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Life without an end date

Florence called to me from her Mt. Lebanon gravestone, so I had to track her down, explains **MARK HOLAN**

Florence Westwater is not 150 years old, as suggested by the Mt. Lebanon Cemetery gravestone with her name and an open-ended inscription: 1867-19__.

I noticed her granite marker during a walk through the winding roads of the South Hills cemetery. The incomplete date silently tugged at my attention from the blur of four-digit birth and death years.

Nineteen what?

This is the kind of question that grabs the attention of genealogists.

The Federation of Genealogical Societies just concluded its 2017 national conference at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center. Sessions included "How Do You Know What You Know?" and "When Does Newfound Evidence Overturn a Proved Conclusion?"

And this: "Death Certificates: Keys to Breaking Through Brick Walls."

So, what about Florence?

Intrigued by the incomplete death date, I used basic genealogical search techniques to see what I could find about her life. Turns out she may not even be buried under the gravestone that bears her name and the names of her husband, William C., 1867-1929, and sister-in-law, Janet, 1858-1928.



Mark Holan

The gravestone of William C. and Florence Westwater in Mt. Lebanon Cemetery, only Florence isn't there.

Florence was living at 740 Sebring Ave. in Beechview when her husband died in 1929 at age 62, nine days after surgery, according to the publicly available death certificate. The funeral was held at their home, three miles from the Mt. Lebanon Cemetery, according to his obituary in the Post-Gazette.

The couple had married in April 1892, when they were 25. He was the son of a Pittsburgh engineer. She was born Flora May Trimble,

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