

Huntington Township History



What is the origin of your Municipality's name?

Unknown – Original people to settle the area were English and Scotch/Irish and it has been suggested that that it may have been named after a place in the old country near and dear to their heart.

Did it ever have another name? What?

Not that I know of or could find.

When was it created?

Huntington Township was formed December 7, 1745, and the first taxes were levied. At this time the township was part of Lancaster County.

Sometime later, York County was formed and included all the area that would eventually become Adams County on January 22, 1800. It took 11 years of formation for 21 townships to come together as Adams County.

York Springs Borough had once been called Petersburg. Its founder Peter Flick changed its name to York Sulphur Springs. Later, dropped "Sulphur" from the name in 1898 because it was felt the name was too long.

The original name was changed due to confusion with the postal service. (Littlestown was also named Petersburg at that time.)

When the townships were formed York Springs was part of Huntington Township but incorporated as a separate borough on August 20, 1868, with borough officials being elected the following January.

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Some Interesting history of the area from the 18th, 19th, 20th Century. During the French and Indian War of approximately 1755 the territory now called Adams County was mostly spared the ravages and murders that the other bordering counties experienced. The raiding bands came from the North. The South Mountain seems to have been a barrier to a great extent, but a few roving bands made stealthy raids on the helpless settlements. On these occasions the terror-stricken people were often forced to flee the area for their lives. The Reverend Thomas Barton and others from the Huntington/ (York Springs) Petersburg area formed companies of men to guard local homes and settlements. The Last Indian raids occurred in 1765. In June of 1809 Ralph Lashell started a hack line from Gettysburg to York Sulphur Springs, leaving Gettysburg Monday and returning on Wednesday. As roads began to connect settlements, making travel between towns easier, roving bandits or highway men became a constant threat to hapless travelers. One of the most notorious to plague our area was a man known as "Lewis the Robber" or David Lewis. He was a roving bandit with one eye on the ladies and the other on the law. He became a legend throughout Pennsylvania with the "country folks" because like Robin Hood he often took from the rich and gave to the poor. Lewis was known to have friends in the York Sulphur Springs Area and to take refuge in a rock abode near the springs often when being hunted by the law. Once Lewis crossed paths with an Adams County posse that was hunting him. The posse invited him to join the search. When the party failed to locate the outlaw, they expressed concern and disbursed. A few days later the sheriff received a letter that stated, "You did not find Lewis the Robber, to be such a bad companion after all." Huntington Township/York Sulphur Springs area was not only involved in the French and Indian War, but due largely to the location between Carlisle, Harrisburg, Gettysburg, and York/Hanover they became involved also in the Civil War. Homes and Farms in the area were raided by Confederate troops for food, blankets, guns, and horses. These items were hidden in local churches, under porches, and horses were taken to the islands in the Susquehanna River and hidden in cellars, neighbors' farms, and the forests. Many men from Huntington Township fought in the civil war. Many slaves escaped to freedom via the Underground Railroad which was quite active in Huntington

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Township. Slaves came up from McCallister's Mill to Wierman's and then onto Dillsburg Hill. They were then spirited off to the Susquehanna River and onto freedom in Canada. A Female Seminary run by Susan Lundy (Sister of noted abolitionist Benjamin Lundy) was also an Underground Railroad Station as well as John and Mary Wierman's home which was a stopover point. Their main living room had a large trap door through which slaves could quickly escape. They could also escape through the large cellar windows. The "Hanover – Carlisle" or "Cross Keys Road" (Rt. 94) was a toll road. At one time there was a toll house at the lower end of York Springs opposite where Smiths grocery store now stands. The remains of the log structures were destroyed in the construction of the new Rt 15. The last tollkeepers were a Mr. and Mrs. Everhart and the toll road operated until the early 1920's. Money was raised by public contributions and the right-of-way again became public. During times of war our area has never flinched at sending young men off to protect our great democracy. World War I for instance saw thirty men from the York Springs Area serve. Eighteen served state side. Five of the twelve who did serve overseas did so on the front lines. There were twenty Privates, five non-commissioned Officers, two Second Lieutenants, one First Lieutenant, and one Lieutenant Colonel representing the Infantry, Quartermaster, Aviation, Engineers, Medical Corps and Navy. One man from the district was wounded.

What are the Oldest Buildings in the Area?

Rock Chapel Church - The first Methodist Episcopal Church in Adams County. In fact, it is now the oldest Methodist Episcopal Church west of the Susquehanna River. The first stone of the original church was laid in 1773. The original Congregation met on the farm of Peter Group before the church was completed. Rock Chapel was rebuilt in 1849 by Reverend Dyson at a cost of \$800. A cemetery was also established. Several famous Methodist circuit riders such as Francis Asbury, Freeborn Garretson, and Lorenzo Dow, were known to have preached at Rock Chapel. During the Civil War, woolen blankets from Heikes Mill also known as "Good Intent Mill" were hidden in the attic of the Church to protect them from confiscation by General Ewell's confederate troops encamped at Starrytown. (Near Heidlersburg).

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Every year an Annual Homecoming and Memorial Service is held at Rock Chapel in honor of those who labored to build the church so long ago.

German Baptist and Brethren Church and Cemetery - This Building was built in the early 1800's by German Baptist and then later used by German Brethren. A cemetery was also established on the property in the early 1800's. The building is no longer used by the present-day congregation that established a new church which is Grace Bible Chapel located behind the older building.

Upper Bermudian Lutheran Church - This church was originally built in 1782. An agreement between the Evangelical Lutheran and Evangelical Reformed congregations became known as the Church Articles and list the signatures of twenty men who settled in Huntington Township after 1772. The original church was a log building with several windows and a bell tower. It was located just below the stone wall of the present church and the cemetery below. In 1835, a new church of brick, 40 foot by 30 foot, was constructed at a cost of \$1350. The clay for the brick was dug from the nearby Guy Lobaugh farm and fired on the Bupp farm. In 1885, the decision was made to rebuild the old structure by extending the church to the north by 19 foot and to the east by 15 foot at a cost of \$1868.30. A sexton house was constructed on the church grounds across the road from the church in 1897. In the 1890's or early 1900's the church gained the nickname "Ground Oak" church. This name probably came from the numerous White Oak Trees located on the property and near the church building. In 1954 a vestibule was built onto the church. An education building was added in 1965 and enlarged in 1995. Earliest dated tombstones in the adjacent cemetery are from 1792 (although there are many unmarked stones). There have been 28 pastors associated with this church over its 200+ year history. Heike's Bridge (Covered Bridge) - Built in 1892. This is one of only a few covered bridges still standing in Adams County. This bridge is located in a lovely setting over the gently running Bermudian Creek the divides Huntington and Tyrone Townships. Although only being used for storage on a private farm this bridge is well maintained. Both the sides and portals are covered with horizontal clapboard siding, but the sides are open the length of the bridge approximately at mid-wall height, which exposes some of the low burr

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arch and multiple kingpost truss system. It rests on stone and mortar wing walls. The deck is covered with lengthwise planking. Stone House at Wierman's Mill - Built around 1772 from stone quarried from the property. The mill and meeting house were also built from the same stone. Millers Schoolhouse - This building is located 1 mile west of York Springs on the York Springs/Idaville Road on the Helm's property. It was later converted into a museum. Wierman's Mill - What is left of this mill is located at the southwest part of the township along the Bermudian Creek. When in operation the mill took advantage of the 18-foot fall of the creek. Indians were known to have their maize ground here. The original log mill was succeeded by a stone structure. This structure was so sturdy, it wore out two frame tops or upper floors. This mill was built with colonial doorways, the only one of its kind in the entire United States. It had three sets of grindstones in order to grind feed and flour simultaneously. The flour was then put through bolting cloth, a fine silken material that was expensive and had to be renewed frequently. The chest into which different flours fell had carved posts and the grain elevators that ran the entire length of the mill were enclosed in pine. The toll box was made of walnut, dovetailed, and worn smooth by many years of constant use. The overshot wheel was inside the mill, not outside as many of the later ones were.

Tell about some Interesting People who lived in your area. Dr. John B. Arnold - Came to Petersburg (York Springs), Adams County from Connecticut in 1790. He was the first practitioner in the county. He participated in the "laying out" of the town of Hampton in 1814 with the assistance of Daniel Deardorff and the town after Hampton Virginia. He died in 1822 at the age of 47. Reverend Thomas Barton - Born in Ireland in 1730, he was educated at the University of Dublin. At the age of 23 he came to America to serve as a lay reader for the Carlisle, Huntington Township, and York parishes. He was persuaded to go to England by the parishes to study for his Holy Order. In 1755 he was ordained a priest. That same year he returned to Philadelphia where he was a tutor at the University of Pennsylvania. He wrote to the people of Huntington Township who immediately sent wagons to haul the priest, his family, and their effect back to the rectory in Adams County. Reverend Barton officiated at six churches in Huntington, York, and Carlisle. In spite of difficult travel, his labors extended into Lancaster, York, Adams, Dauphin,

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and Cumberland counties. During the French and Indian Wars, in addition to his clerical duties, Father Barton took an active role in the defense of the frontier. He organized a company of rangers (mostly men from his parishes) to guard against raiding bands and organized attacks on the frontier settlements. In 1758 he was made chaplain for the troops under General Forbes. During the Revolution he was a loyalist and often spoke about the war in his sermons. In 1776 Father Barton resigned his charge at the Episcopal Church at Huntington (known as Christ Church) and became a priest at Saint James Church in Lancaster, PA. Reverend Barton died in New York on May 25, 1780, at the age of 50. Cyrus G. Beales - Began as a farmer but decided to teach school in the area. In 1854 he became a principal near York Springs and for eight years served as headmaster. For one of those years, he was principal of York springs High and Grade schools. He was an influential member of the Republican Party. He got appointed and served as U.S. Assistant assessor of Internal Revenue in the 16th PA District until 1866 when he was removed for not endorsing President Andrew Johnson's policies. He served many years as school director, justice of the peace, and also US Inspector of Cigars and Tobacco for Adams County. Mr. Beales was an organizer and charter member of the York Springs Building and Loan Association and acted as their president for 11 years. Jacob Fickes - He was one of the first settlers in the York Springs Area. The Sulphur Springs were discovered on his plantation in 1790 by a Mr. Long and Mr. Joseph Worley. Peter Flick - First citizen and founder of Petersburg (later called York Sulphur Springs then just York Springs). He ran a small liquor store in the back of his cabin. This was the first mercantile venture of the new village. His cabin measured 30 foot by 30 foot and was torn down in 1856. His liquor store was bought out by Isaac Sadler, a hatter. Albert C. Gardner - Born in 1835. He was appointed postmaster at York Sulphur Springs in 1885. As one of the most successful merchants to do business in York Springs, Mr. Gardner's sales annually amounted to about \$50,000.00. he operated a wholesale trade and supplied many local small town storekeepers in several adjoining towns. He worked at this business till he died at age 56.

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Arnold Gardner - Born in York Sulphur Springs in 1812 (Brother of Albert C. Gardner). He learned the tanner's trade from his father. In 1838, he and Charles Kettlewell rented from York Sulphur Springs Spa from the Robert Oliver heirs for 6 years, at the end of which he bought one-half interest in the springs from J. Boggs and became superintendent for the next 9 years. Under his management they became a success and a popular resort. He accommodated as many as 150 guests and some seasons had to find accommodation for some of his patrons in neighboring farmhouses. Reverend Leonard Marsden Gardner - He was born near Hunterstown, Adams County in 1831 but raised in Petersburg (York Springs) till age 17. He served a 3-year apprenticeship at a printing business in Gettysburg before attending Dickinson College in Carlisle for 2 years. In 1854 he entered the Baltimore Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. During the Civil War he was an ardent Union supporter. On the morning of July 4, 1863, before the results of the battle of Gettysburg were known, a messenger from General Smith, enroute to General Meade's headquarters with important dispatches, met Reverend Gardner in front of his father's house in York Springs and asked for directions around the Rebel Army. Reverend Gardner volunteered as a guide and successfully led the messenger around the Rebels by way of New Oxford, arriving at the battle ground at 6pm. During the following weeks he helped with the care of sick and wounded soldiers from both sides. Reverend and Mrs. Gardner kept a house in York Springs that was originally built in 1796 by Richard Pilkington. In 1902 Reverend Gardner completed an autobiography entitled "Sunset Memories" which was published in paperback form and included numerous details of early York Springs. Nicholas Wierman - Built the mill known as Wierman's Mill around 1800.

Judge Isaac E. Wierman – Born in 1802. He was raised on Wierman Homestead at the mill and attended the nearby Mill School. In 1831 he married Louis Arnold, daughter of Dr. John Arnold. As a lifelong democrat, Judge Wierman served the township in various offices. He served as Justice of the Peace for five years and served the county in many offices, a total of eleven years. He was a member of the Society of Friends, and his wife was a Presbyterian. She died in 1880 at the age of 72. Judge Wierman

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was appointed and served as administrator for many estates. He was also appointed acting guardian of many minors. The Wierman family as a whole were very large and profile. Their influence and history go back to the early days of our township and is quite interesting. They were descended of German ancestry. The first Wierman to come to our area was William Wierman. He was the father of Nicholas Wierman, the owner and builder of Wierman's Mill. Their homestead was built in 1772 and the house still stands today. The Wierman Family belonged to a Society of Friends, and many are buried in the Huntington Meeting House Cemetery. Many Wierman's and relations participated in spiriting runaway slaves to freedom on the Underground Railroad. At one time the Wierman homestead encompassed a large chunk of land in Huntington Township, with Nicholas Wierman owning 430 acres of land as well as the mill, house, and outbuildings. They built a one room school close to the mill which is no longer there today. In any research done on the area you will find the name Wierman come up over and over again. Abraham Meals – Born 1838. A farmer that began to work for himself at the age of nineteen on the homestead he would then come to own. Abraham Meals owned over 400 acres in Huntington Township. He was one of the most substantial and independent farmers in the county. How Many People Live In

Your Municipality Today?

As of the 1980 Census, our population was 1,557 living in Huntington Township. That number increased to a approximate population of 1,976 in 1990; 2,233 in 2000; and 2,339 in 2010. The population numbers have been increasing every year as more and more people move out of the urban areas that surround us. The recent implementation of the zoning and ordinances to preserve farmland may help to curb some of the effects of random urban sprawl.

What Schools are in Your Municipality?

Children in Huntington Township as well as many surrounding townships attend Bermudian Springs School District. The Bermudian Springs School Complex is located in Huntington Township along Rt. 94 south of Rt. 15. Huntington Township has a proactive history in regard to education in Adams Co., voting

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favorably for the public school system in the 1830's. Our township has hosted ten one-room schoolhouses of which only six still exist, most of which were converted into homes. One of these, the Miller's School House, has been made into a school museum which many Bermudian Elementary students tour each year as an annual field trip.

What Industries Are Located In Your Municipality?

Huntington Township is primarily an agricultural center for the county. Apples, peaches, and pears are the main produce grown here although dairy, beef, and poultry are also a main stay as well as corn, soybean, hay, straw, wheat, and barley. Many residents run small businesses out of their homes, such as hairstylist, auto repair, furniture refurnishing, produce stands, dog breeders/kennels, auto sales, tree farms, ect. Our township also hosts a bowling alley, roller rink, tanning, salon, cement lawn ornament company, furniture store, bend & breakfast, weld shops, financial services, law office, antique shop, restaurant, a food market, real estate agency, saw mills, modular home sales, flea market, greenhouse, photography studio, Wampler foods and Knouse foods corporation.

What Interesting Natural Features Are In Your Municipality? There are two creeks that flow through and along the boundary of Huntington Township. The Bermudian Creek rises in Cumberland County, near the boundary line with Adams County, and flows through Tyron, Huntington, and Latimore Townships into York County near Braggtown. The other creek is the Muddy Run. It forms a natural boundary with Reading Township on the lower end of Huntington Township. A vein of sulphur extends from Wierman's Mill to the York Sulphur Spring (Spa). The York Springs/ Huntington Township area is well known for and apply named after the many springs in the area. Dickey's Hill, also known as Cline's Hill, is the highest

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point in the township with an elevation of approximately 1080 feet, and Snyder's Hill comes in just below that with an elevation of approximately 1060 feet. The geologic elements of the York Springs area are hornblende rock, magnetic surface ore, weathered orthofelsite slate, copper rock, decomposed crypto-crystalline, othrofelsite, chlorite-schist, porphyry quartz, ore schist, greenish crystalline schist, micaceous asbestos, quartz, iron ore, sandy clay slate, in fact there is an old iron mine on the Idaville-York Springs Road. The magnetic ore from the region is of very high quality. Large deposits still exist in the area.

What Church Denominations Are In Your Area?

Open Arms Christian Fellowship: 540 Old Harrisburg Road, York Springs.

The present church was built in 1994. Previously the church and congregation had been meeting at the Gettysburg College Campus and then at Musselman's. At this time in 1992 the church was known as Gettysburg Christian Fellowship. This information was provided by Pastor and Mrs. Summers.

Chapel Hill Church of God: 4495 Oxford Road, York Springs.

The present church was built in 1931 on land provided by the Sam Keckler Family. The original congregation started meeting in homes back in 1897 and sometime later in the Rock Chapel School House located across the road from Rock Chapel Church. They were known as the York Springs Church of God until being incorporated in 1953, then the name was changed to Chapel Hill Church of God. This information was provided by Mrs. Ellen Blocker.

Assembly Of Pentecostal Church: 1450 Gun Club Road, York Springs. The current congregation bought and built the present church in 1978 on the grounds of a one-room schoolhouse that had partially collapsed. The schoolhouse named Wilts Swamp was built in the 1800's. The church congregation had rented space in many different locations around Adams County. This information was provided by Carman Ramos.

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Grace Bible Chapel:

5575 Oxford Road, York Springs. The present congregation meets in a church that was built in 1978, however a much older church and cemetery are found on the grounds and set out by the Oxford Road. This building dates back to the early 1800's. It was built by German Baptist and also used by German Brethern before being purchased by the present congregation. United Methodist Church:840 Trolley Road, York Springs. The present building was built in 1985. Before this the congregation was located on Main Street in York Springs and even further back at the Rock Chapel Church and dates back to the early 1800's. This information was provided by Jerry McCauslin. Idaville United Brethern Church:Route 34, Idaville, Pa. The original church was built in 1896 but by 1946 it was apparent this facility was inadequate. In 1947 the basement was excavated to provide larger Sunday School accommodations. They soon outgrow these facilities also. Ground adjacent to the church building was purchased at public sale on April 28, 1957 to provide off street parking. Larger facilities were still needed so on April 30, 1963 the old Idaville School House property along Route 34 was purchased. Ground was broken on September 12, 1965 for expansion of the church. In January 1992 a contract was sign with TAM Agri Corporation of Dillsburg, Pa to construct a multi-purpose building. On September 27, 1992, the congregation presented this building. This information was provided by www.cvn.net/idavilleub. Idaville United Methodist Church:3725 Carlisle Road, Idaville, Pa. According to the cornerstone set in the church in 1937, this was an Evangelical Church built in 1850-1896. The building is a very attractive and well-maintained red brick with stone block foundation, peaked roof, and a bell tower to the rear of the church. It also sports many beautiful stained-glass windows. A historic cemetery can be found beside and behind the building. The earliest gravestones date back to the inception of the church in the 1850's to present day. This information provided by on site investigation. Seventh Day Adventist Church:7499 Carlisle Pike, York Springs. Unfortunately they could not be contracted after numerous attempts to do so and no information could be found from other sources.

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No history of Huntington Township would be complete without mentioning Christ Church – the first Anglican Church (Church of England) to form west of Lancaster in 1745. It started as a mission church founded by Reverend Richard Locke. George Craig ministered to the territory from 1751-1753 then Reverend Thomas Barton came in 1755. Reverend William Thomas was assigned to the mission in 1760 and kept the first parish records to have survived. In 1763 the church was rebuilt of square logs. Reverend Daniel Batwell (a loyalist) came from England in 1774. He would not break his oath of loyalty to the King or alter his sermons making reference to the king. He could no longer officiate after the Declaration of Independents. At one time he was dunked in the Codorus Creek three times, and later arrested for treasonous plots in 1777. He eventually returned to England. In 1836 the parish moved to a new building in Petersburg (York Springs). The White Church was eventually torn down sometime in the mid 1800's. In 1880 the congregation merged with Prince of Peace Church of Gettysburg. The chapel is all that remains and was restored in the 1950's. A cemetery belonging to the church can still be found on White Church Road. The oldest readable stone is from 1764, however there are many unreadable stones and stones that are worn smooth. One interesting stone that can still be read belonged to Thomas Wood formerly of Cheshire, England and Philadelphia, Pa for the last 40 years of his life. He died July 24, 1813 while visiting the York Sulphur Springs at the age of 67 years old. A Presbyterian Church was built on the hill outside York Sulphur Springs along Old Route 15 when the land was donated for the church prior to 1830 by James McCosh. Additional land was acquired in 1838 from John Sadler. In 1888-1895 the congregation moved back to a brick building along Main Street in York Springs. With waning membership, the congregation dissolved in 1945. An old cemetery is located at the site of the original church. It was turned over to the York Sulphur Spa Historical Society. General Warren Stewart, the highest-ranking officer from Adams County to serve during the Civil War is buried in this cemetery. He was a Civil Engineer by trade before joining and later commanding Company K, First Regular Pa Reserve Volunteer Corp. His unit was engaged in fighting on the second day at Gettysburg, on and around Little

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Round Top. Later he served with the 112th Regiment, Pa Volunteers. He served the entire war, then returned home to resume his trade.

How was your area affected by the Civil War?

Long before the start of the Civil War, people from Huntington Township and York Springs area felt a need to help the poor frightened slaves that came to our area on their search for freedom. Some well-known residents of our township were active members of the underground railroad and engaged in the feeding, hiding, and transporting of run-a-ways along the route. Numerous men from our area went off to fight and some die in the Civil War, and many civilians offered their assistance. A group formed by the ladies of York Springs called "Ladies Union Relief Association of York Springs" helped the sick and wounded soldiers of both sides. June of 1863 was a frightening time in this area. Carlisle had been shelled by the Rebels and they were headed this way on their march south. The Carlisle Road was clogged with refugees, horses, cattle, sheep, and hogs. Long lines of wagons filled with grain and articles deemed of special value added to the fray. During the last week of June 1863, a general panic had gripped the whole area. Horses were being hidden in the woods or hurried off to the islands of the Susquehanna River. Women were urged to bake bread and other food to give or sell to the Rebels. It was believed the Rebels would treat them courteously if they did. At Good Intent Mills, 500 blankets were carted to the Rock Chapel Church to be hidden in the lot. They were never found. Wierman's Mill as at Good Intent Mills had to hide their stores of grain and flour from the raiding troops. All but a few sacks of flour were hidden under the floorboards of the Mill. These were not found and only the sacks not hidden were taken. Horses were also hidden but those were found. A promise note was given. (Never Paid!) The Rebel Troops took all the food and horses in the community they could find. Some families were completely impoverished and had to sell their farms. Many moved also. On July 28, 1863 the Rebels located around the Albert's home. On the first and second days they didn't take anything but on the third day they took a four-horse hitch wagon and loaded it with corn and drove away with it. The Albert's horses and some of their neighbor's horses were driven over to Snyder's Hill. Later that evening

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(Friday July 3, 1863), Mr. Albert and his neighbors went over and moved horses to the Lerew's Farm. They left the horses there till Monday (July 5, 1863), when they heard The Rebels had cleared out, because the battle had ended at Gettysburg. In fact, many soldiers had actually scattered the battle and wandered the hills around this area. The local people got scared and moved away for awhile. After the fighting ended in Gettysburg, some locals who were curious went to Gettysburg and were promptly pressed into service digging graves and cleaning up, others brought back bullets and guns along with other souvenirs.

Sources:

Books – "York Springs in Days Gone By" (Student research project)

"Covered Bridges Of Pennsylvania"

"History of Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, Bedford, Adams, and Franklin Counties Pa"

"Adams County in World War 1"

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Other information was obtained by on-site examination of properties, York Sulphur Spa Historical Society, and personal interviews.

Written and compiled by Kim Dulak of Huntington Township, August, 1999 to January, 2000.