



CITY OF TARPON SPRINGS, FL

CITY MANAGER

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MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Commisioners

From: Mark LeCouris, City Manager *ML*

Date: August 4, 2022

Subject: Approval of Change to Cemetery Rules

The request is to amend the Cemetery Rules to allow for monument/marker for persons buried at the cemetery with some historical significance to the City. This amendment would allow the Tarpon Springs Historical Society to place a historical marker for Doctor Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb (see attached). The amended policy would allow this to be done along with other requests that meet the new criteria.

XIII. MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS, MARKERS AND BENCHES

- (1) Persons installing memorials/monuments must obtain permission from the City Clerk and Collector and must comply with any directions of the City Clerk and Collector. Such person(s) or firm(s) must submit a completed Monument/ Plot Improvement Request form(s) to the City Clerk's Office. In the event the requester is not the owner, then the owner(s) must contact the City Clerk's Office and give permission to the requestor prior to any installation approval.
- (2) **If the owner of the gravesite is deceased and his/her estate has not been probated** the City Clerk may provide authorization to the requester to install a memorial/monument upon providing proof, acceptable to the City Clerk, providing that the requester is either:
 - a. a surviving spouse,
 - b. a child of the decedent,
 - c. the decedent's mother or father, or
 - d. a brother or sister of the decedent.

The requester will also provide letters of no objection from all other living family members of the decedent as well as sign a hold harmless/indemnification agreement in favor of the City, holding the City Harmless and indemnifying the City for any claims made by the owner(s) of the gravesite for the installation of the memorial/monument as well as the requester's agreement to pay for the removal of the memorial/monument should the owner(s) require it to be removed. If requester is not the owner or has not received permission from the owner for the installation of the memorial/monument the memorial/monument will be limited to the following information: name, date of birth, date of death, birth place and city where the decedent is from. This process will only be considered for single monuments, or for gravesites that have previously approved burial authorization matching the request. If forms and or information are incomplete, the City Clerk or designee will return those form(s), which could delay installment of the memorial/monument. Please allow a minimum of 48 hours for form processing.

- (3) If the owner of the gravesite is deceased and his/her estate has not been probated or there are no known living family members and the gravesite contains no marker/monument or the marker/monument has been damaged and the City Manager or his/her designee has determined that the deceased person buried in the gravesite is a person of historical significance to the City, the City Clerk may provide authorization to install a memorial/monument upon the gravesite. The City Manager shall be provided with the following information by the requester:
 - a. Documentation reflecting the historical significance of the deceased person.
 - b. Requester is a 501(c)(3) organization that concentrates its efforts on historical matters, such as The Tarpon Springs Area Historical Society, Inc.
 - c. Requester provides documentation that confirms that there are no known living family members of the deceased person.

Upon the City Manager's determination that the deceased person buried in the gravesite is a person of historical significance and that there are no known living family members, the City Clerk shall authorize the installation of a marker/monument. The marker/monument shall be limited to the following information: name, date of birth, date of death, birth place and the city where the decedent is from. The authorization will only be considered for single monuments. If the information provided to the City Manager is incomplete, he/she will return the information. The processing of the request will be completed within seven (7) days. Should it not be processed within seven (7) days, the request will be deemed denied.

- (4) Grave(s), crypt(s), niche(s), lawn crypts, scattering garden, cremation space(s), and private mausoleum space(s) must be paid in full before installation of monument or marker.
- (5) Installation of a memorial and foundation must be done in a manner that is both workmanlike and safe. Driving or placement of any vehicle or piece of equipment on a grave, crypt, niche, lawn crypt, scattering garden, cremation space(s), and private mausoleum or memorial is prohibited unless the City Manager or designee determines that damage will not be caused thereby.
- (6) Repairing, cleaning, or installation of a memorial and related work done at the Cemetery must be coordinated by the City Manager or designee and must be started and completed on a regular business day between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The City Manager or designee, after reasonable notice from and in consultation with the installer, may schedule the specific time of the work.

The monument company would have to submit in writing to the City Manager or designee why there is a hardship for not being able to do the installation on regular workdays. If approved the installation will be inspected the following work day and if there is a problem with the work that was done that it will be corrected by the monument company at their expense. If they fail to comply with this policy they will not be granted a hardship in the future.

- (7) Scrupulous cleanup is required as part of the installation process. Turf removed and dirt excavated must be hauled away from the Cemetery by the installer unless the Cemetery Services Supervisor or designee directs otherwise.
- (8) All work of any kind shall cease while a funeral or interment or entombment is underway nearby. Trucks and workers shall withdraw from the location of the funeral service to a reasonable distance designated by the City Manager or designee.
- (9) The City Manager or designee may reject any plan or design for a memorial or improvements that are unsuitable to the plot on which it is to be placed.
- (10) All monuments shall be installed plumb and level, of proper height for flat markers,

and in line with surrounding monuments. Any monuments that are installed out of level or improperly rotated or of improper height will be required to be reinstalled at the installer's expense. In case of flat monuments, such monuments shall be flush with the ground. The City Manager or designee reserves the right to require certain procedures for monument installation. It is the responsibility of the installer to confirm with the Cemetery Manager any required procedures prior to installation and to follow such procedures as required.

- (11) Should any monument, mausoleum or tomb become unsightly, or a menace to safety, the City may, at the expense of the plot owner, repair, improve, or remove it.
- (12) If the Cemetery finds that the memorial and/or foundation have been installed incorrectly or in violation of these rules and regulations, the City will notify the installer by certified mail with a copy to the plot owner of the defect(s).

If such defect(s) is not corrected within fifteen work days of the mailing of the notice, the memorial will be removed by the City for cost incurred for removal plus \$1.00/day storage and handling for each full day of storage before the memorial is picked up by the installer or plot owner. All removal, storage, and handling fees must be paid before the memorial will be released.

If the memorial is not claimed within six months of its removal, it will be disposed of by the City to partially recover removal and storage expenses.

(13) Memorial Inscriptions

1. Except as further limited herein, inscriptions shall be limited to:
 - a. Legal names or socially accepted nicknames;
 - b. Significant personal dates;
 - c. Emblems of organization or institutions incorporated in or recognized by the Federal or Florida governments;
 - d. Suitable quotations from any nationally distributed book of quotations, poetry, or religious text;
 - e. Exceptions as approved in advance solely at the discretion of the City.

(14) Bronze Memorial Plaques, Vases and Inscriptions - Standard Specified at the discretion of the City. (for the crypts and niches).

(15) Foundations

1. Any bronze memorial placed on a conventional grave, crypt, or niche must be mounted on a foundation of concrete or granite. Mounting must be done in a workmanlike manner.
2. All memorials and coping will have a minimum of 6" thick concrete foundation. The

concrete will be at least the same width of length as the base.

3. If a memorial is mounted on a granite foundation the depth of the foundation, measured between its top and bottom surfaces, must be 6" or more inches thick, including under coping.
- (16) No work will be done unless the Cemetery Services Manager or designee approves.
- (17) All improvements or memorials must be placed within the boundaries of the approved parcel. Nothing is to be placed in the city right-of-way. If any improvements or memorials protrude into an adjoining parcel the improvement will be removed at the offending owner's expense.
- (18) Mausoleum Bench Policy – city approval is required prior to installation of any bench and or structure.

Installation of any bench in or around the mausoleum must meet the following guidelines:

- The bench must be an imperial rose granite color or equivalent. This is so it matches the crypt faceplates.
- The height of the bench must be approximately 1' 6" high, 1' 2.5" wide and 4' 2" long.
- Benches are only allowed on the border of the outer perimeter of the concrete walkway around the mausoleum.
- Benches that interfere with the entombments will be moved and returned to their original place.
- Benches will not be allowed to be permanently attached to the concrete unless so required by the city.

Please note benches placed in burial plots are permitted as long as they are not placed in rights-of-way, and as approved by the City Manager or designee. No benches are allowed on the lawn crypts.



TO: Ramona Pletcher, Tarpon Springs Historical Society Cemetery tour Co-Chair
FROM: Lori Samuelson
SUBJECT: Doctor Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb
DATE: 14 March 2022

RESEARCH REQUEST: Find living descendants of Dr. Fidelia Whitcomb formerly of Tarpon Springs, Florida.

BACKGROUND: Dr. Whitcomb was an early physician in Tarpon Springs that the Historical Society would like to feature in their upcoming cemetery tour in October 2022. Purportedly buried in Cycadia Cemetery, Dr. Whitcomb's grave does not have a tombstone. Per City of Tarpon Springs guidelines, only the individual to be interred or relatives of the deceased must approve a gravestone. For this reason, family of Fidelia Merrick Whitcomb needs to be located.

SUMMARY: Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb, born 9 July 1833 in Allegany, New York, was the daughter of Hiram and Esther Richardson Merrick. Fidelia married Walter Bruce Whitcomb in Nunda, Livingston, New York in November 1851. The couple had two children, Clara Eva born 17 August 1852 who later married Ernest C. Olney, Esquire and Silas Merrick, born 10 January 1859 who married Zettie Fernald. Fidelia was first a teacher and later, a homeopathic physician who graduated in 1876 from Boston University. Dr. Mary Jane Safford was Fidelia's preceptor for her last two years of school. Fidelia was known to have met Mary Jane by 1873 through their work with the Women's Centenary Association of the Universalist Church. With failing health, Fidelia came to Tarpon Springs in April 1883 to visit Mary Jane who had relocated there. Fidelia returned to New York but by 1885 was noted in an advertisement to be a manager with Mary Jane of the Tarpon Springs Hotel that catered to invalids. Fidelia died in Tarpon Springs on 1 April 1888 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Cycadia Cemetery.

Fidelia had one grandchild and two great grand-children. It is likely that her grand-children had no children; therefore, no direct heirs of Fidelia can be contacted for permission to place a stone on her grave.

NOTES:

A check of both Findagrave.com and Billionsgrove.com do not show a Fidelia Whitcomb memorial in Cycadia Cemetery.

Find A Grave shows only one Whitcomb burial; Zettie F Whitcomb Born 1866 Death 1943, Plot Section M, Memorial ID 98104010 created by thefifthofnov Gedmatch M365845. Email akoutsourais@gmail.com. No relationship to deceased provided.





1148 Admitted

Dwellings										Enumerators										
No. of dwelling house	Of what material built	Value	Name of every person whose usual place of abode was in the family on the 1st day of June, 1865	Sex	Age	Color	In what county or town of this State, or in what foreign country born	Profession, trade or occupation	Usual place of employment, if one of the city or town, where the family resides	Value		Total value of real estate owned	Value of personal property owned	Total value of real and personal property owned	Whether married	Whether single	Whether widowed	Whether orphaned	Whether employed	Whether unemployed
										Real estate	Personal property									
1			Fidelia J. Whitcomb	F	31	Br	Allegany													
2			Clarie Eva	F	12	Br	Nunda													
3			Silas W.	M	6	Br	Nunda													
4			Wm. G. Towsey	M	22	Br	Nunda	Teacher												
5			Charles W. Keneck	M	36	Br	Nunda	Jeweler												
6	102 Frame	1000	Wm. G. Towsey	M	22	Br	Nunda	Teacher												

1865 New York State Census, Nunda, Livingston, New York, Whitcomb Family, pp. 13-14 (handwritten), digital image; Ancestry.com: accessed 14 March 2022, citing Census of the state of New York, 1865, microfilm, New York State Archives, Albany, New York.

The census confirms that Fidelia J. Whitcomb was the wife of Walter B. Whitcomb and that the couple had two children, Clarie Eva, age 12 and Silas W., age 6. Also in the household were two boarders, Wm. G. Towsey, age 22, a teacher, and Charles W. Keneck, age 36, a jeweler.

There is conflict in Fidelia's birth location; the census states she was born in Allegany County, New York but the 1904 Whitcomb manuscript cited by Coachman (2009) gives Nunda, Livingston, New York as her place of birth. It is likely that the 1904 author assumed Fidelia was born in Nunda as the Merrick and Whitcomb families had ties to that area. Either Fidelia or her husband probably provided the New York State census enumerator with her county of birth, Allegany.

Ancestry.com's family trees were consulted in an attempt to find living descendants. Fidelia was found in 48 online family trees at the site. Only 6 trees provided documentation sources; 1 was private and could not be accessed.

The Thomas Family Tree, created by Pennyoutlaw, only traces Sila's line. Per census documents, Silas married Zettie and had one child, Eva Fidelia Whitcomb, born 18 December 1887 in Tarpon Springs. Eva married twice; first to Reginald Worthington (1888-1960) and the couple had two children, Louise W. (1915-?) and Elizabeth S. (1918-1995). Eva's second marriage to William C. Walton (1889-?) produced no children.

Neither child of Eva's has been researched on this tree.

The Thomas Family Tree has the most citations (7) to show proof of relationship.

The Rice Family Tree provides a spouse for Elizabeth Worthington, John C. Hays (1872-1933). There is no marriage license noted; Elizabeth would have been age 9 when she married and age 14 when her husband died. It is unlikely that this information is correct. Elizabeth's Social Security Application and Claims Index, 1936-2007, does show she had a name change to Hayes in 1979. It is probable she married a Mr. Hayes at that time. That appears to be her first marriage and at age 70, no children would have been born to the couple.

The Perry Family Tree by PerryC1054 provides C. Eva's husband's first name, Ernest. The couple married on 28 October 1874 in Chelsea, Massachusetts per Massachusetts Marriage Records, 1840-1915. No children are listed. It is possible Clara either died or divorced before 1893 when Ernest married second, Hattie Westbrook per the 1900 U.S. Federal Census. That couple had three children.



The Whitcombs in America Tree by Italianbarb provides Silas' wife's name as Zettie Stone Fernald born 4 November 1867 in Iowa but no proof is given.

The Jonathan Levine Family Tree by 1_jonathanlevine shows Silas and Zettie had two children. Besides, Eva, a daughter Cora F. was born in 1888. This information was based on the 1900 US Federal Census where the family was living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Cora F. was noted to be age 12. There is no Eva listed.

It is likely that the enumerator misheard Eva's name and recorded her as Cora or the family member who provided the information was thinking of Merrick's sister, Clara Eva. The census confirmed that Hattie had only 1 child living and had only birthed one child.

The tree gives the birth year for both Cora and Eva as 1888. No other source shows the possibility of the birth of twins.

CHILDREN OF CLARA "EVA":

Clara, preferring the name Eva, married Ernest C. Olney in 1874 in Chelsea, Massachusetts. The couple must have divorced prior to 1893 when he married a woman named Hattie. The 1900 US Federal Census shows him and his second wife living in Nunda, Livingston, New York with his mother-in-law, Stella Westbrook, 21 year old son-in-law Blanche Westbrook and his 3 year old daughter, Samantha E.

Clara was not found in the 1900 US Federal census. Each of the 22 pages in the District 0038 Nunda, Livingston, New York census was reviewed for a possible transcription error; none was found. There were no Olneys living in Tarpon Springs, Pinellas, Florida in 1900. There were 146 female Olney's enumerated in that census; most showing a spouse or father's name.

Clara's father died 10 May 1898 so she could not have been living in his household. She was not found living with her brother and his family in Philadelphia.

In the 1910 US Federal census, Clara was listed as Eva W. Olney, living in Nunda, Livingston, New York as a boarder in the home of Fred and Blanche Redmond. Her age matches her birth year. She reported her marital status as divorced.

The 1900 US Federal census was again searched to see if Eva was living with the Redmond family in 1900. She was not found.

It is likely that Eva and Ernest had no children.

CHILDREN OF SILAS "MERRICK":

1. Preferring the name, Merrick, the 1900 US Census shows he was married to Zettie for 12 years. The couple had only 1 child enumerated as follows in Pennsylvania:

1900 – Cora F. age 12

1910 – Eva F. age 21

1920 – Eva W. Worthington (married) age 29 with 2 children Louise W. age 5 & Elizabeth S. age 1

1930 – Eva Washington (divorced) age 36 with 2 children Louise age 15 and Elizabeth age 11



1940 – Eva Walton (married) age 49 with 2 children Louise age 25 and Elizabeth Warthington age 21

It is interesting to note that Zettie was the only family member that returned to live in Tarpon Springs. The 1940 US Federal census shows her as a widow living alone on High Street in a home she owned. She reported she was living in the same home in 1935. Next door to Zettie lived a likely relative, Leon Fernald, age 38, and his family, wife Endora, age 31 and daughter Peggy Ann, age 7. It is likely that Leon was Zettie's nephew

CHILDREN OF EVA FIDELIA WHITCOMB WORTHINGTON:

Eva married first Reginald Worthington in Shawnee, Pennsylvania about 1912 per the U.S. Newspapers.com Marriage Index. The couple divorced prior to the 1930 US Federal Census where Reginald is found remarried to a Helen B. and Eva is listed as divorced. Reginald died in February 1960 in Shawnee. Children with Eva were not mentioned in his obituary.

A marriage record to second husband William Corson Walton was not found. William had previously married a Ms. Haddon in Philadelphia in 1911; the 1920 US Federal census showed him as single so it is not known if he was a widow or divorced. He married second to Eva M. Knopf in Philadelphia in 1922. The 1930 US Federal census shows William as single; it is again not known if he was a widow or divorced. Interestingly, his US WWII Draft Registration Card listed a Howard Walton as the individual who will always know William's address. It is not known why he did not list his third wife, Eva Whitcomb Olney Walton who he likely married between 1930 and 1940. Howard was probably William's brother as William wrote he worked for a company called Walton Brothers.

Eva and her first husband, Reginald Worthington, had two daughters:

1. Louise Washington Worthington Tucker, born 7 July 1915 in Pennsylvania died 13 April 1954 in Abington, Montgomery, Pennsylvania. Her death certificate records her last name as Tucker but no husband is listed on the document. Married was circled. She is buried in Forrest Hills Cemetery, Souderton, Montgomery, Pennsylvania. There is no cemetery listed on Findagrave.com or Billiongraves.com with that name in Montgomery or Philadelphia counties. No obituary was found on Newspapers.com or GenealogyBank.com. A US City Directories, 1822-1995 listing showed Louise B living with Harry K Tucker at 42 Keesey Street in York, Pennsylvania in 1935. He was a Factory Representative. Five years later, she was living with her mother and step-father in Philadelphia. She was reported to be married but her surname was her maiden name, Warthington. It is likely that the couple separated but did not divorce as her death certificate provides a married name, Tucker, but no husband is given on the death certificate. It is likely the couple had no children.
2. Elizabeth Stuart Worthington was born 12 May 1918 in Philadelphia. She died on 21 August 1995 in Gap, Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Per Social Security records she first obtained her social security card in May 1942 under the name Elizabeth Stuart Worthington. In August 1974, she updated her name to read Elizabeth Worthington Hayes. On the 22 February 1979, she again updated her card to read Elizabeth W Hayes. Her last card, with no new date listed, read Elizabeth Stu Hays. No obituary was found in Newspapers.com or at GenealogyBank.com. Elizabeth likely married a Hay[e]s late in life and had no children.

RECOMMENDATIONS:



Since it is unlikely that a living direct descendant of Fidelia Jane Merrick Whitcomb can be found, it is recommended that the City of Tarpon Springs be contacted for clarification of their headstone policy.

Fidelia likely had siblings. The 1850 US Federal census does not provide relationships but based on ages, it appears that Fidelia was one of 6 children to Benjamin and Esther. Possible siblings are:

Adaline- then age 27

Susan – then age 23

Caroline – then age 22

William – then age 19

Yennet Ellithorp – then age 11 – possibly adopted, bound, neighbor or other relative

In 1850, Fidelia was age 17.

If the City of Tarpon Springs requires a more distant living relative, further research into Fidelia's siblings should be pursued.

Please refer to the Merrick Family Tree that I created as public on Ancestry.com for visuals of all documents found. The site can be accessed through the Tarpon Springs Public Library for free at the library or via Ancestry.com through subscription. (log in, go to Search on the ribbon, click Member Search, enter LoriSamuelson613 in the Name or Username, click Search, click lorisamuelson613, click Merrick Family Tree under Family History>Family Trees.