

FINDING CEMETERY RECORDS

People will say that their person died in Allegan, not realizing that their original reference was to Allegan County, not to the city of Allegan. If the person died in Allegan, it does not mean that they are buried in the city. Find where they lived: consult census records or Ancestry & FamilySearch death records. The person may need to go to the Allegan County Courthouse to consult a death record and see if a burial site was listed on the death record. If the person was buried in Oakwood, our Allegan city-owned cemetery, the records are at the Allegan city hall; 112 Locust St.; **269-673-5511**; Raven Schenider usually handles cemetery information.

1. Yellow Handout - *Locating Death Facts and Graves*

- Consult yellow handout, "*Locating Death Facts & Graves – Hints from Allegan District Library*"
- Cemeteries are listed *by township*, alternative names are in (). There are several "Overisel" names, two Woodcocks (Manlius & Gun Plains), & 2 Riversides (Heath & Saugatuck)
- There are hints about death records in the handout, plus sites to search for records

2. Ruth Robbins Monteith (RRM) Cemetery Records for Allegan County: 7 vol. plus 2 other books.

- Ruth Robbins Monteith (state DAR genealogy chair from Martin, MI), visited and transcribed old (before 1910) stones of nearly all Allegan County Cemeteries (except Messer Cemetery).
- We have all 7 RRM Allegan Co. cemetery stones transcription record books, plus RRM's Allegan Co.'s "*14 Cemeteries*," and RRM's *Cemetery Inscriptions* 1966, which includes oldest stones of many Michigan counties and a section on old stones of Allegan County cemeteries.
- There are 84-88 cemeteries with about 147+ names in Allegan County.
- We have RRM *tombstone transcriptions for burials prior to 1910* for Allegan Co. cemeteries; if a newer or a veteran's stone was on a lot with older (pre-1910) stones, these also were included.
- RRM included data on other burials: **d.r.** =death record; **c.r.** =cemetery record.
- Unmarked graves and deaths from other counties are not included in RRM transcription records.
- Name Indexes for burials for RRM volumes 1-7 are in separate 3-ring binders; consult the page numbers listed at the front of each Index to find the cemetery for that burial

3. Cemetery Notebooks in General:

- Cemetery records are filed in 3-ring binders, *listed alphabetically by township*.
- Consult the *RRM indexes* for most cemeteries to locate a grave by name of buried persons.
- Other records copied from the Internet or other places are filed with RRM records in notebooks.
- Dorr Township Cemeteries has an index of 1666 entries found in RRM Dorr Township records in the Dorr Township Cemetery notebook. This was done by Sue DeHaan in 1997.
- Riverside Cemetery in Heath Twp. has a separate, updated, 2011 cemetery book.
- Blackman Cemetery in Trowbridge Twp. has two additional bound volumes by Viola Wilson giving A-Z detailed family information, including newspaper clippings and obituaries, etc.
- Winkle Funeral Home's Mountain Home Cemetery in Otsego (large red notebook) has a more up-to-date list (probably to about up to 2000) index by A-Z name and an index by burial plot.
- Gibson Cemetery, Laketown Twp. is in a Fillmore Twp. book: *Recordings of East Saugatuck Cemetery, East Holland Cemetery, Fillmore Township... Gibson Cemetery, Laketown Township...*

4. Layout of Cemetery Notebooks, by Township:

- A list from the Library of Michigan (LOM) of all their known Allegan Co. cemeteries and locations
- Information on the LOM Michigan Cemetery sources website to locate Michigan Cemeteries.
- Information on how townships evolved and how names changed.
- An outline map of Allegan County, showing Township lines, proximity, and names of townships
- A map of the township in question, showing location of all known cemeteries in that township.
- For each cemetery:
 - Location
 - Description
 - Map & driving directions from Allegan District Library (ADL)
 - List of ADL cemetery records for that cemetery
 - Any photos, other maps., or other documents pertaining to that cemetery

5. What do you do when the grave sought is not listed in any of the indexes or records?

- Do a search in Ancestry Library Edition or in FamilySearch to check on the death information. The member may have a wrong date, place, or name.
- The body may have been shipped back home to a family cemetery in Ohio or New York.
- The person may have died elsewhere (visiting relatives?) and been buried there.
- The person may have been cremated (more recent) and the ashes not buried in a cemetery. More recent death records often list the place of burial or cremation.
- If the death is more recent than 1910, the member needs to consult other resources, such as the township sexton. Go to the township home page; if necessary, the member may need to call or email the township clerk or supervisor to get sexton contact information.
- For Oakwood records, contact city hall, 112 Locust St.; l269-673-5511; ask for Raven Schneider.
- Search Find A Grave to see if someone has listed the person's burial site. Beware, these are submitted by users and may be in error, but most are reasonably correct and give clues
- See if the person is listed on an Ancestry or a FamilySearch family tree, then search for a grave for a spouse or other family member.
- If the person was a young man of draft age in WWI or WWII, his grave may be overseas.
- Remember, Michigan Death Records at the state level only began in 1867, but our city newspapers started in 1856, and many newspapers carry deaths that occurred out of our area.
- If you have a name and a death date, search for an obituary that might list the burial site; see our home page www.alleganlibrary.org → Genealogy → How to Search Guides → **Where to Look for Obituaries in Allegan County, Michigan.**
- Look at census records to see where the deceased lived; investigate nearby cemeteries.
- Look at land atlases and plat maps to see where the deceased lived; look at nearby cemeteries.
- If the person was prominent and died long ago his history might be in *Michigan County Histories and Atlases* online at www.hti.umich.edu/m/micounty/ (*History of Allegan and Barry Counties, Michigan, 1880; A Twentieth Century History of Allegan County, Michigan, 1907*)..
- **Necrologies** are lists of deaths in a year published in newspapers at the end of a year or the beginning of the next year. These usually give the names of the deceased, age at death, residence, and date of death. Example: March 16, 2014 – John Doe, 87, Cheshire Twp. We have some lists of more recent necrologies in the *Allegan County News and Gazette* in a 3-ring binder.