

The Honorable George E. Hoffer

Cumberland Skirmish

For

The Cumberland County
Historical Society



June 28, 2013 Cumberland Golf Club





Located in the historic district of Carlisle, this unique shop carries a variety of local artists' work including paintings, fine jewelry, textiles, pottery, metalwork, wood carvings, clothing and food items. Historians will love their collection of reproduction photographs and books, including information on the Carlisle Indian School. The shop also offers Dickinson College items.

While visiting the shop, be sure to pick up maps, brochures, walking tours and other information in the <u>Cumberland Valley Visitors Center</u>.



Brig Gen. Fitzhugh Lee CSA article from Carlisle (PA) American

Our citizens will, no doubt, rejoice over the capture of this incarnate fiend, who, not more than three weeks ago, held our town at the mercy of his cannons. With scarcely a moment's warning, and while the women and children were flying through the streets to places of

safety, this "chivalrous scoundrel" – in the disguise of a rebel uniform – opened a furious bombardment for three long hours upon our defenseless town. Such an outrage was never perpetrated by any nation at war with another, and there exists no punishment too severe that could be visited upon such a villain. – We sincerely hope that the Government will not let him escape the just doom that will forever put an end to his inglorious career. If the Government at Washington should think it proper, we would suggest that they hand over his "ugly carcass" to the citizens of Carlisle, when an outraged people could have revenge.

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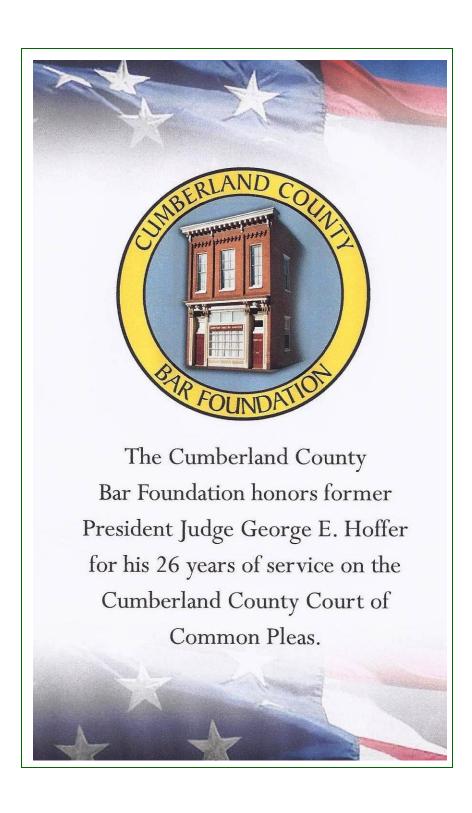
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The skirmish at Oyster Point was a small engagement that took place in late June 1863 in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania between Confederate forces under General Albert G.

Jenkins' command and Union militia from New York under General William F. Smith's command. After Confederates entered Mechanicsburg, General Jenkins set up artillery and sent Virginia cavalry in pursuit of Union militia who had been in the town. At Oyster Point the Confederates encountered two militia regiments from New York and Landis' Philadelphia Battery of Light Artillery. Later that day General Jenkins ordered his force to withdraw to the Rupp House in Mechanicsburg. A historical marker is located at the intersection of 31st Street and Market Streets in Camp Hill.



The Historic Peace Church and Gardens in Mechanicsburg. On June 28, 1863 the Historic Peace Church heard a roar of Rebel cannons just outside its doors. This location

served as a Confederate artillery position on June 28-29th as the cavalry, led by Albert Jenkins, probed the Harrisburg defenses.



The Carlisle Springs Monument marks the northernmost point the Confederates reached during the Gettysburg Campaign of the Civil War. Militia at Sterrett's Gap prevented the troops from advancing.



Mechanicsburg. The Burgess George Hummel House, 312 E. Main, is a two-story brick structure with blue shutters. There are no historical markers. This is where Jenkins ordered the low-

ering of the U.S. flag, which was last seen leaving town under a Rebel saddle.



On Saturday evening June 27, Lt.Gen. Richard S. Ewell, CSA sent his card, with a note, to several families in Carlisle, assuring them that the strictest discipline would be maintained in his command, and that no act of outrage or violence would be committed. He also offered them special protection to allay any fears ich they might have. His assurances were fully real-

which they might have. His assurances were fully realized, and while his command were here the citizens felt satisfied that they would be protected.

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Brig. Gen. William F. Baldy Smith's USA "Shell away!" was his answer to the surrender ultimatum sent to him by Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart CSA on the evening of July 1, 1863. It was not what the great Confederate cavalryman wanted to hear. As to whether the residents of Carlisle (the Pennsylvania

town Smith was defending) were pleased with Smith's response, the general could not be sure nor did he bother to inquire. The town would be defended, like it or not. Smith could be sure of one thing - Stuart was not going to like it and he didn't, not one bit. "Jeb" Stuart and his boys, the troopers of Brig. Gen. Wade Hampton's, Brig. Gen. Fitz Lee's, and Col. John R. Chambliss' brigades, had seen some hard riding since they left Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia on June 25. Determined to cause as much trouble behind Federal lines as he possibly could, Stuart led his men on a bone weary jaunt that saw him destroy canal boats, tear up several miles of railroad track, capture hundreds of prisoners, and pick up over 100 Federal supply wagons before clashing with Federal cavalry at Hanover, Pennsylvania, on June 30. Now, desperately trying to find Lee's army, Stuart had hoped to locate some portion of it at Carlisle, only to find "Baldy" Smith in a bad humor and with a chip on his shoulder.



Stuart concluded that all Smith needed was a little persuasion, so he forwarded the guns of Capt. James Breathed's 1st Stuart Horse Artillery. Dashing into position, Breathed unlimbered his guns and commenced a bombardment of the town. Capt.

Henry D. Landis' 1st Philadelphia Battery answered him defiantly and soon shells and solid shot were arcing over the houses and shops of Carlisle whose citizens scattered to shelter or pulled in their necks to escape the flying iron. Stuart watched and waited for Smith to come to his senses, but the Federal commander kept his artillery blasting away at Breathed. Frustrated that Smith could not be budged Stuart decided to strike elsewhere and ordered his men to burn the United States Cavalry barracks just outside of the town. Flames soon soared skyward from the buildings while additional fires erupted in Carlisle. Still, Smith refused to yield.



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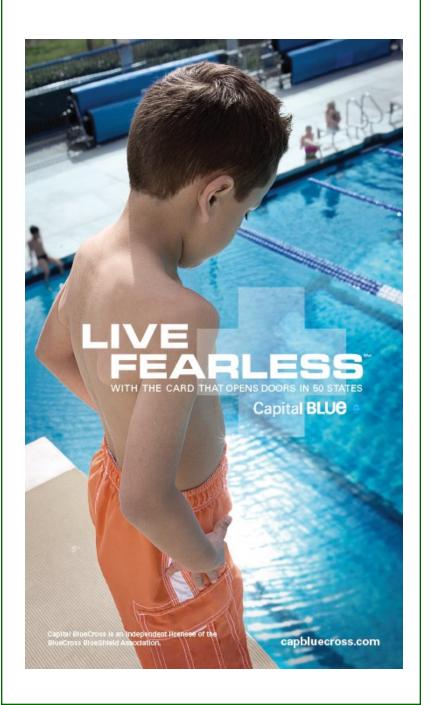


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William Luther Beetem, 19, the first Civil War cas-

William Luther Beetem, 19, the first Civil War casualty in Cumberland County, was killed under the following circumstances: About 3 o'clock on the morning of April 23, 1861, a mounted courier came galloping into Carlisle with news that a large body of men, presumably Rebels - was marching upon Hanover from the direction of Maryland. Carlisle was aroused by the ringing of bells, and the Carlisle Infantry, commanded by Capt. Robert McCartney, marched at double quick out the Baltimore turnpike to meet the supposed invaders. Before the company reached Mt. Holly, the news met them that the report was false, and after taking a rest the soldiers turned about and came back. William L. Beetem and Jacob Wunderlich out of curiosity had followed the company in a buggy, and when the march homeward began they proposed to some of the soldiers that they give them their muskets to carry back in their buggy. Several passed their guns over to the young men, but in the handling one was discharged, the ball passing through Beetem's body in the region of the heart, killing him almost instantly. An hour afterward his widowed mother was apprised of the sad occurrence by the arrival of his dead body at the door of her home in Carlisle. He is buried in Carlisle's Old Graveyard. lisle's Old Graveyard.



Shippensburg. The James Kelso home at 110 E. King St., was looted by Confederates when they learned a Union soldier lived there. Impassioned speeches were made from this porch for recruiting Company D of the 130th

PA. A marker at 20 W. King St. honors Brigadier General Samuel Sturgis, who was one of the heroes of Burnside Bridge at Sharpsburg/Antietam and lost the Battle of Brice's Crossroads to Nathan Bedford Forrest. The location is Sturgis's boyhood home.



Lemoyne. The earthworks of Camp Couch at Eighth and Ohio are now a small park. There is a state marker at one end and a new three-part monument at the other end with

maps of the fortifications. Be sure to take in the entire city block for information on Ft. Couch, General Couch, and Ft. Washington. This area marks the limit of the travel of Rebel Scouts.



The last week of June 1863 saw Brig. General Albert G.Jenkins, CSA and his boys riding all over Cumberland County, stealing horses and supplies, and spreading fear and terror throughout the populace. He sent scouts into

York County, and then followed that up on Saturday, June 27 with a major raid through Lisburn and vicinity.





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The Hon. George E. Hoffer

Cumberland Skirmish

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