

THE LANDMARK

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Newsletter of the Friends of Old Annville
P.O. Box 99, Annville, PA 17003

Memories, Mortality & Meaning in Annville's 1918 Flu Pandemic

President's Message, by Michael Schroeder

COVID-19's relentless rampage through our county, country, and world offers yet another grim reminder that we're all intimately connected in ways we still only dimly understand. Global pandemics like the one we're currently enduring not only expose the underlying qualities of our political leadership, institutions, economy, and civic life — locally, statewide, and nationally — but also show that small, seemingly out-of-the-way places like Annville PA remain deeply enmeshed within a much bigger whole.

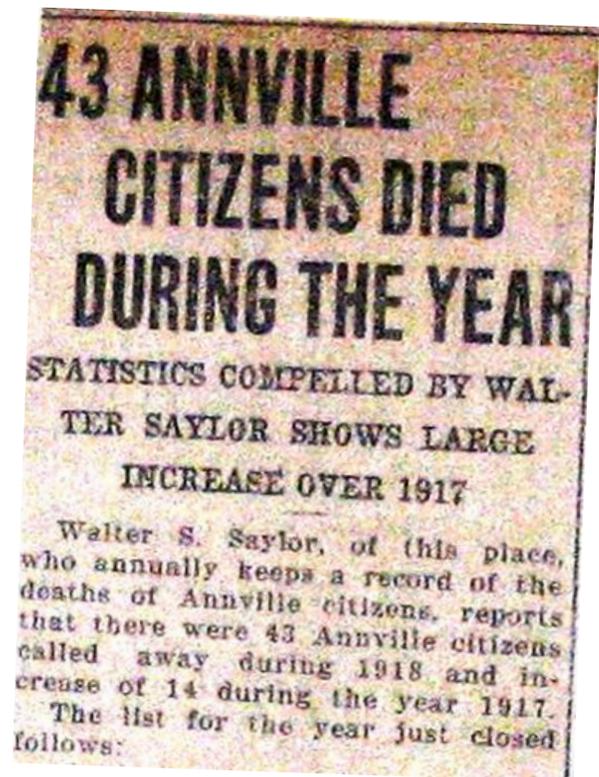
Curious about how Annville fared a century ago in the great influenza pandemic of 1918, I rummaged through FOOA's Digital Archives hoping to learn more about how local folks responded to and remembered the experience. Unfortunately, I found little more than an undated newspaper article from the *Lebanon Daily News* from around Jan. 1919 headlined "43 Annville Citizens Died During the Year."

Fortunately, the article conveys a boatload of valuable information. Here I'd like to milk that information for all it's worth.

By my reading it tells us three main things: (1) the names of the dead; (2) the dates of their deaths; and (3) that Annville's mortality rate in 1918 very closely matched the national trend. It also offers the salutary reminder that Annville was but part of a much bigger whole back in 1918, something even more true today.

"STATISTICS COMPELLED BY WALTER SAYLOR SHOWS LARGE INCREASE OVER 1917" reads the article's subhead. (Better copyediting would have yielded "COMPILED" and "SHOW," but I don't want to pick on local media right now.)

The article's first sentence offers an intriguing commentary on the state of Lebanon County's public health infrastructure in 1918. The data in the article came not from a *public* county health department or coroner's office but from a prominent *private* citizen, presumably an impeccably authoritative one: "Walter S. Saylor, of this place, who annually keeps a record of



the deaths of Annville citizens, reports that there were 43 Annville citizens called away during 1918 and increase of 14 during the year 1917."

The box on the next page reproduces Walter Saylor's list of the 43 Annville citizens who died in 1918 and the dates of their deaths.

The only other noteworthy reference to the 1918 flu pandemic found in FOOA's Digital Archives is from a manuscript documenting the recollections of Joan Kettering Terwilliger, who in 2013 recalled: "Dad was 8 years old in 1918 when the flu epidemic hit and took the life of his only brother, Charlie, who was about 5. Dad avoided the flu, apparently by moving into the backyard and living there a while." Joan Kettering's remembrance about her late Uncle Charlie is confirmed in Walter Saylor's list, which shows that Charles L. Kettering died on Nov. 29.

How did Annville’s 1918 mortality rate compare to the nation’s as a whole? The graphs below compare the township and nation’s monthly mortality rates per 100,000 persons, using the 1920 census figure of 4,801 persons in Annville Township.

The two graphs match very closely. At the height of the pandemic in October 1918, mortality in both the USA and Annville Township peaked at a little under 250 per 100,000 persons – though in Annville the numbers rose again in December, while the country as a whole saw a continuing decline.

Also mirroring the national pattern, in Annville more males died than females (23 males compared to 19 females, with the sex of one victim, William Matthews’ baby, d. Oct. 29, unknown).

Perhaps the main lesson to be drawn from this little excursion into Annville’s epidemiological history is as simple and banal as the headline in the 25 March 2020 issue of the Lebanon Area *Merchandiser*: “We’re all in this together.” In that light, we hope you’re staying safe.

If you or your family have any memories of the 1918 pandemic in Annville that you’d like to share, we’d be grateful to hear from you.

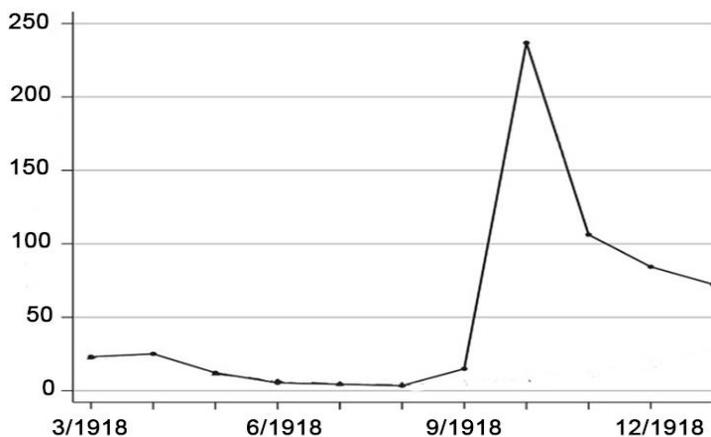
Walter Saylor’s List of Annville Deaths in 1918

Abraham M. Herr, Jan. 28
 John H. Miller, Feb. 11
 Miss Jessie Reed, Feb. 15
 Mrs. Samuel Ober, Mar. 6
 Samuel Deininger, Mar. 8
 Mrs. William Diamond, Mar. 9
 Mrs. John Hoen, Mar. 19
 Mrs. Charles Streicher, Apr. 5
 Mrs. Michael Sharp, Apr. 7
 Mrs. Jacob Walters, May 4
 Miss Lillie Heilman, June 9
 Mrs. David Leedom, July 12
 Mrs. Thomas Loser, July 29
 Mrs. William Heilman, Aug. 12
 Isaac Boyer, Aug. 14

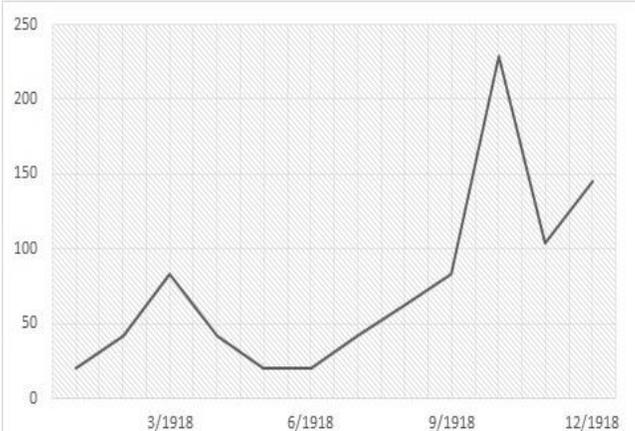
John Boehm, Aug. 22
 Mrs. John Reigert, Sept. 19
 Mrs. Adam Winters, Sept. 22
 Max Lehman, Sept. 28
 Joseph Connor, Sept. 29
 Miss Reba Lehman, Oct. 3
 Dr. I. K. Urich, Oct. 14
 John Sload, Oct. 6
 Eugene Smith, Oct. 16
 Joseph Horn, Oct. 17
 Miss Annie Brewer, Oct. 18
 Mrs. Emory Hartman, Oct. 19
 Pierce P. Galebach, Oct. 23
 Clarence W. Lutz, Oct. 25
 John Maulfair, Oct. 27

William Matthews' baby, Oct. 29
 Albert Miller, Nov. 4
 Hiram Sanders, Nov. 7
 Charles L. Shirk, Nov. 15
 Charles L. Kettering, Nov. 29
 Mrs. Charles Herr, Nov. 30
 Charles M. Fink, Dec. 5
 Raymond Waltz, Dec. 7
 Mrs. Adam Wood, Dec. 8
 Joseph Hemperly, Dec. 13
 Harold Daughterty, Dec. 14
 Samuel K. Imboden, Dec. 14
 Mrs. John Benson, Dec. 25

Deaths per 100,000 in the USA and Annville Township, 1918



The United States (March-Dec. 1918)¹

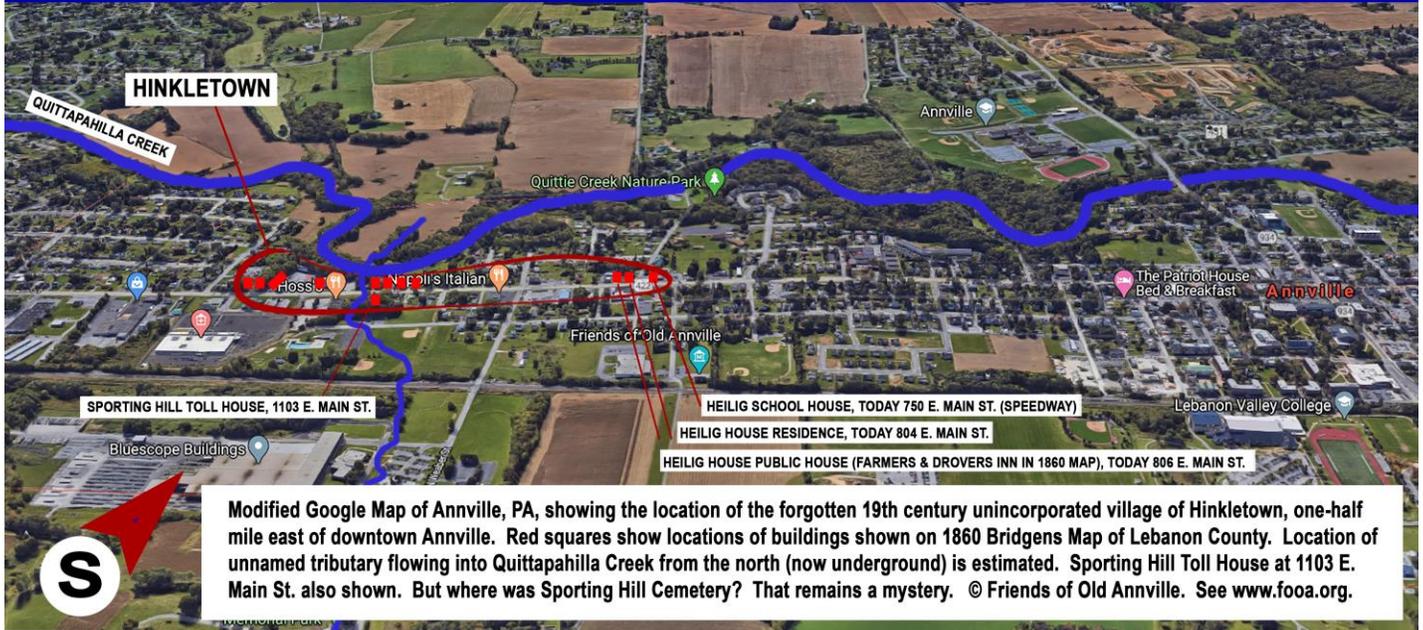


Annville Township (Jan.—Dec. 1918)

¹ Graph on mortality rates in the United States from March-Dec. 1918 adapted from Karen Clay, et al., “Pollution, Infectious Disease, and Mortality: Evidence from the 1918 Spanish Influenza Pandemic,” *The Journal of Economic History*, 78 (4) Dec. 2018. Graph for Annville Township calculated from Walter Saylor’s and 1920 census data.

“Hinkletown”? On seeing your own backyard with a fresh pair of eyes . . .

The mystery of Sporting Hill Cemetery in the forgotten 19th-century village of Hinkletown just east of Annville, PA



Modified Google Map of Annville, PA, showing the location of the forgotten 19th century unincorporated village of Hinkletown, one-half mile east of downtown Annville. Red squares show locations of buildings shown on 1860 Bridgens Map of Lebanon County. Location of unnamed tributary flowing into Quittapahilla Creek from the north (now underground) is estimated. Sporting Hill Toll House at 1103 E. Main St. also shown. But where was Sporting Hill Cemetery? That remains a mystery. © Friends of Old Annville. See www.fooa.org.

In early May we received the following email query with the subject line, “Sporting Hill Cemetery”:

“Hi, I am interested in learning more about the cemetery and surrounding area around Annville. I’m specifically looking for a map that has a road named Braunsberg pass on it. I learned recently that there was a cemetery named Sporting Hill (Hinkletown) located east of Annville along 422. Some graves still exist, but I do not know the location of the cemetery to check it out myself.”

So, we did a little digging, and in mid-May published our preliminary findings on Facebook, headlined with the graphic map image above and accompanied by ten other images. Three days later, the post had been viewed nearly 3,000 times. What follows is a recap of what we uncovered and posted, updated with some of what we learned from our readers’ comments.

Starting with the 1860 Bridgens Map of Lebanon County (housed on the FOOA website at www.fooa.org/annville-maps/) and consulting other sources in FOOA’s Digital Archives, we determined that:

- Starting in the first half of the 19th century, Hinkletown formed as a small, unincorporated village centered on the cluster of limestone houses in the area just west of today’s Bomberger’s Ace Hardware (south side of Main St.) and Hoss’s Restaurant (north side), including the large limestone barn that today is home to Escape Room Level 6 (1244



Detail of 1860 Bridgens Map overlaid with our best guess of Hinkletown’s location on Annville’s east end.

E. Main St). Hinkletown thus lay on the north side of a northward bend in Quittie Creek next to a spring-fed creek that today flows through an underground culvert. To the west, Hinkletown likely extended to the Heilig House Inn and Heilig School House, today the corner of North Spruce St. and Rt. 422. The Heilig House still stands as 806 East Main St. The Heilig School House was located where today's Speedway sits (750 East Main St.). In the 1860 map, the Heilig House is called the "Farmers & Drovers Inn".

- An 1892 clipping from the *Lebanon Daily News* describes the Heilig House as "one of the oldest as well as one of the best known in this county. It was licensed in 1820 and at one time was one of the most prominent hostelries between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, when traffic and passengers were still over land."
- In the 19th century, today's Rt. 422 was a toll road, and today's 1103 E. Main St. is the former the Sporting Hill Toll House (see photo at right).

- According to Paul D. Heilman, writing in the March/April 1992 issue of *The Landmark* and remembering back to when he was a small boy in the early 20th century, "Sporting Hill got its name from the toll gate by that name located on the small hill just east of Annville. What is now known as 1000-1200 East Main Street in Annville was once called 'The Berks-Dauphin County Turnpike'. This was a privately owned gravel and limestone road build between Reading and Harrisburg. The road was built and maintained by money collected from travelers by the collecting houses built along the road at various intervals. The toll-house named Sporting Hill was operated by 'Pappy Bowman'. The fare was five cents for a team (horse & wagon), six tickets for quarter, or a man on horseback paid two cents. . . .



Caption of the original reads, "Pappy Bowman at the Sporting Hill tollgate." Circa early 1900s.

Sporting Hill had two houses on the North side. The toll Gate House and a stone house where Jack Ensminger lives. On the South side (east to west) the eight houses where John Boyers, William Mell's, Elias Miller's, Jacob Heagy's, Clayton Detweiler's, William Heilman's and Simon Heilman's house in which I was born and raised."

- One can readily envision the former Sporting Hill as one travels east or west along Rt. 422. All the limestone houses in that little section have retaining walls along the roadway, their front doors elevated 3-5 feet above the road's existing grade. Just imagine a slight rise that met the tops of the existing retaining walls and, traveling east toward Cleona past Bomberger's Ace Hardware, a steeper descent down into what was once a shallow ravine with a small creek at its bottom. The hill was flattened, the ravine filled in, and the creek encased in an underground culvert big enough to accommodate high rains and floods.
- Reader Craig S. Hess commented on Facebook: "Sporting Hill Toll House is where I grew up! My mother remembers when the road was up even with yard. Notice Pappy Bowman is standing on what appears on other photos I've seen to be a wraparound porch."
- Reader Eric Morel-Ensminger commented: "The tunnel [culvert] was for drainage, . . . roughly in front of the erstwhile Marty's Music. . . . the tunnel was 6 feet square and crossed under the road. The concrete was, at a minimum, a foot thick. . . . When we were kids, we would play in the tunnel. There was a field generally sloping down from Church Hill Rd. which was broken up by the railroad. Where the Healthcare building is, a store called Nichols used to stand. Before Nichol's, there was a quarry in which we would also play, to our mothers' deep chagrin. There was also a shallow, wooded ravine that ran from the Ensminger property to back of the AC Swimming Pool. At one time, this was the bed of a road or a lane connecting Main St. (Philadelphia Pike) to Church Hill Road. . . . No idea where the cemetery might be. If Hessy and I never stumbled across it, it's gone or truly hidden."

Funny that after all this and more, we still don't know exactly where Sporting Hill Cemetery or Braunsberg Pass were located. Perhaps you do? Regardless, thanks to our curious questioner, FOOA's Digital Archives, and the generosity of members of our community, we can now see part of our own backyard with a fresh pair of eyes.

Don't miss this! From the Vaults of WITF-TV — Online Screening of *Our Town: Annville*, Wednesday, June 17 @ 7:00 p.m.

In lieu of Historic Old Annville Day this year, the FOOA Board of Directors has worked with the staff of WITF to undertake a virtual showing of the film *Our Town Annville* (2005). This classic film includes interviews with remarkable Annville personalities of that time. Copious thanks to Kreamer Funeral Home for being one of the primary sponsors of the event. Sponsors will help to defray the cost of the digitization of the original VCR tape and closed-captioning for the hearing impaired necessary to make the screening possible. Please take the time to watch on June 17th and post comments and remembrances in real-time on the WITF website and the FOOA Facebook page.

WITF's "Our Town" series is a video scrapbook of the people, places and happenings of towns across the WITF-TV viewing area, as seen through the eyes and camera lenses of the people who live there. WITF invited residents to use their video cameras to answer the question, "What is special about our community?" From Millersville and Annville to York and Gettysburg, WITF and local residents produced over 30 "Our Town" programs from 2000 to 2008. The films celebrate the many communities across our region and offer unique portrayals of their hearts and souls. By WITF patron (FOOA's) request, WITF is dusting off these much-loved films for a series of virtual screening events. We'll inaugurate the series with *Our Town Annville* on June 17. Episodes will then be made available on WITF Passport (available with WITF membership). Please support your local public television station and join us on Wednesday, June 17 at 7:00 p.m. for this unique online screening event. Visit <https://www.witf.org/> or <https://www.pbs.org/>.



Are you passionate about historic preservation? Do you love the Annville community and desire to pass on the best of Annville to future generations?

If you answered "yes" to either question, please consider joining the Board of Directors of the Friends of Old Annville. In the last year, through a change in FOOA by-laws, several at-large positions have been added to the board. FOOA's Board is very active in making good things happen in our community. The Friends of Old Annville is responsible for:

- Helping to preserve the Annville Historic District through funding and managing the Façade Grant Program by donating thousands of dollars annually to local property owners
- Maintaining the Annville Train Station as its headquarters and as a community center
- Maintaining and expanding our Digital Archives of Annville History
- Publishing *The Landmark* newsletter six times per year (that's the gem you hold in your hands!)
- Organizing and managing Historic Old Annville Day on the second Saturday in June, with some 150 vendors and an estimated 6,000 attendees each year
- Helping to steward Quittie Creek Nature Park in collaboration with Annville Township (now consisting of over 36 acres of public parkland, much of it purchased by FOOA and donated to the Township)

For more information, please contact FOOA Vice President Douglas L. Nyce at 717-480-1584 or douglasnyce@gmail.com.



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Please note that your MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DATE can be found in the line above your name and address on this issue of *The Landmark*. Please send your dues and address change to Rachel Noll, 1673 Louser Road, Annville, PA, 17003-8856. Questions? Call Rachel at (717) 867-2137.

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