



# CUMBERLAND VALLEY RAIL TRAIL



## The Big Spring Adamantine Guards

**The Big Spring Adamantine Guards:** Soldiers from Cumberland County's leading militia cavalry unit – the Big Spring Adamantine Guards – became Company H of the Union Army's 3d Penna. Cavalry and served in the Civil War from 1861 to 1864. Co. H saw action in some of the war's major engagements including the battles at Antietam, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. During that period approximately 130 local men served in Co. H.

The departure of Co. H (mostly amateur soldiers at this point) from the Newville CVRR station on August 8, 1861, was described in the company history as: *... ludicrous in the extreme: Some boasted a military hat or cap, ornamented with a feather or shield; others a coat or blouse belonging to a defunct military company, whilst the braver sort wore upon their boots immense spurs, that made the sidewalks rattle as they hurried to and fro.*

Newville Train Station (looking east) about 1900.  
Image credit: Cumberland County Historical Society

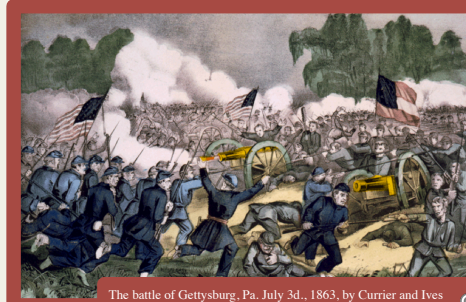
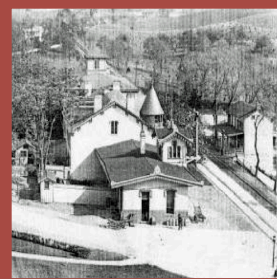
**Big Spring:** The Big Spring Adamantine Guards were named after the Big Spring Creek, a spring-fed stream that originates about three miles south of Newville at Springfield Rd. The creek runs under the old Cumberland Valley Railroad right-of-way at Big Spring Ave. as it winds its way north through Newville, eventually emptying into the Conodoguinet Creek about one mile north of the Laughlin Mill.

**Adamantine:** Adamantine comes from the Greek word *adamantinos*, meaning "hard or unyielding, like a diamond."



Captain William E. Miller, ranking officer of the Adamantine Guards Co. H during the Battle of Gettysburg, was awarded the Medal of Honor for his bravery and initiative on the final, decisive day of the battle, July 3, 1863. Captain Miller's award citation reads that he "Without orders, led a charge of his squadron upon the flank of the enemy, checked his [the enemy's] attack, and cut off and dispersed the rear of his column." After the war Capt. Miller worked in the hardware business in Carlisle until he was elected to the Pennsylvania State Senate in 1898. He died in 1919 and was buried in the Gettysburg National Cemetery.

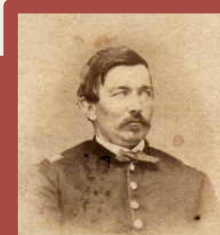
Image credit: Cumberland County Historical Society



The battle of Gettysburg, Pa. July 3d., 1863, by Currier and Ives

William Baughman served as a lieutenant in Co. H and a Captain in Co. E of the 3rd Penna. Cavalry. Baughman, born in 1829 in Newton Twp., was a farmer and stockman before the war. He helped recruit Co. H and served three years and six months before returning home to engage in a successful agricultural implement business in Shippensburg.

Image credit: Private collection



**The third day:** On the third day of fighting at Gettysburg, the Adamantine Guards played a critical role in hard, close combat as they cut through the Confederate left flank in East Cavalry Field. This battlefield is located about three miles east of downtown Gettysburg.

*For a few minutes the dense mass of men and horses writhe in the agony of a death struggle; the quick pistol shot, the harsh grating of the sabre falling upon human bones, the groans of the wounded, formed a scene beyond the power of description. Each moment men fell by the score and it was a work of difficulty to keep in the saddle and secure a sure object to shoot or cut at, so fast did the slaughter go on.*

Source: *Company H History; Third Penna. Cavalry*

