You may also want to bring **rubbing supplies** such as large paper and masking tape and a thick crayon if you plan on doing any tombstone rubbings. However, be sure to check with the cemetery office first. Some cemeteries prohibit rubbings because they can harm fragile stones.





8. For more information on taking care of the tombstones see: http://hubpages.com/hub/How-to-Clean-a-Headstone-the-Proper-Way

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5. Gravestone Symbols

The main symbol that was used during the New England colonial era was the winged skull, also known as death's head, which is found at the top of many New England gravestones. It is one of the oldest gravestone symbols found in New England since it was used mainly in the 17th century. The skull is believed to symbolize physical death, while the wings symbolize spiritual regeneration.

The next most commonly used New England gravestone symbol is the winged cherub. It is a modification of death's head and it represents the soul's flight to heaven. However, the winged cherub did not replace the death's head symbol. Both the cherub and death's head continued to be used.

Check http://www.graveaddiction.com/symbol.html for more symbols

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6. Three Important Cemetery Sites
1. Billion Graves

1

Billion Graves (www.billiongraves.com)

a. What sets these user-submitted photos apart is that they're all GPS encoded, so they can be mapped.

b. Contains over 9 million records.

c. Uploading and transcribing both earn you credits toward BillionGraves' notifications feature which requires a paid Plus account ($9.95 a year).

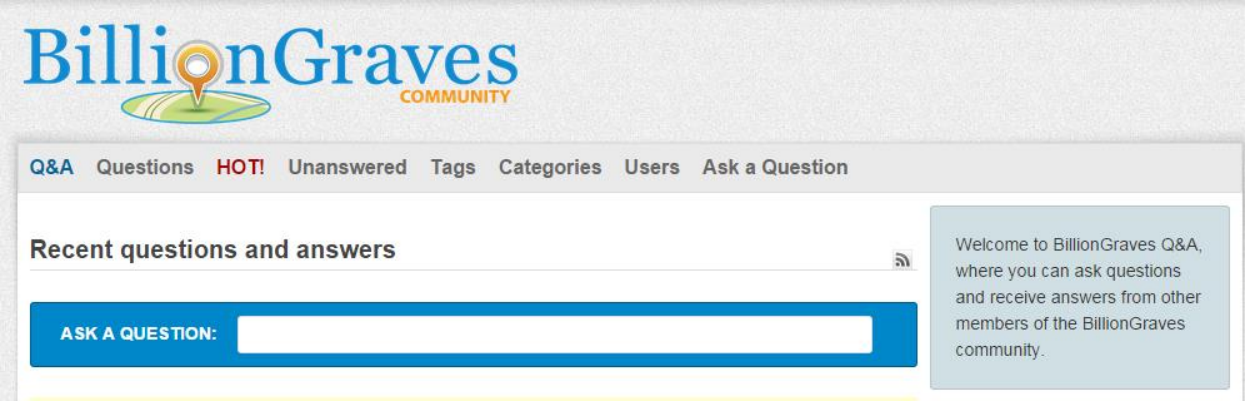
d. Register for a basic account.

e. Can do a headstone search by first name, surname, birth year and/or death year

f. How to search

1. Fill in at least a last name

2



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Billion Graves Results for “Torbron”

Dashboard | Photos ▼ | Tools ▼ | Transcribe (814712) | Notifications ▼ | Upgrade

Search our records

Person Lookup | Cemetery Lookup

First Names | Last Names (* required): Torbron | Birth Year | Death Year | Year Range: ±5

United States | Filter by State (73) | Filter by County...

Exact Match ☑ | Phonetic ☐ | Filter by Record Type ... | Search

Showing 1-3 of 3 results for *Torbron*

Get notified of new records (and more) with BG Plus

« First | ‹ Prev | Next › | Last »

Search for "Torbron" at MyHeritage

Mary L. Torbron
Born: 1905
Died: 1985
Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery
San Antonio, Texas, United States

Orin Forrest Torbron
Born: 1895
Died: 1961
Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery
San Antonio, Texas, United States

Burial Record

Orin Forrest Torbron
Born: 1895
Died: 1961
Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery
San Antonio, Texas, United States

Search for "Torbron" at MyHeritage

Showing 1-3 of 3 results for “*Torbron*”

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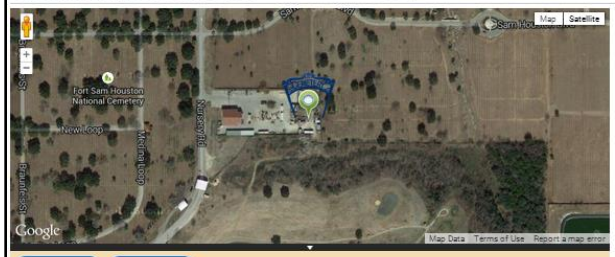
Results for Orin Forrest Torbron and Cemetery Results

Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery
San Antonio, Bexar, Texas, United States

Images 28014



Show Pins | Large Map

4850 images from this cemetery are waiting to be transcribed - Transcribe Now!

Cemetery Information

Address 1520 Harry Wurzbach Road
San Antonio, Bexar, Texas
United States
(29.47573,-98.42613)

Website http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems...

Information

Cemetery Images

Nearby Cemeteries

Fort Sam National Cemetary	1.1mi | 1.8km
Sunset Funeral Home	1.3mi | 2.1km
Sunset Memorial Park 2 images	1.4mi | 2.3km
The Sisters of the Incarnate Word Cemetery 101 images	2.3mi | 3.7km
Salado (Beitel Memorial) Cemetery 145 images	3.3mi | 5.3km
Sutton-Sutton & Woodards Mortuary Inc	3.3mi | 5.3km
confederate cemetery	3.5mi | 5.6km
Bueche Cemetery	3.7mi | 6km
Agudas Achim Cemetery	3.9mi | 6.3km

Records 23408/12954 | Images 28014 | Contributors 73 | Requests 8 | Comments 0

search text here

Showing 1-25 of 23319 Prev Next

<unknown>	1956 - 1975
Adeline E	1913 - 2001
Albert S Jr	1955 - 1977
Aljurita	1889 - 1978
Alvena Z	1902 - 1997
Angelina	???? - 1984
Anita G	1909 - 1985
Ann Marie	???? - 1967
Ann Z.	1919 - 1996
Anne R	1898 - 1987
Annie B	1907 - 1988
Antonia E	1912 - 2003
Apolonia	???? - 1941
Beatrice G.	1916 - 1998
Belle	1919 - 1977
Bernice	1889 - 1976
Bertha M	1911 - 1963
Bessie	1900 - 1980
Bill J.	1964 - 1984
Blanche	1929 - 2002
Carmen	1907 - 1992
Carmen H	1914 - 1976
Carol	1892 - 1986
Carrie T	1902 - 1966
Clara M	1896 - 1986

1

Orin Forrest Torbron

Do More with a BG+ Account

+ Link to FamilySearch

Virtual Walkthrough
View Others Buried Nearby

Search for:
Torbron in this cemetery
(2 found)
Torbron in this County
Torbron in this State
Torbron in this Country

Login to add photos

View Larger Map

Vital Information:

Birth:	7 December 1895
Marriage:	Not Available
Death:	7 January 1961
Cemetery:	Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery San Antonio, Texas, United States

Others NOT Buried Here: Login to edit

Others Here:

Mary L. Torbron
(1905-1985)

Relationships:

Login to add relationships

Epitaph & Description:

Mary L. Torbron was the wife of Major Orin Forrest Torbron.

Military Information:

Login to edit military record

Christian

Transcription: MAJOR INFANTRY WORLD WAR II
Ranks: MAJOR
Branch: INFANTRY
Units:
Conflicts: WORLD WAR II
Awards:
Plot:
Notes:

Memorial / Obituary / Personal History:

Personal History: Login to add Personal History

2

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2. Find A Grave

SEARCH DOCUMENTS FOR FREE:

First Name | Last Name | State | Search now

fold3

KarenR | Sign out

FIND A GRAVE

Recent News: Charles Larson died on Jul 26, 2014.

Find Famous Graves

See the graves of thousands of famous people from around the world.

- Famous Grave Search
- Browse by **Location**
- Browse by **Claim to Fame**
- Search by **Date**
  - Born On This Date
  - Died On This Date
- **Most Popular** Searches
- Yearly Necrologies
- Posthumous Reunions
- Interesting Monuments
- Interesting Epitaphs
- New Listings
- New Photos

Find Graves

Find the graves of ancestors, create virtual memorials, add 'virtual flowers' and a note to a loved one's grave, etc.

- Search **116 million** grave records
- Search for a cemetery
- Add burial records
- View recently added names
- Stroll through our online cemetery
- Join the Find A Grave Community
- Top 50 Contributors
- Link To Find A Grave
- Surname index

Forums, Store, etc.

- Discussion Forums
- Find A Grave Store
- Success Stories
- Related Books

Questions and Answers

- Frequently Asked Questions
- **Who** is behind Find A Grave?

Privacy Statement and Terms of Service

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Find A Grave Instructions

1. Fill in the Name fields, (“last” is required). This is an exact match search, so be aware of that.
2. Sometimes less information is better. (For example, if the name on a headstone for John William Smith was “J W Smith” a search for “John Smith” would not find this record.)
3. Fill in other fields as desired to limit the search.
4. After a state is selected a county list field will appear where a county can be selected.
5. You can reverse the steps above and search for the cemeteries in a particular county first.

- Search hint: When you find someone you are interested in, (for example, “John Smith”), you may want to click one of the “Find all SMITHs in:” links on the left of the screen to look for other family members in the same cemetery, city, county, or state.

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2. Find A Grave

Find A Grave Search Form

Name: Israel (First) | (Middle) | Chapin (Last) (required)

Include maiden name(s) in my search ☐

Do partial name search on surname ☐

Born: **Year:**

Died: **Year:**

Cemetery in: The United States / New York

Memorial #:

Date filter: All Names

Order by: Name

Search

Israel Chapin

Memorial | Photos | Flowers | Share | Edit

Birth: Dec. 4, 1740
Worcester
Worcester County
Massachusetts, USA

Death: Mar. 7, 1795

Revolutionary War General. At the direction of George Washington, he summoned the Canandaigua Council, which led to the signing, on November 11, 1794, of the Canandaigua Treaty, the final treaty between the six nations of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) and the United States Government. The general died a few months after the signing of the treaty at age 54, and Seneca chief Red Jacket gave a moving condolence speech at his graveside. (bio by: Kristen Conrad)

Family links:

Spouse:

Elizabeth *Marsh* Chapin (____ - 1794)*

Children:

Thadus Chapin (1761 - 1830)*
Israel Chapin (1763 - 1833)*
Lois *Chapin* Saltonstall (1773 - 1806)*
Sally *Chapin* Howell (1778 - 1808)*
Henry Chapin (1781 - 1865)*
George Chapin (1784 - 1867)*

*Calculated relationship

Burial:
Pioneer Cemetery
Canandaigua
Ontario County
New York, USA

Edit Virtual Cemetery info [?]

Maintained by: Find A Grave
Originally Created by: Kristen Conrad
Record added: Jul 16, 2005

Find A Grave Memorial# 11366232

Added by: Kristen Conrad

Added by: Alan Brownsten

Added by: Alan Brownsten

Photos may be scaled.
Click on image for full size.

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3. USGenWeb

Alabama
Alaska
Arizona
Arkansas
California
Colorado
Connecticut
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Idaho
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maine
Maryland
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Mississippi
Missouri
Montana
Nebraska
Nevada
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New Mexico
New York
North Carolina
North Dakota
Ohio
Oklahoma
Oklahoma/Indian Territory
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Tennessee
Texas
Utah
Vermont
Virginia
Washington
West Virginia
Wisconsin
Wyoming

Home | Counties | Special Projects | Research Help | Search | Exchange Data! | Volunteer! | About Us

Site Index:

- Queries for Unknown Counties
- Michigan Cemeteries
- Michigan Funeral Homes
- Civil War section for MIGenWeb
- MI History Comes to Life
- MI Genealogical and Historical Societies
  Genealogical and Historical Society Publications
- *1873 Michigan Atlas Online*
- *MICHIGAN MAILING LISTS AND MESSAGE BOARDS*
- Other Helpful Michigan Sites
  A must-look-at page!

Affiliated Projects:

- Civil War MIGenWeb
- Michigan USGenWeb Archives
- Michigan Lookups Help Needed!
- Michigan Tombstone Photo Project
- Michigan Family Group Sheets
- Michigan's Orphan Artifacts
- Michigan Schools
- Michigan Research Exchange (to view queries)

Helpful Links:

- Genealogy Links & other Genealogy Tips *Another must-see!*

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US Gen Web (cont.)

Hillsdale County
MIGenWeb
Michigan Genealogy on the Web
Part of The USGenWeb Project

HOME | Biographies | Cemeteries | Census | Help | History | Land Records | Military | Misc. | Newspapers | Obituaries | People and Families | Queries | Schools | Surnames | Townships | Vital Records

Allen Township Cemeteries
Surnames Index

**

Michigan Cemeteries Rootsweb Mailing List

MIGenWeb Tombstone Photo and Transcription Project

Allen Cemetery ** Dorris/Walsh Cemetery ** Layton Cemetery ** Sand Lake Cemetery
South Allen Cemetery

South Allen Cemetery sec. 28, S. Allen Rd. between Arkansaw and Hallett Rds.	Adams, Allison, Appleton, Bacon, Baggerly, Bird, Bradley, Bradshaw, Brockway, Brott, Brown, Burlew, Burroughs, Campbell, Close, Cooper, Cox, Crandall, Dalchow, Darling, Denman, Densmore, Dewey, Eberth, Eldred, Ellsworth, Farnwalt, Farrah, Ficks, Folger, Fox, Frarey, Friedley, Garrett, Gezelman, Goodrich, Gray, Green, Grover, Guy, Hand, Harlan, Harris, Hatfield, Hayden, Haynes, Hemry, Herring, Hicks, Holbrook, Hollibaugh, Howe, Howland, Hulwick, Kent, Kinnucan, Kirkum, Ladd, Lombard, Lotz, Macey, Malcom, Martin, Mathews, McConel, McConnell, McCully, McEvoy, Merriman, Miller, Moody, Myers, Nafe, Newman, Nicloy, Osgood, Paine, Parker, Parrish, Pattinson, Peck, Pettibone, Phillips, Potter, Pratt, Purchase, Ranney, Redding, Rice, Riford, Rogers, Rumfelt, Russell, Scott, Shepard, Sherin, Smith, Sparks, Stafford, Stanley, Stohlman, Stone, Struble, Swift, Teeple, Thomas, Towns, Truax, Tucker, VanAken, VanNocker, Vinson, Vreeland, Walton, Washburn, Watkins, Webb, Webster, Welch, Wells, Wenger, Westfall, Whitmore, Willard, Williams, Winter, Young

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7. Additional Recommendations

1. Cemeteries may have been relocated for various reasons. Check for registrations with federal, state, or local agencies or local libraries for removal of graves.
2. Check with the sexton for additional names and dates of your ancestor's relatives.
3. Try to obtain additional information about the cemetery and their rules and customs and history. Know their regulations about flower placement, pictures on graves, and headstones or ground placement or certain reserved sections.
4. Know that certain inscription mistakes happen.
5. Don't assume burial and gravestone placement occurred simultaneously or everything listed on the tombstone are actually buried there.
6. Make sure you transcribe everything accurately (better yet, take a picture of the tombstone).

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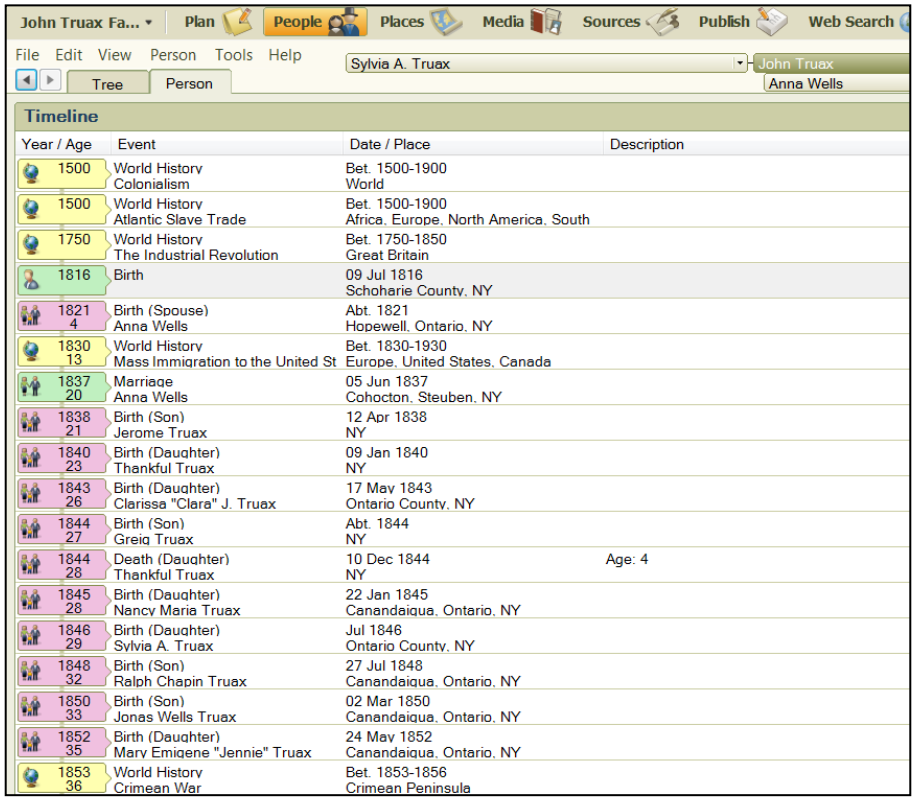
S. C. Computer / Genealogy Class SIG

Next Computer Class

Thursday, 10:00 a.m. --- October 09, 2014

Karen Ristic

Genealogy Timelines



Year / Age	Event	Date / Place	Description
1500	World History Colonialism	Bet. 1500-1900 World	
1500	World History Atlantic Slave Trade	Bet. 1500-1900 Africa, Europe, North America, South	
1750	World History The Industrial Revolution	Bet. 1750-1850 Great Britain	
1816	Birth	09 Jul 1816 Schoharie County, NY	
1821 4	Birth (Spouse) Anna Wells	Abt. 1821 Hopewell, Ontario, NY	
1830 13	World History Mass Immigration to the United St	Bet. 1830-1930 Europe, United States, Canada	
1837 20	Marriage Anna Wells	05 Jun 1837 Cohocton, Steuben, NY	
1838 21	Birth (Son) Jerome Truax	12 Apr 1838 NY	
1840 23	Birth (Daughter) Thankful Truax	09 Jan 1840 NY	
1843 26	Birth (Daughter) Clarissa "Clara" J. Truax	17 May 1843 Ontario County, NY	
1844 27	Birth (Son) Greig Truax	Abt. 1844 NY	
1844 28	Death (Daughter) Thankful Truax	10 Dec 1844 NY	Age: 4
1845 28	Birth (Daughter) Nancy Maria Truax	22 Jan 1845 Canandaigua, Ontario, NY	
1846 29	Birth (Daughter) Sylvia A. Truax	Jul 1846 Ontario County, NY	
1848 32	Birth (Son) Ralph Chapin Truax	27 Jul 1848 Canandaigua, Ontario, NY	
1850 33	Birth (Son) Jonas Wells Truax	02 Mar 1850 Canandaigua, Ontario, NY	
1852 35	Birth (Daughter) Mary Emigene "Jennie" Truax	24 May 1852 Canandaigua, Ontario, NY	
1853 36	World History Crimean War	Bet. 1853-1856 Crimean Peninsula	

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