

## 4.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Early settlers of current day Cumberland County and Middlesex Township were of Scottish-Irish descent. The proprietary authorities decided to set aside land in a new county, Cumberland County, as an exclusive Scotts-Irish preserve. Cumberland County was created in 1750, carved from the western end of Lancaster County.

The geopolitical origins of Middlesex Township are as follows:

- 1730** - part of Pennsborough Township, Lancaster County;
- 1745** - part of West Pennsboro Township, Lancaster County;
- 1750** - part of Middleton Township, Cumberland County;
- 1810** - part of North Middleton Township; and
- 1859** - Middlesex Township

The Township was named after its oldest village, Middlesex. The Village of Middlesex is one of the oldest settlements in Cumberland County. The settlement pattern, at that time, was for the first arrivals to buy land at the power sites along the rivers and streams. In 1727 John Chambers, Sr. settled where the LeTort Spring flows into the Conodoguinet Creek, on a grant of land given by William Penn. Here, he established the first grist (flour) mill in the Cumberland Valley. This grist mill supplied flour to troops during the Indian War of 1756. By the Indian War of 1756, the Village of Middlesex consisted of several dwelling houses, the aforementioned grist mill, a saw mill and a distillery.

The mill at Middlesex played an important role in the American revolution. During revolutionary times, the mill was owned by Robert Callender and then Ephraim Blaine. Ephraim Blaine was Deputy Commissary General for the Middle District of the Continental (American) Army. During the Revolutionary War Colonel Blaine and Mr. Callender supplied flour and meal to the American Army.

Also during Revolutionary times, the first wrought iron cannon in America was made in Middlesex by William Denning. Mr. Denning was an artillery officer in the Army of the Revolution. He made two wrought iron cannons in Middlesex and a third near Mt. Holly Springs. During the 1800s, the Village of Carlisle Springs

became a popular resort destination. Carlisle Springs was famous for its mineral and sulphur springs, and featured a 200-room hotel. This hotel burned down around 1867 and Carlisle Springs never regained its popularity as a resort.

The Village of Hickorytown was another early settlement within Middlesex Township. This small village is situated on Trindle Road near its intersection with South Middlesex Road, along the Township's southern border with South Middleton Township.

From its initial settlement during colonial times through today, farming has been and continues to be an important aspect of the Township's character. However, the character of the Township changed dramatically with the construction of the Pennsylvania Turnpike in 1940. The Pennsylvania Turnpike was the nation's first super highway. The Pennsylvania Turnpike connected eastern Pennsylvania with western Pennsylvania cutting through the Allegheny Mountains. The eastern terminus of the Pennsylvania Turnpike was in Middlesex Township, thus setting the stage for the tourist and trucking industries in the area, and the need to provide services to the traveling public. The subsequent extension of the Turnpike eastward from Middlesex Township to Philadelphia and the construction of I-81, has resulted in increased demand to serve the traveling public and the transportation industry.

Middlesex Township is now famous for the so-called "Miracle Mile", a 1.2-mile stretch of U.S. Route 11 that connects the Pennsylvania Turnpike with I-81. This section of roadway is reportedly the second most heavily traveled segment of roadway in the country for trucks. Truck stops, restaurants, hotels/motels, gasoline service stations and similar commercial establishments dot the landscape adjacent to the Miracle Mile.

There are no structures or historic districts currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places within Middlesex Township. However several locally important historical resources are found within the Township. These resources are described briefly below:

Ephraim Blaine's grave site is located off Mill Road along the banks of the Conodoguinet Creek, just east of its confluence with the LeTort Spring Run.

Folklore tells of David Lewis, a local folk hero known as “Lewis the Robber,” who hid in a cave along the Conodoguinet Creek near the above mentioned grave site of Ephraim Blaine.

A point in Middlesex, just south of Sterretts Gap is recognized as the furthest northward advance of Lee’s Army during the Civil War. On Sunday, June 28, 1863, a detachment of about 20 Confederate Cavalry men traveled north from Carlisle. The Rebel detachment rode as far north as the Joseph Miller farm, situated below Sterrett’s Gap, before turning back to Carlisle. A plaque commemorating this event has been placed at the John Kutz farm (formerly Joseph Miller farm) on Spring Road.

About 20 structures have been inventoried and identified as being potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. These structures mainly include 19th Century residences and barns scattered throughout the Township. These potentially historic structures, which also include a stone double arch bridge on Hollowbrook Road and a 1940s garage in Carlisle Springs, are on file at the Cumberland County Historical Society.

The Township also recognizes several areas as historic districts, although no formal boundaries for these districts exist. The Township’s historic districts include the villages of Carlisle Springs, Donnelytown, Drytown, Hickorytown, Middlesex, and the Miracle Mile.

#### **4.1 TRENDS AND ISSUES**

##### **Trends**

- ✓ Historic considerations play an integral role in the enhancement of the natural, rural and suburban landscapes.
- ✓ The diversity of cultural and historic resources have greatly contributed to the development of the Township rural and village communities.
- ✓ County and local officials, and residents recognize the value of conservation, rehabilitation, restoration or adaptive reuse of historic features and styles to preserve the Township’s past.

##### **Issue**

- ✓ Create historic districts in the villages of Middlesex and Carlisle Springs.

#### **4.2 COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS**

- The majority of respondents agree to strongly agree with the following statement:
  - More historic areas should be preserved (76.1%)