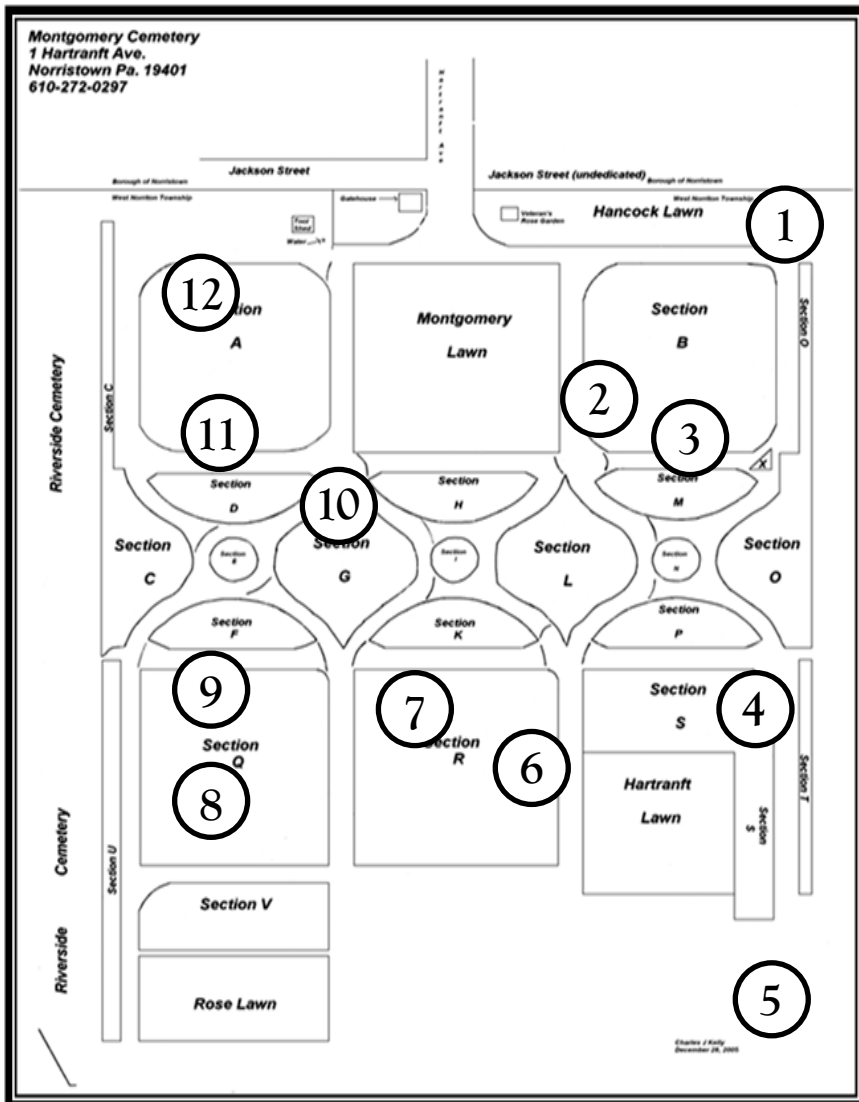


Historic Montgomery Cemetery





Historic Montgomery Cemetery is located at the end of Hartranft Avenue in West Norriton Township, PA. Open from dawn to dusk.

Address: 1 Hartranft Avenue, Norristown, PA 19401

The main entrance gate is locked to help prevent vandalism. Visitors are welcome to enter through the pedestrian gates. Please clean up after pets, which need to be leashed at all times. Be mindful of uneven terrain. Plots in need of repair may be hazardous. Please adhere to all posted guidelines and exercise caution if wandering off designated pathways.

1. General Winfield Scott Hancock (1824-1886)

Winfield Scott Hancock was born in Montgomery Square in Montgomery County, PA. He graduated from West Point in 1844, eighteenth in his class. After serving in the Mexican War, he was stationed in Florida, Utah, and California. He was promoted to Brigadier General when the Civil War began in 1861.

He commanded troops at many battles including Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, and most notably Gettysburg, where he was severely wounded by a bullet to the leg. The bullet was removed by Dr. Louis Read of Norristown, PA after several other doctors had failed. Hancock was able to return to service, seeing action at Petersburg. He ended the war a Major General.

Immediately after the war, Hancock oversaw the execution of John Wilkes Booth's co-conspirators. Hancock spent the Reconstruction period in various military posts. In 1880, he ran for President on the Democratic ticket, but lost to James Garfield. Interestingly, Montgomery County was largely Republican at the time, and Hancock did not win the presidential vote here in his home county. He returned to the military after the election, and died at Governor's Island, New York.

Winfield and his daughter, **Ada Elizabeth Hancock (1857-1875)** are buried in Hancock's mausoleum. Hancock's wife, Almira *Russell* Hancock and his son, Russel Hancock would later choose to be buried in Mrs. Hancock's family in St. Louis.

General Hancock's parents, **Benjamin Franklin Hancock (1800-1867)** and **Elizabeth Hoxworth Hancock (1802-1879)** are buried in Section P in Historic Montgomery Cemetery along with General Hancock's twin brother, **Hilary Hancock (1824-1908)**. John Hancock (1831-1912), General Hancock's younger brother is buried at Arlington Cemetery.

There are actually three Winfield Scott Hancocks buried at Historic Montgomery Cemetery. Besides the General, his nephew—John Hancock's son (1861-1918)—and his grandson—Russel Hancock's son (1880-1880) had the same name.



2. Joseph Fornance (1804–1852)

Joseph Fornance was a Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Pennsylvania. Born in Lower Merion Township, he studied law, was admitted to the bar in 1832 and commenced practice in Norristown. He served as president of the council of the Borough of Norristown. He was a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from 1834 to 1843. Fornance was elected as a Democrat to the Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh Congresses. He resumed the practicing law in Norristown after his political career until he passed away in 1852.

Fornance nominated future Civil War Major General and Democratic presidential candidate Winfield Scott Hancock for the United States Military Academy at West Point.

3. John Slingsluff (1838-1899)

Slingsluff was born in Norristown and attended Rev. George Dering Wolf's Elmwood Institute. He apprenticed as a civil engineer at the age of 16, but eventually came to work at the Bank of Montgomery County where his father worked. He succeeded his father as president of the bank in 1875. He was the superintendent of both the Norristown Water Company, and the Gas Company. He was also treasurer of the Montgomery Cemetery Company. He sat on the board of directors for most on Montgomery County's railroads and Norristown's insurance companies. Slingsluff was also president of the Montgomery Hose and Steam Fire Engine Company. He was a private in Company E of the 34th Regiment Emergency Militia.

John Slingsluff lost his life in the Exeter train wreck. On the evening of May 12, 1899, an express train full of Civil War veterans and citizens from the Norristown and Philadelphia areas was returning from Harrisburg where the train's occupants had attended the dedication of an equestrian statue to General John F. Hartranft. So many people had attended the events that the Reading Railroad decided to add a second train to the express. At Exeter, six miles east of Reading, the express stopped for orders. The second train, initially 20 minutes behind the first, caught up to the express at Exeter smashing into it causing it to smash into three cars of the first train. The results were catastrophic and the story became one of the most widely published events in the local and national news.

A total of thirty persons were killed and another fifty were reported injured. A special train of doctors and nurses was sent to the wreck site. The injured were transported to Reading and to Norristown hospitals for medical care. The dead were returned to their hometowns for funerals.

Ten of the victims of the Exeter train wreck were buried here in Historic Montgomery Cemetery.

4. James Hooven (1808-1894)

James Hooven was born on the 30th of March, 1808, in Chester County, and when a youth moved with his parents to Upper Merion Township. At the age of fourteen he began working at a country store located at King of Prussia and in 1830 embarked in business with a partner. He moved to Norristown two years later and partnered with Dr. George W. Thomas as merchants.

Hooven continued to expand his financial interests, and over the next decades would go on to operate a lime-burning plant, a rolling-mill, and a blast furnace. In 1864 he was elected president of the First National Bank of Norristown. He was also the first president of the Stony Creek Railroad.

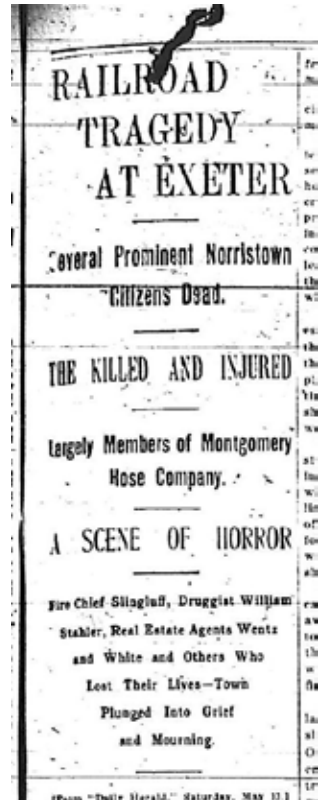
Mr. Hooven was, in 1833, married to Miss Emeline Henry, of Evansburg, Pa. He married a second time, in 1874, to Helen Cushman, of Norristown.

He was among the earliest advocates of the doctrine of abolition. Hooven was originally a Whig in his political predilections and subsequently became a Republican and served as a delegate to the National Republican Convention in 1860, aided by his vote in the nomination of Abraham Lincoln for the Presidency.

Exeter Train Wreck

10 of those killed in the Exeter Train Wreck are buried in Historic Montgomery Cemetery.

- William Camm (H 45)
- Isaac E. Filman (A 24)
 - Norman Hughes
- William D. Jenkins (K 14)
 - William H. Lewis
- George Schall (B 218)
- John Slingluff (B 214-234)
 - Franklin Sower (H 2)
 - William Stahler (L 27)
 - Charles H. White (V 57)



5. John Hartranft (1832-1899)

The home Hartranft was born in is still standing in New Hanover Township, Montgomery County, PA. John Frederick Hartranft attended Tremont Seminary and Marshall College, before heading to Union College in Schenectady, New York for a degree in civil engineering. In 1857, he was elected colonel of the Norris Rifles, a local militia unit. Hartranft's war got off to an exciting start when he won the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions at the Battle of Bull Run. He returned to Montgomery County to form the 51st Pennsylvania Volunteers, which served with particular distinction at the Battle of Antietam. His commanding officer commended him for bravery at Antietam, and he was promoted to Brigadier General. Hartranft also fought at Vicksburg, Spotsylvania, and Petersburg.



After the war, General Hartranft was commander of the prison that held the Lincoln assassination conspirators. He was praised for how he handled the conspirators, especially Mary Surratt. In 1873 he was elected governor. During his two terms he reorganized the Pennsylvania National Guard, passed new banking regulation, and used the militia and regular army to put down railroad strikes and the Molly Maguires. He was commander of the Pennsylvania National Guard until his death in 1889.

When Hartranft died, he was so beloved by his men, that the PA National Guard raised the money for this obelisk. Over 10,000 people were here for its unveiling. Later in his life, Hartranft

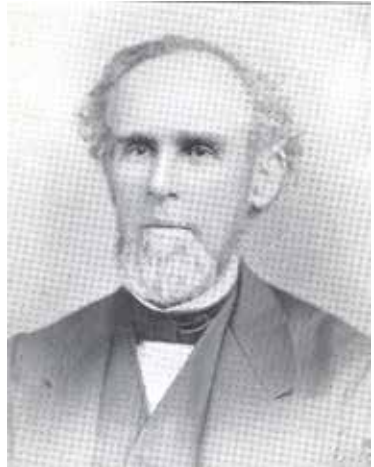
lived in a house on Main Street. His widow would later live in the big white house at the end of Hancock Road in West Norriton.

6. James Grier Ralston (1815-1880)

James Grier Ralston was born in Nantmeal Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania on December 28, 1815. He graduated from Washington College in Pennsylvania in 1838, attended Princeton Theological Seminary from 1839 to 1840; was principal of Oxford Female Seminary in Chester Country, Pennsylvania from 1841 to 1845; was ordained by the presbytery of New Castle on December 17, 1845. In 1845, Ralston founded the Oakland Female Institute, dedicated to liberal education for women. The school attracted students from around the world, educating over 3000 women before it closed in 1881, just after Ralston's death.

He organized the Western North Carolina Land Company in 1874, with other Philadelphia entrepreneurs for the purpose of land speculation. He also wrote a Historical Sketch of the First Presbyterian Church of Norristown, Pennsylvania (1876). He was a student of natural history and mineralogy and the discoverer of a fluoride of aluminum and calcium that was later named ralstonite after the discoverer. He died in Norristown, Pennsylvania on November 10, 1880.

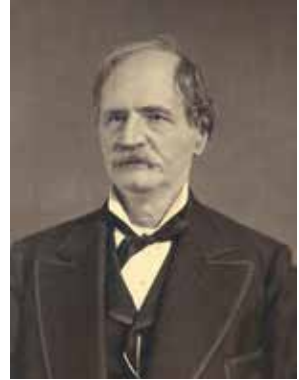
Ralston's personal mineral collection was sold to Prof. Thadeus Lowe and his wife Leontina. In 1917 the Lowe collection of 6,000 specimens (including the Ralston collection, which had retained its original labels) was purchased by George L. English on behalf of Wards Natural Science Establishment.



Established in 1847, Montgomery Cemetery was the first public, non-sectarian burial grounds in Montgomery County. Ideally located on sloped land along the Schuylkill River just outside Norristown, and designed in a formal Rural Landscape style, it provided a park-like setting for families to visit their relatives, view the outdoor symbolic sculpture on monuments, and walk the grounds.

7. Dr. William Corson (1806-1886) Dr. Louis W. Read (1828-1900)

The Corson family can be traced back to Alan Wright Corson in Whitemarsh Township at the end of the 18th century. Buried in the cemetery are many members of this illustrious family. William Corson, of Plymouth Township, belonged to a family distinguished for their hostility to slavery and their adherence to the teachings of the Society of Friends. In 1831, he graduated from the University of Pennsylvania where he studied medicine. During the Civil War, he was appointed to the board of examiners in Harrisburg along with Drs. Green (Easton, Pa.) and Worthington (West Chester, Pa.) to oversee the fitness of Surgeons and Assistant Surgeons going into the field. He was also assigned as the examining physician in the Norristown area for those men drafted for service in the army.



After the war, Dr. William Corson was examining surgeon under the act granting pensions to disabled soldiers and sailors. He served as a commissioner to superintend the construction of the hospital for the insane in Warren, Pa. He was one of the first to instruct women in medicine. Among his students were Drs. Ella Zook and Mary H. Stinson. Along with his brother Dr. Hiram Corson he helped establish the Montgomery County Medical Society. Dr. Corson remained single throughout his life. He died at his residence at 116 East Main Street in Norristown.



Louis Wernag Read was born in 1828 in Upper Merion to parents Thomas and Sarah (Corson) Read. He attended Tremount Seminary before going to medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. He got his first military experience in the Crimean War (1853-1856), in the Russian medical corps. He was a doctor in the Pennsylvania militia until June 1861, when he became a surgeon in the US Volunteers. In 1863, he accepted a position as the medical director of the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps, where he introduced more modern sanitary policies. In 1863, Dr. Read removed the bullet that had wounded Hancock at Gettysburg.

After the war, Read was involved in the establishment of the County Hospital for the Insane. Gov. Hartranft appointed Read to Surgeon General of PA from 1874-1899. He was also involved in many civic organizations including the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Sons of the Revolution, and the Union League. He remained active in the local community until his death of heart failure in 1900.

8. Bessie Pifer (1885-1895)

On August 14, 1895, little Bessie was killed in the evening on the Trenton Cutoff Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad crossing of Germantown Pike near Hickorytown in Plymouth Township. Just before the accident, a pleasure party which included the little girl boarded a car of the Norristown & Wissahickon Railway Company on Cherry Street. The trolley tracks along the Germantown Pike did not cross the Trenton Cutoff Railroad due to a legal dispute. The passengers were required to disembark, cross the railroad on foot where a car was usually waiting for them to carry them on to their destination. The pleasure party had disembarked following this custom when a freight train was heard coming. For reasons that are unclear, Bessie Pifer tried to beat the train across the tracks. Thomas Hovenden (an artist from Plymouth Meeting) jumped out to pull her back just as they train came through. The girl flew off the front of the train into the dazed crowd. Hovenden was struck on the shoulder, his head crushed, and was dragged about 10 yards before the train stopped. He died almost instantly. The 9 year-old girl was carried to the arms of her mother where she died a few minutes later. Hovenden was buried in Plymouth Meeting Friends Cemetery. Bessie's mother sued the Pennsylvania Railroad for negligence and was awarded \$1,400.

9. Franklin Derr (1815-1877)

Franklin Derr grew up in Hamburg in Berks County, but became a resident of Norristown in 1833. He trained as a marble mason and soon established himself in business. He founded the Steam Marble Works here in Norristown. Derr was the stonemason who supplied the stone for the County Courthouse in Norristown, and he built the Soldier's Monument in Norristown Public Square. Much of his work can be seen in the stones here at Montgomery Cemetery. He owned extensive marble quarries in Upper Merion Township as well. He supplied stone for Philadelphia's 30th Street Station Post Office. His quarries also furnished the stone for 19th Century additions to Girard College in Philadelphia. He was a trustee of the Montgomery Cemetery Company, a director of the Bank of Montgomery County and the Montgomery Savings, Loan, and Building Association.

In the 1850's he appeared on the ten dollar bill issued by Montgomery County Bank.



10. Samuel Zook (1822-1863)

Samuel K. Zook was born in Chester County, but moved to Valley Forge as a boy to live with his grandmother. He began a successful career in the new field of telegraphy in 1842, working on crews all over the country. He made several improvements to telegraph apparatus, and at one point held the record for fastest telegraph operator.

When the Civil War began, Zook was living in New York City and was already an officer in the New York militia. He then became colonel of the 57th New York Infantry which he led during the 7 Days Campaign. While he missed Antietam due to illness, Zook was present at Fredericksburg, where he served directly under Winfield Scott Hancock. Zook was severely wounded on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg. He died the following day, after being told that the Union had won the battle. He was posthumously promoted to Major General, making him the highest ranking soldier from Montgomery County killed in the Civil War.



William Mogee (1816-185)

William Mogee was born in 1816 in Ireland. He operated a Limestone Quarry in Plymouth Township.

Mogee recruited Italians from the central areas of Italy and they ended up living grouped together in a neighborhood just outside the borough line; that area came to be known as “Mogee town,” and is today part of Plymouth Township. Mogee town consisted of a settlement of houses, Mogee’s mansion, a small church, and twenty-two acres of lime quarries offered work to the men of Norristown and Plymouth Meeting.

With almost 6000 known burials, Montgomery Cemetery holds the remains of some of the most prominent citizens, veterans and reformers in the county and nation. From five Civil War generals to many captains of industry, it tells the story of the nation through the lives it represents.

11. GAR Post #11 Plot

Many war veterans are buried in Historic Montgomery Cemetery. They represent wars ranging from the War of 1812 to the Korean War. After the Civil War, veterans banded together to form fraternal organization known as the Grand Army of the Republic. The Norristown GAR Post No. 11 purchased a plot in the cemetery which now holds 32 of its members.

The General

Historic Montgomery Cemetery is the final resting place for five Civil War Generals

- Winfield Scott Hancock
- John Frederick Hartranft
- Matthew R. McClennan
- Adam Jacoby Slemmer
- Samuel K. Zook



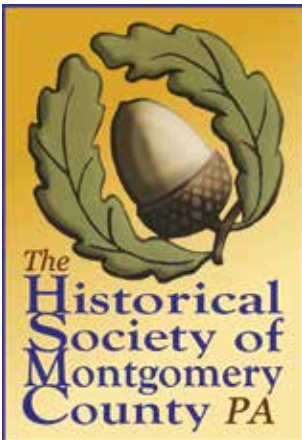
G.A.R. Zook Post

12. Othinel Spang (1821-1898)

Othinel was born in the Oley Valley in Berks County in 1821. He moved to Norristown as a young boy with his parents. As a teenager, he began learning the stone cutting trade. However, from an early age he had an interest in art and drawing. He abandoned stone cutting in 1854 and opened an art studio here in Norristown.

In 1855, he began teaching art in the public schools. When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted Company E of the 15th PA Cavalry. He fought at Antietam but then came down with typhoid fever. After recovering, he rejoined his regiment and served at Chickamauga and the battles around Chattanooga. After the war, he continued working with students in the schools and was an instructor for a number of years at Oakland Female Institute.

The cemetery is no longer an active burial ground, but is preserved as a historic site. The Historical Society of Montgomery County has owned and maintained Historic Montgomery Cemetery since 1997. Years of neglect, vandalism and wear had taken their toll. Through the efforts of community groups, Civil War groups and private citizens, the Historical Society of Montgomery County has been able to return the cemetery to some of its former beauty.



Historic Montgomery Cemetery is owned and maintained by
The Historical Society of Montgomery County

**Research Library - Archives
Books & Gifts - Galleries
Historic Montgomery Cemetery**

1654 DeKalb Street
Norristown, PA 19401

Monday and Thursday, 10am - 5pm
Tuesday and Wednesday, 1pm - 8pm
Saturday, 10am - 2pm

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