

Issue No. 3 | Fall 2025

# The Bell

A Publication of the Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association

## CULTURE

Gems in  
Our Own  
Backyard

## HISTORY

Facing  
Difficult  
Truths

## COMMUNITY

Local Poets  
Burnish  
*The Bell*

## From the Editor



James M. Puckett

This edition begins with thought-provoking and painful truths drawn from history about war. We are blessed with historians who have done the work to find the primary sources to write about the facts of history – the facts that motivate us to ensure that horrific events are not repeated. As humans, we need these reminders.

Thankfully, you will see that the mood is lightened by the writers who tell us about the Bellefonte Union Cemetery's history and updates and the wonderful opportunities available here through the Bellefonte Art Museum, the Historical Museum, and the Chamber Music Series. So many friends have told me that they are ashamed of not taking advantage of what is available in their own town. These reminders are welcome, too.

We are also fortunate to include for the first time the works of local poets in this edition. Two are winners of the

June 2025 Ekphrastic Poetry Contests and one is Teresa M. Stouffer, a retired special education teacher who taught at the Bellefonte Elementary School for 34 years. There, she met Dotty Houtz, the food service director of the school district, who inspired the "Farm to Table" poem and Wib McClasin, the elementary school custodian, who inspired her "After Dismissal" poem.

I hope that more poets, essayists, and storytellers will feel encouraged and inspired to be published here. We are also grateful to the photographers who shared their images and made this edition visually attractive and beautiful.

BHCA prints a small, finite number of each edition of *The Bell*. BHCA members receive a hard copy by mail. Two copies are mailed to each contributor – one for themselves and one to share their published work if they wish. A dozen or so copies are hand-delivered to places

such as the Library, Art Museum, Train Station, Borough Office, etc., and they disappear quickly! The Centre County Library keeps one copy in the magazine section to be read there. Soon, *The Bell* will be available on the BHCA's updated website.

Remember, if you would like to submit an article, poem, essay, lyric, image, painting, and/or comment about this edition for the Winter edition, please send it to your editor at [treez387@gmail.com](mailto:treez387@gmail.com) by October 17, 2025.

Peace,

## BHCA Board

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## Mission

*The Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association exists to improve the lives of all Bellefonte residents and their nearby neighbors through opportunities to participate in and enjoy programming that explores Bellefonte's rich history; promotes appreciation and preservation of our town's historic architecture; and enriches the sensibilities of visitors and residents through literary, performing, and visual arts.*

Front cover: photo by Carla Cipro and logo by Ashley Crosby  
Photo by James M. Puckett



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Carla Cipro

## President's Page

In the Summer issue of *The Bell*, I used this space to ruminate about two events that had not happened at the time of my writing. I wondered about the possible success of our Easter Parade and went on at length about the then upcoming *Civil War Weekend in Bellefonte*. Our Easter Parade was short, sweet, and covered by Channel 6. It raised some funds for our local food bank and cost just a few hundred dollars. We may have started a new Bellefonte tradition. At least, we are planning to hold it again next year.

The *Civil War Weekend in Bellefonte* was entirely different. It stretched over three days and cost thousands of dollars over

what we received from sponsorships and our grant from the Happy Valley Adventure Bureau. The Weekend had its own website and included lectures, book talks, exhibits in three venues, a play about Generals Grant and Sherman, an extensive sale of Civil War books, a concert, a train excursion, reenactments of famous speeches, Union Cemetery tours, demonstrations of period cooking, a special church service, and Civil War reenactors camping out on the Bellefonte Waterfront, demonstrating embalming, and firing muskets and cannons. It was enticing, exhausting, extensive, and expensive. Now, we face the question of whether to do it again next year. Our *Civil War*



General Grant portrayed by Derek Maxfield.  
Photo by Miranda Fedor

*Weekend in Bellefonte* could become the next Victorian Christmas, educating and entertaining locals while attracting out-of-towners to Bellefonte. The Weekend would have been impossible without the involvement of many volunteers, especially Ken Martin



Miranda Fedor



Miranda Fedor

of the American Philatelic Society and Mary Sorensen of the Centre County Society who provided invaluable help.

The decision about the future of the *Civil War Weekend in Bellefonte* rests in the hands of our community. If we can find sponsors willing to help us bear the cost of the event, BHCA will do the work to make it happen again, better than before. BHCA demonstrated what could be done to capitalize on Bellefonte's robust Civil War history, significant cultural resources, charming ambiance, and local expertise. One of my jobs over the next few months will be to solicit sponsorships for a second annual *Civil War Weekend in Bellefonte*. Local businesses and community members will make the decision about whether there will be one in 2026.

BHCA is a cultural organization with a broad mission. We aren't dedicated to preserving a special place or focusing on a particular art or celebrating one aspect of our history. Instead, BHCA strives to enrich



Wilson Okello giving Frederick Douglass' 1852 speech 'What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?' at the Civil War Weekend in Bellefonte, Photo by Miranda Fedor

the experience of living in or visiting Bellefonte through the performing, visual, and literary arts and by celebrating our local architecture and history. We operate as a cultural catalyst, precipitating events and activities already latent in the community. We sponsor talks at the Centre County Library, because people want to hear them. We offer concerts, because people love good music. We produce Art in the Open, because families enjoy painting with their children. Occasionally, we can save a building, because people

love our town's historic architecture.

My point is that BHCA's power to produce anything worthwhile is already present in the people who can enjoy and profit from what we do. We function like a lens concentrating miscellaneous rays of interest into bright spots of illumination. So, we are helpless without input from the community. We need ideas, volunteer labor, financial support, and encouragement — especially encouragement. All of us inhabit a world of eroding commitment to community, a place where the digital has displaced the face-to-face interaction that enriched earlier generations. Yet we beat on, boats against the current, doing our best to pull the best of the past into the present (*apologies to F. Scott Fitzgerald*). Feel free to take an oar.

*Joseph Grillo*

## Bellefonte Civil War Weekend Encampment Boosts Public Education

The Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association (BHCA) presented a very successful Civil War Weekend event on June 6th, 7th and 8th in partnership with the American Philatelic Society and other organizations. Public education was the main focus and the great payoff of its varied offerings. Bellefonte also benefitted from the many visitors that came to town, patronized local businesses, and formed ideas for future visits to our Victorian Crown Jewel in Central Pennsylvania. The weekend was a big win!

One highly visible event feature was the Civil War encampment on the Bellefonte Waterfront Associates' property along Spring Creek. At "Camp Songer," Civil War living historians and period demonstrators camped and educated the public about our Civil War and the resulting legacy of our ancestors of states united, but at horrific cost.

Attendees saw demonstrations of artillery and weapons, yes, but also had an opportunity to speak with the presenters and ask questions. In addition to things military, visitors learned about Civil War food through cooking demonstrations—with samples — and a display providing information and examples of army cooking equipment. The younger generation found out about period technology, like key-wind watches. (Where does the battery go?) People could view the sparse accom-



Gary Hoover

modations of a garrison camp and form some idea of the hardships of army life in the 1860's. There was also a display of Civil War money, north and south, and people were introduced to the origins of the paper "Greenbacks and Graybacks" and their relationship to "hard money" — silver and gold coins.

The reality of death, ever present during the Civil War, was made manifest by a visit to the embalmer station.

The very best of reenactors consider themselves living historians. Army uniform regulations have obviously changed many times since the Civil War, but the Civil War uniform worn by Union reenactors is the uniform of the United States. Please don't call it a "costume." They take their responsibilities to represent Civil War soldiers and civilians to the public very seriously. Many

reenactors spend years on research and spend a great deal of time and money to accumulate knowledge to present at historical reenactments, living histories, and memorial events. They endure heat and cold, bad weather, ticks, and generally poor living conditions while practicing their craft.

Yet, even with all that and more, there is a thrill in sharing what they know if they see even a few feeling inspired to study more American history, increase their love of country, develop an appreciation and respect for all our Veterans and, most importantly, pick up on the greatest lesson of the American Civil War: Not to do it again.

**By Gary V. Hoover**  
Captain  
Independent Battery C  
PA Vol. Light Artillery

## Reflections On The *Civil War Weekend In Bellefonte*

I can't quite get over the *Civil War Weekend in Bellefonte*. I thought up the notion of having it, wrote a grant proposal featuring it, recruited a planning committee to imagine it, and oversaw most of its implementation. It's "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." Now that it's over, the Weekend's essence reverberates in my mind, reminding me that all is not well in our world.

The Weekend had many facets: an encampment with tents and roaring cannons, a book sale for Civil War enthusiasts, book talks for those who hungered for the grisly details or profound insights springing from our national catastrophe, likeable music from the 19th century, and stirring speeches that set the table for the blood fest to come. Much of my attention was consumed by logistics: sign printing, the placement of porta potties and paying for dry firewood for reenactors. But the weekend had a spirit that I can't shake, a message that few want to hear.

Let's get metaphorical. Why did Cain slay Abel? Was it jealousy? If so, why did the Lord refuse Abel's sacrifice? How did trouble come into our world? Is our house of spirit built over a foundation of discord and enmity? As Rodney King so plaintively asked, "Can we all get along?"

The seeds of the Civil War were sown by the Founding Fathers. Could they have done otherwise? When you think



Ben Stovall, Connie Cole, and Cheri Banks - Photo by Joseph Griffin

about it, when has peace prevailed? The history of the world is a grand panorama of struggle, slaughter, and combat. Is it any different today?

Much of our Weekend dealt with the particulars of the struggle between North and South. But some of it touched on the origins of the tensions which turned citizens against one another. I learned what I could and began thinking about today and tomorrow. We are almost as polarized now as we were in 1860. I believe that discussing how we resolved our differences has merits. We should do what we can to understand how trouble happens.

At the end of our Weekend, the Very Reverend Ruth Ferguson offered a church service on the theme, *Yearning for Peace in a World of War*. It was sparsely attended but meaningful. The very end of the Weekend happened amongst the green grass and white stones of the Union Cemetery. Unfortunately, it was raining, but a few stalwarts turned out. I offered the remarks below about the significance of what we were doing. There were only six of us present as I hauled down the 1841 US flag from the Union Cemetery flagpole, but I think we were onto something. See if you agree.

### CLOSING CEREMONY REMARKS

We have spent three days remembering four terrible years that shaped our country. The specific political tensions that pushed our nation into conflict were resolved by terrible sacrifices of life and prosperity. But the deep roots of those tensions, the troublesome sentiments and ideologies that bred them 160 years ago, remain with us today. Truly, the conflicting notions of justice and propriety that sparked our Civil War are ancestors of today's influential but incompatible ideas. These ideas rile the face of that miraculous lake of tranquility we and our long-

dead ancestors imagined to be attainable.

We must ask if true enduring peace is but an illusion. And if we answer that question affirmatively, we must commit to continuing conflict. And in that case, the question is how to conduct our struggle. Will we fight our unending battle with words, or will we resort to force? Do we even have the power to choose?

More than half a million men, some of them sleeping here, should remind us that unless we learn to make do with artful

argument and persistent persuasion, then their sacrifice has taught us nothing.

The Book of Isaiah tells of a time when the righteous "shall beat their swords into plowshares." If they couldn't agree on anything else, the dead from the North and the South would surely have embraced that sweet notion.

Let us acknowledge their sacrifice by doing what we can to avoid their fate.

By Joseph Griffin



Carla Cipro

## An Outbreak of Incivility: Major Elliott's Stormy Post-War Homecoming to Bellefonte

In the wake of Bellefonte's recent Civil War Weekend, let us revisit an episode that occurred in the borough in the aftermath of the War itself. The incident—and the way it was reported at the time—offers a glimpse into the intense emotions that still gripped the community weeks after the Confederate surrender at Appomattox, reflecting deep divisions left by the “brother vs. brother” conflict.

Much of what we know of the fracas derives from an article in the June 9, 1865, edition of the *Democratic Watchman*, helmed by firebrand editor Peter Gray Meek. The “copperhead” editor's anti-Abolitionist sentiments were obvious in his titling of the article: “Almost a Row.—Arrival of Major Elliott.—Disgraceful Proceedings.—Abolitionism Rampant.—Somebody Hurt.” We learn from other sources that “Major Elliott” was William (“Bill”) Power Elliott Jr. Born to a Lewistown printer and editor

in 1831, Bill had made his way as a teenager to Bellefonte, where he found work as a druggist. Here he met and took a liking to Isabella (“Belle”) Harris, daughter of cabinet-maker Samuel Harris, who lived in the stone house he had built on the northeast corner of Howard and Penn Streets (addressed as 203 E. Howard St., the residence is now home to Candy and Bob Dannaker). Though he moved to Knoxville, Tennessee, in 1852 and established himself there as a partner in the drug firm Byrne & Elliott, Bill returned to Bellefonte in the summer of 1854 to marry Belle. The newlyweds set up housekeeping in Knoxville, but Belle came home to Bellefonte briefly in the summer of 1856 to deliver the couple's only child: Samuel Harris (“Harry”) Elliott.

When the Civil War broke out, Bill Elliott's loyalties shifted to his adopted Southern home. “Believing it to be his duty,” the *Watchman* reported, “he took up

arms and the cause of Southern independence.” After sending his wife and young son back to the relative safety of her widowed father's house in Bellefonte for the duration of the war, Bill was commissioned as a major in the Provisional Army of the Confederate States, serving as quartermaster in General John Hunt Morgan's famed cavalry brigade. According to the *Watchman*, “he was a brave and reliable officer. . . He was frequently seen by soldiers from [Centre] county and [Bellefonte] who were prisoners, and they all bear testimony to his uniform kindness and consideration for them, doing all in his power to make them comfortable, and, if possible, to procure their release. To some he [even] gave money and [a horse].”

During the Morgan Brigade's raid into Ohio in July 1863, Bill was captured with most of the Brigade's command. He was locked up in the Union prison for Confederate officers at Fort

Delaware and held in the type of solitary “close confinement” reserved for high-risk prisoners. After a year's imprisonment, he grew so ill that he had to be transferred to a prison hospital. Several weeks of treatment restored his health to the point that he could be released and re-incarcerated without any special restrictions.

When the war ended and Bill was released, he took the oath of allegiance to the United States required of former Confederate soldiers wishing to regain their civil rights. He then boarded a train for Bellefonte, expecting to reunite with his wife Belle and son Harry. Rumors of Bill's impending arrival preceded him to his former hometown, so that when he stepped off the morning train on Thursday, June 1, 1865, he was confronted by an unwelcoming party of former neighbors. His attempts to greet some of them were angrily rebuffed. Railroad clerk Delaune Gray, whose hand Bill offered to shake in greeting, responded: “How can you expect me, a loyal man, to shake the blood-stained hand of a guerrilla?” When Bill made a similar overture to “burly blacksmith Benjamin Schrock”—who had plied his trade in “government shops at Washington” during the war—Schrock exclaimed “Don't touch me. Go away, you damned scoundrel!” Bill thought he would be received more kindly by bookstore proprietor George Livingston, but the latter “raised his cane as if to demolish the Major at one blow.” Bill then turned to Cen-

tre County Register and Recorder John P. Gephart “whom he regarded as respectable. Elliott inquired [of Gephart] whether there was a provost marshal or military commandant in town, explaining that he had taken the oath of allegiance and had documentation to prove it, and would request official protection if possible. Mr. Gephart replied that no such officers were present — delivering the only polite words Elliott had received since his arrival.”

Trailed by a hostile mob, Bill hurried to the house of his father-in-law Samuel Harris, where he finally reunited with Belle and Harry. Perhaps hoping to elude his pursuers, Bill relocated for a time to the nearby residence of his brother-in-law Henry P. Harris. Meanwhile (as alleged by the *Watchman*), “notice was sent to the iron works and ore banks for men to do the mobbing that night, and arrangements [were] made for that purpose. We believe a mob did [eventually] surround the house of Henry Harris.” Concerned for the Major's safety, attorney Hugh N. McAllister called on Bill and “informed him that it would be dangerous for him to remain, at the same time advising him to leave as soon as possible. The Major concluded to take the advice.” First National Bank cashier John Harris—another brother of Belle—spirited the Elliotts away in a carriage to Milesburg, where they caught a train for Augusta, Georgia.

Tempers continued to flare back in Bellefonte. Frank Wal-

lace, an Elliott sympathizer lately returned from serving in the Union Army, delivered a punch to the face of vocal critic Wesley Lambert. Henry Harris defended his brother-in-law's honor by similarly slugging blacksmith Schrock. Belle's father Samuel was reportedly “so much wounded by the outrageous and infamous conduct of his [fellow townsmen] that he wept.” He did not have long to lament. Two-and-a-half months later, as he was descending Howard Street near his house in an oats-laden cart, the vehicle's front end collapsed, “throwing [Samuel] from the top of the load, beneath the wheel, which passed over him, breaking his leg and arm and otherwise very seriously injuring him” (as reported in the *Watchman*). The unfortunate carter died a week later “from the effects of the calamity.”

We find no evidence that Bill Elliott ever attempted another return to his former hometown. The effects of the illness that sent him to a P.O.W. hospital dogged him for the remaining 13 years of his life, spent with Belle and Harry in Knoxville. He was only 48 years old when death brought “a speedy relief to his calamitous [physical and mental] condition” on November 7, 1878 (as reported in a Knoxville newspaper). Belle and Harry lived together off and on in Knoxville, then Athens, Tennessee, until they died of old age in 1912 and 1942, respectively.

By Phil Ruth



Christopher Cipro

# The County of Centre

## PROCLAMATION

NUMBER 34 OF 2025

WHEREAS, the Bellefonte Union Cemetery had its official beginning July 19, 1859; and

WHEREAS, starting with the combining of three family burial grounds and has expanded over the last 166 years. There have been over 8,300 interments; and

WHEREAS, the Bellefonte Union Cemetery is the final resting place of Medal of Honor recipient George W Harris; Bellefonte's co-founders (James Dunlop and James Harris), William Petrikin (anti federalist present at drafting and signing of the Bill of Rights); individuals who founded and funded Farmers College aka The Pennsylvania State University (Evan Pugh, Congressman James Irvin and Hugh McCallister), and three Pennsylvania Governors (Andrew Curtin, James Beaver and Daniel Hastings); Congressmen Thomas Burnside, John Blanchard, James Tracy Hale, Senator Andrew Gregg, William Wilson Potter; three Brevet Brigadier Generals, William H Blair, James Addams Beaver, and John Irvin Curtin; and

WHEREAS, the Bellefonte Union Cemetery is the home of more than 800 veterans. These individuals served during times of peace and conflict for all branches of the military; and

WHEREAS, the Bellefonte Union Cemetery has never been segregated and is non-denominational.

WHEREAS, preservation of the Bellefonte Union Cemetery is vital as it helps remind the community of its local history and cultural heritage; and

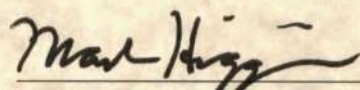
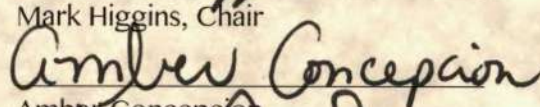
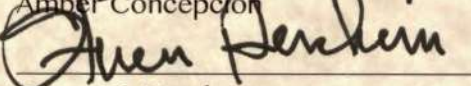
WHEREAS, the Bellefonte Union Cemetery is solely managed and maintained by a board of volunteer managers and with the help of the community. The upkeep, restoration and preservation is done through donations to the non-profit Bellefonte Union Cemetery; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Centre County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim July 2025 as **Bellefonte Union Cemetery Month** and encourages all community members to celebrate and preserve our history, heritage, and culture.

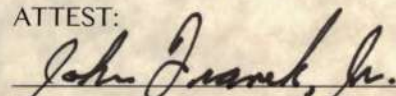
ADOPTED this 24<sup>th</sup> day of June 2025.



CENTRE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

  
Mark Higgins, Chair  
  
Amber Concepcion  
  
Steven G. Dershem

ATTEST:

  
John Franek Jr, Administrator

## Bellefonte Union Cemetery – Historic Heart of the Area

The volunteer board of the Bellefonte Cemetery Association – a non-profit which does business as the Bellefonte Union Cemetery – was honored on June 24, 2025, when the Centre County Board of Commissioners Mark Higgins, Amber Concepción, and Steven Dershem declared July 2025 as Bellefonte Union Cemetery Month. The Bellefonte Union Cemetery is dependent on the help of others for its survival. Both the Bellefonte Borough and Centre County provide support, when possible, but we are most dependent on the residents who volunteer their personal time and money for maintaining this Cemetery.

The Bellefonte Union Cemetery was originally a family burial ground utilized by the extended family of Dr. Constanc Curtin. The first burial was for Elizabeth Gregg McKee in 1801. Elizabeth was the sister of Margery Gregg Curtin, the wife of Roland Curtin. Roland Curtin lived on his brother Constanc Curtin's property. His home was originally where Babyland is now, but later it was moved. (Babyland is a section of the cemetery that had been set aside for the burials of infants, stillbirths, miscarriages, and young babies. The permanent memorial placed by the Union Cemetery Board reads "A space apart dedicated to the infants and children cradled forever in these gentle hills.")

In 1804, Roland Curtin was commissioned as Centre

County coroner requiring a \$2,000 bond – valued at about \$54,000 today. The Curtin family burial ground is where many of the burials before 1859 took place. There were other family burial grounds on the hill off Howard Street.

On July 19, 1859, James Burnside, Edward Humes, James Hale, and Hugh McCallister filed papers in Centre County Court to form the Bellefonte Union Cemetery. In 1866, Hugh McCallister was president, and James Beaver was secretary of the Bellefonte Cemetery Association when it filed its first deed. While serving in the Civil War until 1864, James Beaver was wounded four times and rose to the rank of Brigadier General. One can imagine how important it was to him to establish the Bellefonte Union Cemetery. Later, in 1887–1891, he served as governor of Pennsylvania.

Today, the Bellefonte Union Cemetery has over 8,300 burials. There are about 800 military Veterans buried here: eight Revolutionary War Veterans, nine War of 1812 Veterans, two Mexican War Veterans, over 230 Civil War Veterans, about 25 Spanish American War Veterans, about 150 WWI Veterans, over 250 WWII Veterans, 39 Korean War Veterans, and 19 Vietnam War Veterans. There are others buried here who served in the military during peacetime. Wreaths Across America charge \$17 per wreath. The estimated cost to place a wreath on all the Veter-



James M. Puckett

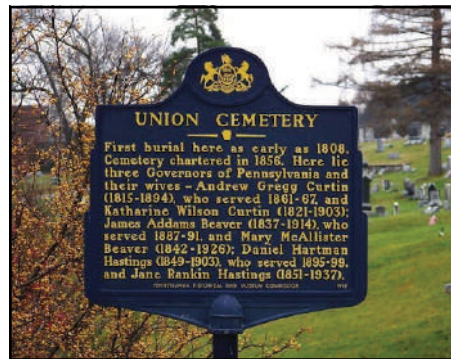
ans buried here would be \$14,000. The Bellefonte Cemetery Association has 200 wreaths for 2025 to date. Wreaths can be donated at [www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/184679/Overview](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/184679/Overview). We can always use help placing wreaths and gathering wreaths after Christmas.

The cemetery is about 22 acres in total and just keeping the area mowed is an overwhelming task. This year has been extremely difficult because of storm damage. Many of our trees were planted in the 1860's when Hugh McCallister purchased them from Farmers' High School of Pennsylvania, later named the Agricultural College of Pennsylvania. The life span of some of those old trees ended in 2025, with the recent storms. In addition to damage to the trees, the iron fence around the Mann Family plot needs to be repaired. (Mann founded the Mann Axe Company.) Shockingly, some gravestones were knocked from their bases, and others were knocked over. Insurance has helped with the costs of repairing some of the damage, but we can always use more help.

It would be too lengthy to name everyone who has contributed to the Bellefonte Union Cemetery here, but four current notables are Board Members Brenda Reichert, Dylan Wetzler and Steven Richards, and volunteer Matt Maris. Brenda is a descendant of General Philip Benner as are many of those buried here and those still living in Bellefonte. She organized the “Light Up the Cemetery” and the “Veterans Day” programs for the Union Cemetery last year. She is working on 2025 programs.

Dylan Wetzler made sure every Bellefonte Elementary School student had a luminary bag to decorate for “Light Up the Cemetery” which takes place in October. We certainly need help placing the luminaries. As volunteers, the luminaries are a wonderful addition to our year. When the students come to see their work with their parents, it is very uplifting and beautiful. This year, driving through the cemetery will end prior to the children walking through during “Light Up the Cemetery,” so they can enjoy it without worry.

Our 8,300+ burials can always use a boost, even just to read and say their names. Steven Richards, secretary of the



Bellefonte Cemetery Association, has helped or supervised cleaning about 2,000 stones in the last five years and keeps on going. We never have a shortage of stones in need of repair or replacement. We have famous notables buried at Bellefonte Union Cemetery, but our favorite notables are the residents of Bellefonte who show up with no provocation to care for the stones and plots. Planting red geraniums throughout the cemetery is an old tradition, and seeing their blooms always brings smiles and memories.

Matt Maris teaches social studies at the Bellefonte High School. His students are amazing at Day of Caring. They do the hard work of uncovering the stones that were swallowed up by the ground. This has helped in identifying gravesites. Matt is also one of the founders of Local Historia (localhistoria.com). Joined by Jared Fredericks and Dustin Elder they work tirelessly, preserving our local history.

Due to the cost of making the entrances and facilities handicapped accessible, the Bellefonte Cemetery Association was unfortunately not able to negotiate the purchase of The Gatehouse last year. The Gatehouse is no longer part of the Bellefonte Union Cemetery. The 8-foot road serves as the right-of-way into the cemetery. Edward (EC) Humes was the person who was the overseer of the move of the old caretaker’s house to The Gatehouse’s current location. He contracted with Daniel McGinley for all but the stone foundation and moving of the care-



2024, “Light Up the Cemetery”, James M. Puckett

taker’s home for \$850 on May 30, 1858.

Commissioner Dershem made us aware that the census for those living in Bellefonte was 6,105 in 2020. As already mentioned, there are over 8,300 burials in the Bellefonte Union Cemetery. We still have gravesites and columbarium space available for purchase. Inquiries can be made via the website.

Union Cemetery is the historic heart of the area. We are normally in need of donations just to keep the equipment running for the volunteers to mow. This year, we need much more. Donations can be made online at [bellefonteuioncemetery.com/donate](http://bellefonteuioncemetery.com/donate) or mailed to Bellefonte Union Cemetery, PO Box 342, Bellefonte, PA 16823.

By **Connie Cole**



James M. Puckett

## Behind the Stone: War Crime Victims

The average visitor walking through Union Cemetery today would probably not notice the two graves marked as World War Two veterans about thirty yards apart. Upon closer examination, they would find that both young men died on the same date, December 17, 1944, and that they were from the same unit, Battery B, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion. Three young men from Bellefonte, Donald Bloom, Donald Flack, and Charles Breon, were serving in that unit that day in December.

Donald Lee Bloom was born in Bellefonte on June 18, 1923, to William and Viola Bloom and was from the Pleasant View area of Spring Township in 1940. The census listed his level of education as 6th grade. His army paperwork says he did “unskilled occupations in laundering, cleaning, dyeing and pressing apparel or other articles.” His draft registration card said he was employed by “Centre County Hospital.” Taken together he was employed in the laundry at the hospital when he entered the service January 12, 1943, in Altoona. He stood 6 feet tall and weighed 145 pounds with blue eyes, blonde hair, and a light complexion.

Donald J. Flack was born in Bellefonte on November 12, 1923, to Joseph and Ruth Flack and lived on Halfmoon Hill in 1940. According to his army paperwork, he had completed



credit to US Army

two years of high school and was employed as a semiskilled machine shop worker. He entered the service on January 12, 1943, in Altoona. He stood 5 feet 8 inches tall and weighed 150 pounds with brown eyes, brown hair, and a light brown complexion.

Charles R. Breon was born in Bellefonte September 28, 1922, to Leroy and Katherine Breon of Howard St. His army paperwork indicates that he completed the 8th grade and was a

laborer for American Limestone Plant. He married Virginia Gummo on August 11, 1942, and entered service December 22, 1942, in Altoona. He and his wife had a son December 27, 1942, who passed away five weeks later. Charles stood 5 feet 7 inches tall with blue eyes, brown hair, and a light complexion.

The three were stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for their training in artillery observation. They were trained on the

primary mission of field artillery observation to locate enemy artillery positions and adjust friendly artillery fire. 'This training was very technical involving flash ranging, sound ranging and radar ranging. While these men had their basic training of physical development and weapons familiarity, they had been selected for this special task.



credit to FindAGrave

On December 16, 1944, Adolph Hitler launched a massive counterattack against the Allied Armies west of Germany. The target point was the Ardennes Forest in Belgium, and the onslaught surprised the Allies and was initially successful. Battery B, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion received orders to move forward and join the U.S. Seventh Armored Division. On December 17th, their thirty-truck convoy had just cleared the city of Malmedy and were making a turn at the crossroads village of Baugnez when they ran into

the left flank armored column of General Sepp Deitrich's 6th SS Panzer Army. The German column was *Kampfgruppe*<sup>2</sup> Peiper commanded by *SS-Obersurbannführer*<sup>3</sup> Joachim Peiper. Peiper's tanks blew up the lead and rear trucks of the American convoy. The rest of the battalion was quickly overpowered and surrendered. The prisoners were herded into a roadside farm field and machine gunned by the tanks. Some men tried to run; others tried to play dead. The Germans then came through the field and killed the wounded. Eighty-four American soldiers were murdered.

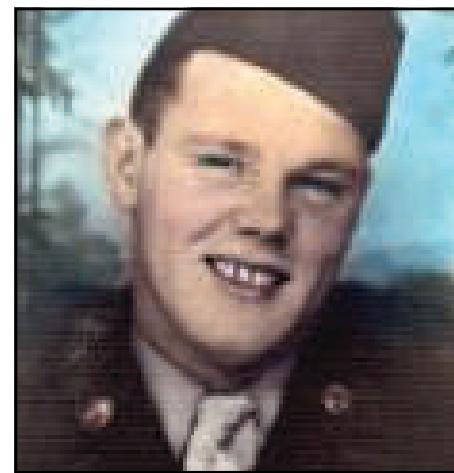
Tech/5 Charles R. Breon, Pvt. Donald J. Flack and Pvt. Donald L. Bloom died that day. It was evident from the American investigation that Breon and Flack had tried running. It was not clear if Bloom was in a blown truck or whether he fell in the massacre. Autopsies were conducted on all the men, but those individual results are



Donald Bloom, credit to FindAGrave

not available yet. General results were released. "A survey of the 72 autopsies and photographs of remains on file indicate at least 20 had potentially fatal gunshot wounds to the head inflicted at very close range in addition to wounds from automatic weapons. Most head wounds showed powder burns on the remains' skin. An additional 20 showed evidence of small caliber gunshot wounds to the head without powder burn residue. Another 10 had fatal crushing or blunt trauma injuries, most likely from a German rifle butt. This easily confirmed US suspicions that a serious atrocity actually did occur."<sup>4</sup>

The bodies were returned to their families in the late 1940's (1947 for Bloom and Flack). Flack and Bloom were interred in Union Cemetery with Flack's sacrifice noted on the family stone. Bloom was interred with his own stone.



Charles Breon, credit to FindAGrave

Charles Breon was interred at Centre County Memorial Park by his wife and son he had never seen. The families of all three men filed for and were granted pensions in 1950. Each family received \$500.00 per month.

Seventy-four perpetrators of the atrocity were tried for war crimes between May and July 1946 at Dachau. Included were the direct chain of command from Sepp Deitrich to Werner Poetchke (SS Panzer Division

<sup>2</sup> Adolf Hitler had committed suicide April 30, 1945.

Commander) to Joachim Peiper. They used the defense that they had orders not to take prisoners with Deitrich claiming he got his directly from Hitler.<sup>5</sup> Forty-three were sentenced to death (including Deitrich and Peiper), twenty-two were sentenced to life in prison and eight sentenced to shorter sentences. All the death sentences were commuted to life sentences by a review board. In the world of Cold War politics, Deitrich was re-

leased from prison in 1955 and Peiper in 1956.

While walking either cemetery, find, pause, and remember Donald Bloom, Donald Flack, and Charles Breon. Three Bellefonte men who were brutally murdered. Malmedy remembers and honors the victims with a beautiful memorial.

By W. Charles Young



Malmedy Massacre Memorial, Belgium, credit to FindAGrave

<sup>1</sup> Department of the Army. *The Field Artillery Observation Battalion and Batteries (FM 6-120)*. Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1951, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Kampfgruppe is an ad hoc military formation used frequently by Germany in WW1 and WW2

<sup>3</sup> Obersurbannführer is a paramilitary rank in the Nazi Party equivalent to an army rank of Lieutenant Colonel

<sup>4</sup> Glass, Scott T. (22 November 1998) "Mortuary Affairs Operations at Malmedy." Centre de Recherches et d'Informations sur la bataille des Ardennes. Retrieved Jul 16, 2025.

## 2025 Events Calendar

September 1	<i>Labor Day</i>
September 5	<b>Out Loud at The Print Factory: Caroline Shea (BHCA)</b>
September 7	First Sunday Open Reception at the Bellefonte Art Museum
September 22-24	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i>
September 28	<b>Sunday Afternoon Chamber Music: Curtin Family Chamber Ensemble (BHCA)</b>
October 1-2	<i>Yom Kippur</i>
October 3	<b>Out Loud at The Print Factory: Teresa Hamilton (BHCA)</b>
October 5	First Sunday Open Reception at the Bellefonte Art Museum
October 6-13	<i>Sukkot</i>
October 13-15	<i>Shemini Atzeret &amp; Simchat Torah</i>
October 18	Train Ride: Apple Festival Special (bellefontetrain.org)
October 18	Train Ride: Kids Halloween Special (bellefontetrain.org)
October 19	Train Ride: Bald Eagle Flyer (bellefontetrain.org)
October 19	Train Ride: Bingo on the Bald Eagle (bellefontetrain.org)
October 25	Train Ride: Bellefonte Limited (bellefontetrain.org)
October 25	Halloween Parade (HBI)
October 26	Train Ride: Mountain's End (bellefontetrain.org)
October 26	Trunk or Treat (Bellefonte Cemetery Association)
October 31	<i>Halloween</i>
November 2	First Sunday Open Reception at the Bellefonte Art Museum
November 7	<b>Out Loud at The Print Factory: Kayleb Rae Candrilli (BHCA)</b>
November 9	Veterans Day Service (Bellefonte Cemetery Association)
November 9	"Light Up the Cemetery" (Bellefonte Cemetery Association)
November 23	<b>Sunday Afternoon Chamber of Music: Whistle Tone Flute Quartet (BHCA)</b>
November 27	<i>Thanksgiving</i>
November 29	Christmas Tree Lighting (DBI)
Nov. 29 – Dec. 21	Santa House (HBI)

TBD	Winter Excursions by Train (bellefontetrain.org)
December 7	First Sunday Open Reception at the Bellefonte Art Museum
December 12 – 14	Victorian Christmas (HBI)
December 13	<b>Arts &amp; Crafts Show (BHCA)</b>
December 13	Winter Market (DBI)
December 14 – 22	<i>Hanukkah</i>
December 25	<i>Christmas</i>
Dec. 26 – Jan. 1	<i>Kwanzaa</i>

### Contacts for Volunteers:

#### Bellefonte Union Cemetary

*Trunk and Treat*

*Light Up the Cemetery*

bellefonteunioncemetary.com/volunteer

#### Bellefonte Historical Railroad Society (BHRS)

For volunteers:

bellefontetrain.org/membership

For Fall Train Excursions:

bellefontetrain.org/train

#### Bellefonte Historical & Cultural Association (BHCA)

*Arts & Crafts Show at the Victorian*

*Christmas*

Jim Dunne, jhdunne@outlook.com

#### Historic Bellefonte, Inc. (HBI)

*Santa House*

Romayne Naylor, 814-571-0106

#### Victorian Christmas

Dave Provan and Phil Breidenbaugh

christmasinbellefonte@gmail.com

#### Downtown Bellefonte, Inc. (DBI)

*Christmas Tree Lighting*

*Winter Market*

Lorraine Mulfinger, 814-548-7532

#### The Print Factory

www.printfactorybellefonte.org

130 S. Allegheny Street, Bellefonte

(814) 810-4061

*Photograph by Carla Cipro*

The Bell is a quarterly publication of the Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association (BHCA), a nonprofit organization founded and incorporated in 1976. BHCA is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)3 of the I.R.S. Code. Official registration and financial information about BHCA may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, (800) 732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## Big Spring Chronicles: Local Haunts

When autumn splendor peaks in mid to late October, masses of people report having a paranormal experience. The belief is that the separation between the physical and spiritual worlds weakens, allowing ancestors and other supernatural entities to interact with the living. While interviewing residents and proprietors about their lives in Bellefonte for my volumes of *Big Spring Chronicles* (Holly M. Hopkins, 2022 and 2023) these kinds of stories kept surfacing. Some ghost stories have been passed down for generations while other reports of paranormal sightings are still active today.

*Big Spring Chronicles* (Holly M. Hopkins, 2022) reveals that the beloved restaurant on Cherry Lane, Jim's Italian Cuisine, had a recurring visitor. When staff heard unusual sounds or things would go missing, they collectively blamed Monk (James Munks' nickname). In 1819,

James Munks was the last man to be publicly hanged at the Bellefonte gallows which stood where their parking lot is now. His story was sensational. His execution was the most attended on record, and they believe he may have decided to keep hanging around.

The Queen - A Victorian Bed & Breakfast on Linn Street had a mischievous ghost for years that moved things as large as bookcases and constantly left their refrigerator door open. The innkeeper's young son referred to this visitor as Harry who they later found out was the name of a past resident of the house.

Dr. Babcock, a dedicated physician and surgeon, owned a striking white Victorian mansion on Allegheny Street. His schedule was so busy that he built himself a private office on the property. After his passing, the dentist who bought it and his staff were convinced that

Dr. Babcock still made visits to his practice.

Lucinda Hall (8/22/1875-5/26/1963) was a proud patriot who marched through Bellefonte with large American flags, no matter the weather, to give the soldiers leaving by train a proper send off during WWII (1939-1945) and the Korean War (1950-1953). On foggy nights, locals report seeing the outline of a woman waving a flag on the tracks near the Bellefonte Train Station. A memorial plaque was placed there in her honor.

The popular Hublersburg Inn - a restaurant, pub, and country inn - was built in 1827 on the outskirts of town and has an invisible prankster who loves to flicker lights and undo the cleaning and prepping done by staff the night before. Ask them the next time you visit; they are more than willing to talk about it.

My favorite story came from the Forge House on Axemann Road. When Keith Koch was the owner, he told me that his home was built by Bellefonte founder John Dunlop in 1803. The prominent Valentine family lived there at one point, along with other well-to-do families. In 1929, the owners turned the second floor into rental rooms, and the first floor became their restaurant, advertised as the Black Cat Inn. (Centre Daily Times, 2/13/1993) What they didn't openly advertise was that they made and sold alcohol, as this was during the Prohibition

era (1920-1933). The attic had little to no insulation at that time, so during the winter season it served as food storage, with the ceiling beams used for hanging meat. Somehow word got out that alcohol was being served at the Inn, and a detective showed up one night while the speakeasy was in full swing. Details after that moment are unknown, but the detective was reported as a missing person. Eventually, he was found in the attic, hanging with the meat. Everyone who worked on the property claimed innocence, and no one was ever charged with his murder. Keith and other homeowners before him believe the spirit of that detective still walks through the Forge House.

*Big Spring Chronicles, Volume 2* (Holly M. Hopkins, 2023) highlights Governor Hastings' mansion, one of the most notoriously haunted spots in Bellefonte. Ghost stories passed down through the generations describe the same three specters over and over: a little girl is seen and heard playing on the first floor; a night watchman walks the halls of the upper floors, jingling his keys and checking all the doorknobs; and the most common vision is of a woman in white seen gliding down the grand staircase.

There is also the tale of a long-lost grandfather clock that used to sit in the foyer. The face of the clock had a person's face painted on it, and legend has it that if you stared into the eyes long enough, one of them would wink at you.

I interviewed tenants of the Hastings Mansion's apartments, and they all agreed that the property was haunted. Tenant



*The Hastings Mansion, Holly Hopkins*

#4 rented the same apartment for more than twenty-five years. He never witnessed any spirits per se, but he thought it was strange that after his landlady passed away, he had a recurring dream about her for years. She would come into his apartment to chat and then they would sit on the divan and share a cocktail. At times her voice, the smells and tastes seemed so real that when he woke up, he wondered if he had truly been only dreaming.

Tenant #5 and her mother both felt what they described as a strong female presence in her apartment. They jokingly called the spirit who dimmed lights and knocked things from shelves regularly Sarah. While walking through the Union Cemetery one day, they located the graves of Governor Hastings and his wife who gifted adjoining burial plots to their beloved housekeeper and her family. One of their tombstones was engraved with the name Sarah Lambert.

Tenant #6 picked up his mail on the first floor every day, until the day he saw a little girl

standing in front of the mailboxes. She looked to be about five years old with curly hair and wearing an old-fashioned white lace dress. He knew no children lived in the building, especially one that looked like she was from an old black-and-white movie. They both stood frozen, staring at each other. As soon as he started to say something to her, she disappeared. He was so spooked, he didn't check his mail for three days.

Autumn is one of the best times of year to explore Bellefonte with its charming scenery, coffee and sweet shops, outdoor markets and activities, and of course, the possibility of having a paranormal experience of your own!

**By Holly Hopkins**

*Holly Hopkins is a local dental hygienist, historian, and author of Big Spring Chronicles which can be borrowed from the Centre County Library and purchased at the Belle Mercantile. Holly is also a current member of the Bellefonte School Board and is running as a write-in candidate for the general election on November 4, 2025.*



*photo of The Black Cat Inn provided by Keith Koch*

## Farm to Table Seibert Road circa 1997

for Dotty Houtz

The farmer's wife,  
my chicken-plucking  
berry-picking  
egg-gathering  
chicken-raising  
cherry-canning  
mentor.

Dotty needs help  
plucking chickens.  
My debut.

Spring chickens,  
feathers white as egg shells,  
beaks yellow as yolks.

Scooped from the coop  
with a crook, grabbed by their feet  
held upside down to calm them.

I hand a pair of feet  
to the farmer  
at the chopping block.

He says to the chicken,  
"Be quiet or I'll cut off your head."  
He does.

Neck on post between two nails  
he chops, swipes,  
ready for the next neck.

The bloody-necked broiler  
flaps herself upright  
like a wind-up toy.

Feet dash in loopy circles,  
she collapses  
among other ones.  
Each beheaded bird  
is dipped in scalding water  
over the wood fire.

Ready now for de-feathering,  
sturdy farm fingers pluck chickens  
bare to pimply skin.

I grab a clump of feathers -  
pull like pins from a cushion.  
The air smells like sour milk.

I shake and flick my wrists,  
feathers stay stuck  
like the flies on my legs.

Next, the fowl  
are singed with a torch  
to burn off bits of feather follicles.

In the mud room sink,  
I scrub each body in warm water  
with homemade lye soap.

Dotty guts them,  
carves out the oil gland,  
plunges the bird into icy water.

Poultry, packaged and frozen.  
Sunday dinners -  
chicken at Dotty's.

By Teresa M. Stouffer

Photograph by Carla Cipro

## A Legacy of Art and History: The Bellefonte Art Museum



Lori Fisher

### BUILT ON HISTORY: THE LINN HOUSE

The Bellefonte Art Museum is more than just a museum; it's a vibrant hub with a rich historical legacy. The Museum has become a cornerstone of the community and preserves an important part of Pennsylvania's history.

The Museum is located in the historic Linn House, built in 1810 by Revolutionary War General Philip Benner. Throughout the 19th century, the home was occupied by many influential figures who helped shape Bellefonte and Pennsylvania, including three state governors.

In the decade leading up to the Civil War, the Linn House is believed by some to have been a stop on the Underground Railroad, though there is no direct

evidence to confirm this. During that time, the house was owned by Jacob Valentine Thomas, a devout Quaker who may have provided refuge to those escaping slavery. Bellefonte's strategic location made it a key link in the network guiding enslaved individuals north to freedom.

The Museum honors this legacy through its permanent third-floor exhibit, A Journey

to Freedom, which explores the region and this house's role in the Underground Railroad. As the only public space in Bellefonte dedicated to this history, the exhibit shares powerful artwork, stories, and historical context. Artist Lino Toyos' vignettes, along with a pamphlet compiled by Dr. Mudiwa Pettus, offer visitors a deeper understanding of this chapter in American history.

Thanks to a recent America250 grant, the Bellefonte Art Museum will be able to sustain and expand this important exhibit. The funding will support the production of Dr. Pettus' researched informational pamphlets as well as interactive workbooks. These educational tools allow visitors of all ages to more fully engage with the stories and history shared



1934, Dean E. Kennedy

in *A Journey to Freedom*. These resources ensure that the exhibit remains both accessible and informative as we approach the nation's 250th anniversary in 2026.

**RESTORED FOR THE FUTURE: THE BELLEFONTE ART MUSEUM**

By the late 20th century, the Linn House had fallen into disrepair. In 1997, it was gifted to the Borough of Bellefonte, and thanks to the generosity of community members and local businesses, the building was restored. In 2008, the Bellefonte Art Museum opened its doors, bringing fresh energy into the historic space.

The Museum celebrates the human spirit through the arts, with a mission to make creativity accessible to everyone. It showcases local talent, highlights global cultures, and offers free exhibitions and events that invite the whole community to engage with the arts.

There's always something new to explore at the Bellefonte Art Museum. The Special Exhibitions Gallery rotates bimonthly and shows work from both global and local artists. For those passing by the Museum, the 24/7 Display Window offers round-the-clock access to art. Every month, the Museum highlights local talent through the Paulette Lorraine Berner Community Gallery, the R. Thomas Berner Photography Gallery, and the Sieg Gallery with work from its artist registry. The Stanza Poetry Gallery, dedicated to Robert



"2024 Art in the Open" painting by Cecelia Doty

Lima, highlights the work of 2025 poet-in-residence Kate Hoffman and monthly contest winners. Families and visitors of all ages can engage with hands-on creativity in The Makery, a self-guided studio space, or take a quiet moment in the Museum's Art Library. Even the gift shop, the Twig Museum Store, plays a role in supporting local arts with a selection of handmade ceramics, textiles, jewelry, and more.

The Bellefonte Art Museum is open to the public every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday from 12:00pm to 4:30 pm. The Museum is a space to connect, reflect, and be inspired. Whether it's through honoring the past, showcasing local voices, or bringing global perspectives to central Pennsylvania, the Museum continues to enrich the community through the arts.

If you are interested in supporting the Museum, you can do so by donating or becoming a member. All donation and

membership information can be found at [www.bellefontemuseum.org/pages/join-donate](http://www.bellefontemuseum.org/pages/join-donate).

**By Gillian O'Neill**

Sources:  
CentreHistory.org  
Bellefonte.com  
BellefonteMuseum.org



Carla Cipro



Carla Cipro

**Our Painted Tree**

All trees are special—  
Their trunks reach high into the sky,  
And their leaves dance with the wind.  
But our tree was different,  
Because it was ours.  
Our tree sheltered us from summer rain,  
As laughter bubbled up while we ran beneath its shade.  
Our tree became our jungle gym,  
Where we'd gaze out on perfect summer nights,  
Counting stars that twinkled like scattered brushstrokes,  
Painted across the velvet canvas of the sky.  
Our tree held shade for the books we read,  
Each page opening a brand-new world.  
Our tree whispered stories in the breeze,  
Its branches swaying in rhythms like abstract waves,  
Colors blending softly like watercolor dreams,  
A place where patterns danced with light and shadow,  
Where time moved slowly all day long.  
Our tree caught snowflakes in the winter chill,  
A frosty crown reflecting shards of icy blues and whites,  
We built our forts beside its roots,  
Wrapped in the quiet textures of a winter palette.  
Our tree watched seasons come and go,  
From bursting blooms like splashes of vibrant paint,  
To autumn's swirling golds and crimsons,  
Through every change, it stood with us,  
A constant brushstroke in the masterpiece of our lives.

**By Mila Nanes**

*Winner of BAM's June 2025  
Youth Ekphrastic Poetry Contest*

## Discover the Miles-Humes House



Judy Dombroski

Likely you have passed the Miles-Humes Historical Museum many times over the years, if you're a Bellefonte resident. You may have even visited it when it was the only public library in the Centre County Library System! Have you come inside lately? If not, you are in for a pleasant surprise!

What's new in this 1814 structure? The Miles-Humes House invites you to visit. Our operating hours are Monday through Friday from 12pm-5pm, and all are welcome. The managers, Bonne Goble and Judy Dombrowski, provide genealogical assistance and offer short museum tours to the public every weekday.

We maintain a Centre County genealogical library on the first floor, and we have been slowly renovating it with new carpet, tiles, paint, and window coverings. These projects were paid

for with Happy Valley Adventure Bureau Tourist grants that were matched by money from the Centre County Library's Janet Wood Fund.

You may already know that the Miles-Humes House participates in the Victorian Christmas every year, and on that special Saturday, we offer additional Museum tours and entertainment from our grand piano. We intend to continue that tradition and offer our wonderful local musicians a superb instrument to play. This year it will be especially lovely with all the renovations to see.

Aside from physical interior changes, we have updated our surname database that will more easily help you find Centre County ancestors. Many family genealogies are available onsite with family tree connections not available online or elsewhere. We also provide library access to ancestrylibrary.

com and familysearch.com for our patrons. People looking for primary documents come from all over the country just for our records.

What surprises many visitors about our county history is the plethora of newspapers that flourished in its past! This signals our area's historical importance as well as the commitment and interest of the local



Judy Dombroski

people to be well-educated. You will find eighteen local newspapers on microfilm here. Recently, we added an in-house subscription to newspapers.com as well.

Do you ever wonder who lived in this big house? It was home to three well-known local families whose portraits grace the grand staircase: the Miles, Potters, and Humes families lived here over the years from 1816-1935.

Each room in the Miles-Humes House was named, many after a local family. For instance, on the first floor the microfilms are located in the Miller Room, named after a local teacher, John Miller. New to this room is an engaging photo of John as a youngster (causing trouble, no doubt) and a painted portrait of his wife, Elizabeth. Also on the first floor, the Spangler Room contains photographs of Idella Spangler, the genealogist whose primary Centre County documents are bound and used in this room. On the second floor, you will find the Linn Room which features the furnishings and clothing of John Blair Linn and his



Judy Dombroski

wife, Mary, and the Seig Room which features work of the Seig family business that is key to Bellefonte's 20th century history.

Renovation also took place on the second floor including adding a fifth room to the exhibits. The entire second floor is devoted to Centre County history, from the American Legion Junior Band to the Linn House to Centre County war veteran artifacts. Some of our notable donations to the Museum in its most recent years include World War I photographs, bicentennial quilts, and American Legion instruments

and photographs. Each room has a charm unequalled, because it demonstrates the hard work of the citizens of this county as well as its triumphs.

What will impress you? Come and have a look. Perhaps your family's history awaits you!

**By Judy Dombrowski**



Allegria Ensemble, photo by James Dunn

## Bellefonte Sunday Afternoon Chamber Music Series



*Penn State Graduate Ensemble, photo by James Dunn*

The first chamber music concert, which evolved into today's Bellefonte Sunday Afternoon Chamber Music Series, sponsored by the Bellefonte Historical and Cultural Association (BHCA), was held in the John B. Miller Room of the Centre County Library Historical Museum on June 1, 1980. It was inspired by the donation to the Library of a Steinway grand piano in 1979 by Frank Gullo, a Penn State music professor, and his family. This concert featured the Juniata Wind Quintet with Diane Gold, flute, Janet Telford, oboe, Ibrook Tower, clarinet, Miriam Bengston, bassoon, James Dunne, horn, and assisted by Gay Dunne, piano. The Sunday Afternoons at the Library Series has continued with name and venue changes to the present. Each season consists of 5 to 7 free concerts.

The 1890 vintage Steinway grand piano was restored in 1983, through joint funding by the Library and BHCA. A

memorial concert was given honoring Dorothy Schad, a professional violinist from Philadelphia who had moved to Bellefonte after marrying Louis Schad. She established the Community Concerts and presented the first concert in the series at the Bellefonte High School, now the Bellefonte Elementary School on N. Allegheny Street. She was highly respected in the Bellefonte and State College music commu-

nity. Her concerts provided a model for BHCA's concerts.

The 44-year Series has been remarkable for its diversity of instrumental ensembles and composers represented. Over the years, programs represented composers from the baroque era to contemporary. The performing artists ranged from early instrumental groups, string ensembles, wind and brass groups, solo vocalists and



*Stonebridge Winds, photo by James Dunn*



*Revamped Duo, photo by James Dunn*

madrigal singers to jazz ensembles and guitars. The piano was often used by keyboard soloists and accompanists.

The audience growth of "Sunday Afternoons at the Library" prompted a venue change to Trinity United Methodist Church on Howard and Spring Streets beginning with the 2018-2019 season. The concerts were renamed "Bellefonte Sunday Afternoon Chamber Music Series".

The use of performing spaces in historic buildings accessible to the public also promotes BHCA's mission to preserve historic architecture. Exposing audiences to an historic venue in conjunction with music is a sensory experience which may encourage public support of preservation.

**By James and Gay Dunn**

## Shore

**By Michele Mekel**

*Winner of BAM's June 2025*

*Adult Ekphrastic Poetry Contest*

Lines deeply etched  
into stone, her forehead  
from sun, surge, searching, sobriety.  
Tides, time pass,  
but memories remain  
of bare feet, brisk waters, breaking waves.  
Thirty-seven years,  
she has returned  
always comfortingly familiar, always curiously new.



*Lines of the Lake by Jordan Marsh*



Carla Cipro

## After Dismissal

Another obituary,  
Wib, custodian,  
at Bellefonte Elementary School,  
where I taught for 34 years.

He'd lean on his mop,  
tell me again  
how time goes faster  
as you get older.

Eraser in hand,  
I listened,  
snippets of his life -  
Mae, kids, grandkids,  
his chalkboard,  
my clean slate.

So many mops  
and erasers  
ago.

By Teresa M. Stouffer

Carla Cipro



Sharon Weisser

autumn sunflowers  
stretch on their toes, pirouette  
pause to bow their heads

By Teresa M. Stouffer

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

first name\*

middle initial

last name\*

telephone number\*

email address\*

Mailing address:

\* Required fields

BHCA is not yet able to accept electronic payments.  
**Your \$20.00 membership payments accompanied by this form can be mailed to:**

BHCA  
PO Box 141  
Bellefonte, PA 16823



*Carla Cipro*



**BELLEFONTE HISTORICAL  
AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATION**  
P.O. BOX 141  
BELLEFONTE, PA 16823

