

East Falls Historical Society Looks at the Past and Future of Mount Vernon Cemetery

East Falls' distinguished neighbors include Laurel Hill Cemetery, founded in 1836 as an early exemplar of the rural cemetery movement. Only twenty years later, and nearby, came Mount Vernon Cemetery (MVC), also then seen as "in the country." In it rest remains of 33,000 persons, including members of the Barrymore and Drew theatrical family and other notables. The 18th century burial ground of the Second Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia was removed to MVC in 1867. Abandoned by its owners, MVC became a sadly blighted property. In 2021, the Philadelphia courts awarded MVC to a conservatorship, which now works tirelessly to bring it back from the dead.

A leading activist in the rehabilitation effort, Brandon Zimmerman, MA, is an historian of photography and medicine, as well as an exhibit designer. He has worked for Drexel University, the College of Physicians of Philadelphia's Mutter Museum, and the Academy of Natural Sciences. **Mr. Zimmerman's illustrated lecture, "Mount Vernon Cemetery: History and Resurrection," will occur on September 7, at 6:30 PM, via Zoom. The link will be emailed to EFHS members and posted on our website, eastfallshistoricalsociety.org, the day before the program. Note that for EFHS members, there will be a brief annual meeting at 6:15 PM.**



The gatehouse and a cleared section of Mount Vernon Cemetery (atlas.phila.gov)