



The Establishment of Lititz

learn how Lititz started

The Lititz area was traversed and inhabited many Centuries ago by Native Americans; namely, the Nanticokes. Indian relics have been unearthed near the head waters of the Lititz Springs, thus substantiating conclusion that this pristine wilderness of scenic serenity had had cultural development and social organization long before the arrival of the European settlers.

It was not until 1722 when Christian Bomberger became the first known European settler in the Lititz area. He lived in a dugout just one mile northwest of present day Lititz. Richard Carter of Warwickshire England, who was a prominent figure in the early life of the region named Warwick Township in 1729. The Township of Warwick, which surrounds Lititz, was one of the original townships laid out when Lancaster County was formed from part of Chester County on May 10, 1729 as the fourth County in Pennsylvania. For many years the Lititz Run was known as Carter's Run.

John George Klein settled in Warwick Township about 1740 and acquired 296 acres of land around "The Springs" known today as Lititz Springs Park, in 1741. He eventually acquired a total of 510 acres.

In December of 1742 Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf of Saxony, Germany, the leader and organizer of the modern day Moravian Church, stopped and preached at the tavern of Jacob Huber which was located north of Lititz along the Newport Road. The Count was searching for a tract of land for the establishment of a religious community similar to those in Bethlehem and Nazareth, Pennsylvania. The only exception would be that the new community would be family orientated. John George Klein, who was not in attendance at the tavern, followed Count Zinzendorf to Lancaster where Klein was won over by the Count's preaching and his cause.

In 1744 a log church was built on Klein's tract and was called the "St. James Church," and was used as a "union church" by Moravians, Lutherans and Mennonites. In 1746 a meeting was held in Klein's house to consider the building of a Gemeinhaus, which would be a home for the Moravian pastor, a school and weekday meetings, all in one. The St James Church continued to be used for Sunday services. In 1749 the Warwick Country Congregation was organized by Moravians who lived on neighboring farms, with no thought of starting a village.

In April of 1754, Bishop Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg returned from Europe, where, among other matters of business, he had consulted with Count Zinzendorf on his continued interest in establishing another settlement in Pennsylvania. Through an offer made to Bishop Spangenberg in 1753 and renewed in 1754 by John George Klein and his wife Anna, they would turn over their tract of land consisting of 491 acres. The acreage, which meandered along Carter's Run, included the St. James Church and the Warwick Gemeinhaus. The only compensation Klein asked for was an annuity of 70 pounds during his lifetime. Count Zinzendorf approved

this proposition and the legal transfer of the property was made on August 20, 1755. It was on this tract of land that a new settlement was established for the Moravian Brethren.

From June 10 to 16, 1756, a conference was held in the Pilgerhaus or “House of the Pilgrims”, a two-story stone house built by Klein, for use by the settlement. Bishop Spangenberg along with Moravian Brethren from Bethlehem, were in attendance. On June 12th of that conference week, a letter from Europe addressed to the Moravian Brethren, was received from Count Zinzendorf, in which he named the new settlement Lititz. “Litiz” was the German spelling until 1880 when the Postmaster General of the United States changed the spelling to “Lititz” for the English speaking people.

The name that was given was in commemoration of an old gothic castle located in northeastern Bohemia (today the Czech Republic) near the Silesian/Moravia border. The early Moravian Brethren, followers of the martyred John Hus, found refuge in this castle in 1456 and named it “Lidice nad Citadelou,” meaning “People upon the Castle.”

In 1759 the Lititz and Warwick congregations were united into one which was known as the Lititz Moravian Congregation. The administration and supervision of the community were entirely by the Moravian Congregation, and would continue in that capacity until 1855. Everything of village life, religious, social and economic, was under the supervision and control of the “Aufseher Collegium”, an administrative committee of the Moravian Congregation, which was granted a charter by an agent of the British Crown.

From the beginning to the present day the community of Lititz, nestled amidst the fertile farmland of Lancaster County, still has a historical and friendly appeal to its inhabitants and visitors. Lititz, with its incomparable beauty and its scenic serenity is certainly a place of community pride.

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