



Fast Facts – Victorian Bellefonte Then and Now

Population: 6,395

Location: Centre County, in the geographic center of Pennsylvania

Distances: Four hours or fewer from New York City, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Just three miles from the intersection of I-80 and I-99 and within an eight hour drive of two-thirds of the U.S. population

Bed and breakfasts: 12

Big Spring water flow: 18 million gallons a day

First home built: 1785

First post office established: 1798

Predominant architectural styles: Georgian, Romanesque, Gothic Revival, Italian Revival, Queen Anne

Bellefonte Through the Years

- Farmers High School (now Penn State University) owes its founding and growth to the prominent attorneys and their successors who followed John Dunlop to Bellefonte in 1794.
- Hall of Famer John Montgomery Ward was born in Bellefonte in 1860, invented baseball's curve ball and organized Major League's first players' union.
- The Bush House hotel, built in 1868-69, was one of the first hotels in the country to have electric lights.
- Seven governors (five of Pennsylvania and two of other states) were born or lived in Bellefonte during the Victorian era and are honored with a monument at Talleyrand Park.
- Maj. William Frederick Reynolds, builder of the Reynolds Mansion, was reputedly Bellefonte's first millionaire (in the late 1800s, when a million dollars was an impressive sum).
- The voting machine was invented by Bellefonte resident Jacob H. Meyer.
- Anna Wagner Keichline, 1906 Bellefonte High School graduate and one of the country's first registered female architects, designed the K Brick, forerunner of today's concrete block.
- The Bellefonte Airmail Field, where Bellefonte Area High School now sits, was the first stop on the nation's inaugural westbound airmail flight December 18, 1918.

- Vaudeville's George Burns, Gracie Allen and the famed magician Houdini were among the many stars who performed at the Garman Opera House.
- The Mills Brothers traced their roots to Bellefonte where some family still reside. Their father, a town barber, sang with them for a number of years, and the famed quartet turned out more than 100 best-selling albums over a four-decade heyday of popularity.
- The raceway water flowing under the Gamble Mill still powers a turbine that pumps water to various sections of Bellefonte.
- Trout are teeming in Spring Creek, classified as Class A Wild Trout, water containing at least 40 kilograms of trout per 300-meter section.
- Daffodil Project organizers already have planted many of the 150,000 daffodils planned to grace the town in spring.