

February 2014 Assignment – An Obituary – Example

Following is an annotated transcription of the obituary I chose for this month's assignment. Every record we find offers multiple paths, both in research path choices and in narrative writing. I've marked my thoughts on both in this transcription.

- The red font shows statements providing direct evidence or clues to genealogical information.
- Red boxes show genealogy research questions.
- The box at the end summarizes genealogy information from this article, with inferences and deductions in red font.
- Circled in blue are the subjects I focused on for narrative purposes, with the two most intriguing highlighted in blue.
- Blue boxes show narrative questions – and remember that the assignment is to write a narrative paragraph.

"Another Laborer Departed!" *Signal of Liberty* (Ann Arbor, Michigan), 1 January 1848, p. 2, col. 1; digital images, Ann Arbor District Library, *The Signal of Liberty Newspaper* (<http://signalofliberty.aadl.org/> : accessed 29 May 2013).

Another Laborer Departed!

It has become our painful duty to announce to our readers the **death of Rev. Guy Beckley, formerly associate Editor of this paper. He died at his residence in this village, on Sunday, the 26th instant, of inflammation of the bowels, aged 42 years.**

A brief notice of his life will be of interest to multitudes who have known and esteemed him.

Schooling?

He was born in Weathersfield, Vt., and enjoyed only ordinary advantages of education. At an early age, he became connected with the **Methodist Episcopal Church,** and **when only 19, he commenced his labors as a preacher of the Gospel.**

During nine years he officiated as a travelling preacher of the Methodist Church, and his excellent constitution was unremittingly taxed in the incessant labors incident to that calling. He then located, and shortly after entered the service of the **American Anti-Slavery Society,** as a lecturer in behalf of the downtrodden millions of our country. In this service, in which he continued for three years, he visited most of the New England States, and New York, and formed an acquaintance with nearly all the noble and self-devoted spirits who were then prominent in the anti-slavery work. In this cause, his whole soul became deeply interested, and he was a most successful champion of it till the day of his death.

What was trip like?

In 1840, he removed with his family from Vermont to Michigan, and settled in this village, as a **partner with his brother** in the mercantile and manufacturing business. But his labors as a lecturer in the anti-slavery cause did not cease

Identify brother

with his connection with other business. But the thousands who have heard him in all parts of the State are witnesses to his zeal and ability in this department of labor.

In 1841, the **Signal of Liberty** was commenced in Ann Arbor, in the midst of the pecuniary embarrassments and depressions of that period, and mainly by his efforts and energies, through difficulties and sacrifices which none can know but those who participated in them, it was sustained and regularly issued during the four years he was connected with it as an Editor. Whatever of good, to the Slave or to the community generally, has been accomplished by the Signal, is to be credited primarily to the energy and untiring perseverance of Mr. Beckley, without which it would not have been sustained.

Depressions?

For a few years past, he has been extensively known in this community, as one of our most public spirited and enterprising business men. For this sphere of action he was remarkably well fitted by an accuracy and sobriety of judgement which rarely allowed him to be mistaken in deciding upon matters of moment which he had seriously considered, and a knowledge of human character and motives, which seemed to be mainly intuitive, and very far surpassing the perceptions of the generality of men. During a free and unreserved intimacy of six years, we have often had occasion to admire these traits of character.

His attachment to his friends was strong and ardent, and was founded not on mere caprice, but on a clear appreciation of their intellectual and moral endowments.

It will be consoling to his numerous Christian friends to learn that he died as he had lived, in the full enjoyment of the faith of the Gospel, and met the approaches of death with that calmness and confidence which sincere piety, in a vigorous and well balanced mind, never fails to impart.

He was twice married, and has left a widow and eight children, (the eldest but fifteen) to lament the loss of a husband and father, cut off in the prime of his strength and manhood.

*Probate records?
Guardianship?*

The funeral services were attended on Tuesday last, by a very large congregation, at the Methodist Church. The discourse was pronounced by Rev. Mr. [S?]app, from the words of the Savior, "Be ye also read," &c. and the deep interest and sympathy manifested on the occasion showed how large a place one excellent and worthy man may occupy in the feelings and affection of a whole community.

*Where is he
buried?*

Genealogy summary

- Died 26 December 1847, age 42; **born ca. 1805 in Weathersfield, Vt.**
- Methodist Episcopal traveling preacher **beginning ca. 1824 to ca. 1833.**
- American Anti-Slavery Society lecturer ca. 1833 – death.
- Vermont to Michigan ca. 1840.
- Brother in mercantile-manufacturing business.
- 1841 *Signal of Liberty*, editor for four years.
- Married twice.
- Left eight children (**born 1832-1847**).
- Funeral 28 December 1847 (Tuesday last)

Identify wife and children