

Book will recall those buried in Riverview

Wilmington native is collecting stories

As emotions continue to boil over the upkeep and fate of Riverview Cemetery in Wilmington, an area psychologist is working on a project that could one day change the perception of the burial ground.



Lee Anderson of Chadds Ford, Pa., is collecting information about people buried there for a book.

"There's a universal need to remember those who've died," said Anderson, who helps people with grief through her practice. "The loved ones are the ones left behind to speak that name.

Death is "what connects us. I go out to the cemetery, I'm talking to strangers like they're my best friend."

Anderson was born and raised in Wilmington. She would accompany her father to visit family graves. When he died in 1998, he was buried there. His parents are there. Anderson's mother's parents are there. Aunts, uncles and cousins are buried there, too.

Like many others, she goes to the cemetery several times a month to tidy family graves.

In a meeting last fall to hash out problems over ownership and lost records, Anderson rose from her seat and tearfully proclaimed, "I'm writing a book."

"That was spontaneous," she said.



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Lee Anderson of Chadds Ford, Pa., visits her father's grave at Riverview Cemetery in Wilmington. During a meeting on the troubled cemetery last fall, Anderson came up with her idea for a book.

Delaware People

By Berlinda Bruce

She went home and put her thoughts on paper.

Her book took off. She calls it: "Stories from the Grave: Who's Who in Riverview Cemetery."

And now when she's there, she hands out information forms to the people she meets. On the form people can write short paragraphs about their deceased loved ones such as how they are remembered and their contributions and facts of interest about them.

And, it doesn't matter whether the person built floors, swept them or walked across them.

"A person doesn't have to be famous," she said. Anyone can be included, like a woman who was remembered for her knack for crossword puzzles and love of sewing.

To read earlier articles about Riverview Cemetery, go to:



www.delawareonline.com

Submissions gain a measure of immortality for the dead, and recorded history for the city and state.

Anderson requests a permission signature, which allows her to use the information in her book.

Sandra Dawson of Rehoboth Beach welcomed the chance to have her uncle, Kenneth Anderson (no relation), included. Anderson was an acrobat with Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. He died in 1996 at 75.

"I think that's a wonderful idea," Dawson said about the book. "I'm a fan of old cemeteries."

Bill McKinley of Claymont submitted information about 20 relatives - one was a descendant of a passenger on the

Kalmar Nyckel. Another played on Delaware's first Little League team, and the other had been a Wilmington fire chief.

Each entry is important because it shows "this person lived and made a contribution," Anderson said.

Wilmington City Councilman Charles Potter is holding a community meeting at 7 tonight at PS du Pont Elementary School, 701 W. 34th St., to continue discussion on the future of the cemetery. The unkempt state of the cemetery lead the state Attorney General's Office to file a consumer fraud lawsuit against the cemetery owners, who filed for bankruptcy last month.

Anderson will be there with a form you can fill out about deceased family and have them included in her book.

Reach Anderson at (610) 388-1920 or drleeanderson@aol.com.

►Berlinda Bruce's column appears Sunday, Wednesday and Friday. Call her at 324-2782 or send e-mail to bbruce@delawareonline.com.