A Tour of Gettysburg's Visual Battle Damage

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Abstract
A little-known aspect of the Battle of Gettysburg is the story behind the Civil War battle damage still present in some of the town's buildings. During the first three days of July 1863, cannons fired over and into Gettysburg, and as a result some of the homes were inadvertently struck by the shells. As a battlefield guide, the author has driven by these structures everyday for the past few years, and a highlight of any tour is a stop in front of the Sheets house on Buford Avenue, where one can point up to an artillery shell embedded just to the left of its attic window. The loud Oehs and Aahs that emanate from visitors are more than ample evidence of the fascination experienced when coming face to face with battle damage caused more than 130 years earlier. It conjures up the frightening image of a family huddled in the corner of their cellar, while the cannon from both armies fire missiles of death back and forth across the town. For the Gettysburg civilians, this was the true horror of war, the constant fear that one of these shells might crash through their wall, explode in their home, and kill members of their family. It does not take a great knowledge of Civil War tactics to understand and appreciate that fear.

Recommended Citation

Visible battle damage is apparent on the walls of what used to be, at the time of the Battle of Gettysburg, the John Winebrenner House. The house is located at 404 Baltimore Street, and became involved in skirmishing between Confederate and Union troops on the south part of the Borough of Gettysburg. Tim is also a research assistant at the historical society, and his article in that year's Journal (Volume 2), "A Tour of Gettysburg's Visual Battle Damage," presents a good overview of the buildings we will feature over the next couple of weeks. We highly recommend that you pick up a copy at the Adams County Historical Society on Seminary Ridge in Schmucker Hall, or order a copy ($6.95) from the Adams County Historical Society. Click this link for their online giftshop. Gettysburg Battle was the Civil War's turning point, its bloodiest battle, and the inspiration for President Abraham Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address." Gettysburg National Military Park was established to protect the area of the battle and to interpret its landscape and events to the visitors. She is the only known civilian casualty of the Battle of Gettysburg. During a tour of the perfectly preserved home, visitors can see the exact spot where the bullet traveled through two wooden doors before hitting young Jennie Wade. The home also contains a small shop where guests can buy figurines, informative DVDs, flags, puzzles, books, and other memorabilia. Next read: water parks in PA. The Story of Gettysburg and the American Civil War. The Battle of Gettysburg was an Accident. The Town Heroes. The greater good will always win. How to experience a Gettysburg Battlefield tour. Bonus Gettysburg Video: A loss of life that is so difficult to comprehend. The ripple effect of damage this does to communities for generations to come is incredible. How much of that is still felt now, centuries later? The Town Heroes. How to experience a Gettysburg Battlefield tour. The Gettysburg Battlefield is 5 miles long and 5 miles wide and holds 1700 monuments. The monuments tell the stories from the different regiments that were represented in the battle from both sides. We'll dive more into the Gettysburg Battlefield tour and more things to do in Gettysburg in an upcoming post.