To register for a tour: https://prospecthill.org/historic-tours/

A Legacy of Service: The 87th Infantry and the Ties Between Prospect Hill and Lebanon Cemetery

In the shadow of the Civil War, where the bonds of brotherhood were forged in the crucible of battle, the 87th Pennsylvania Infantry left an permanent mark on history. This regiment, composed of men from diverse backgrounds, would see its members' lives interwoven not just in war, but in the eternal rest of two significant cemeteries in York County, Pennsylvania: Prospect Hill Cemetery and Lebanon Cemetery.

The Men of the 87th Pennsylvania Infantry

Among the brave men who served in the 87th Infantry was Benjamin Franklin "Ben" Frick, born on June 9, 1841. A machinist by trade, Frick enlisted in York on August 24, 1861, and quickly rose to the rank of sergeant. His service was marked by courage and resilience, enduring the hardships of imprisonment at Belle Isle in Richmond, Virginia, after being captured at the Battle of Carter's Woods in June 1863. Following his exchange, Frick's return to service was nearly marred by desertion. However, his honesty and the leniency of his commanding officer allowed him to continue serving with distinction. His valor was further recognized when he was promoted to 1st lieutenant and transferred to Company H of the 39th U.S. Colored Troops. After the war, Frick returned to York, where he became a respected businessman and insurance agent. He was laid to rest in the hallowed grounds of Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Another member of the 87th Infantry, William Schriver, endured unimaginable suffering for his country. Born on February 25, 1836, Schriver first enlisted in the 16th Pennsylvania Infantry before joining the 87th. His service saw him wounded twice, narrowly escaping capture at Carter's Woods, only to be captured and imprisoned at the infamous Andersonville stockade. Despite the harrowing conditions, Schriver survived and returned to York County, where he lived out his days until his death in 1917. Like Frick, Schriver's final resting place is Prospect Hill Cemetery.

Captain Murray Samuel Cross, another prominent figure from the 87th, also found his eternal peace at Prospect Hill. Born on March 12, 1835, in Windsor Township, Cross was a leader both during and after the war. He organized Company C of the 87th and fought valiantly in several key battles, including Winchester and Cold Harbor. After the war, he became a well-known figure in York, running the Central Hotel and actively participating in veterans' organizations. His burial at Prospect Hill Cemetery solidifies his lasting legacy.

The Ties That Bind: Prospect Hill and Lebanon Cemetery

While these men of the 87th Infantry rest in the solemn beauty of Prospect Hill Cemetery, less than a mile away lies another burial ground with a story just as rich and profound. Lebanon Cemetery, once a segregated cemetery for Black citizens of York, is the final resting place of Greenberry S. Robinson, a man whose life and service bridged the racial divide of his time.

Robinson, though not enlisted as a soldier, served as a cook for Company H of the 39th Regiment U.S. Colored Troops under the command of Benjamin Frick. He was also present with Company A of the 87th Pennsylvania Volunteers, narrowly escaping capture at Carter's Woods during the Second Battle of Winchester. After the war, Robinson returned to his profession as a hairdresser and became a well-known caterer in York. He was also a member of the Jubilee Singers and the Social Friendship Lodge #42 of the Prince Hall Masons. Despite his service and contributions to the community, Robinson was buried in Lebanon Cemetery, reflecting the segregated society of the time.

A Shared History: The Tours of August 2024

The stories of Benjamin Frick and Greenberry Robinson, though rooted in different worlds, are intertwined in the history of York County. Their shared service during the Civil War, albeit in different capacities, and their final resting places in Prospect Hill and Lebanon Cemetery, respectively, speak to the complex legacy of race and service in America.

As part of **York's 275th Anniversary Celebration,** the public is invited to join a special tour on Wednesday, August 14th, and Friday, August 16th, 2024, at 2 pm. These tours will explore the deep connections between Prospect Hill and Lebanon Cemetery, highlighting the intertwined histories of those who served in the 87th Infantry. Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on the lives of men like Benjamin Frick and Greenberry Robinson, whose legacies continue to resonate today.

This tour is not just a walk through history but a journey through the shared experiences that bind us together, regardless of the color of our skin or the cemetery in which we are laid to rest. It is a reminder that the stories of our past are woven into the fabric of our present, and that in remembering these stories, we honor the sacrifices and contributions of all who came before us.

These tours are offered free of charge to the public and promise to be a poignant part of York's ongoing commemoration of its rich and diverse heritage.

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Researched and written by Samantha L. Dorm
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Photo courtesy of Prospect Hill Cemetery
https://prospecthill.org/notable-burials/benjamin-franklin-ben-frick/

Greenberry S. Robinson

Lebanon Cemetery (York, PA)
https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/208061255/greenberry-s-robinson

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