

**DISCOVER**



**SMETHPORT**



## Discover Smethport

Smethport Area High School's Alma Mater states, "In the little town of Smethport, hills eternal lie." There is no better description for Smethport than that.

Resident Matt Muller recently returned from a teaching job in China and wrote a poetic description of the town nestled in those "eternal hills." His treatise amply captures the essence of Smethport!

*"A Chinese student, a talented English major from a university in Hunan, China, asked me to describe my hometown. This is what I wrote:*

*"Smethport is very different from Chenzhou. It is like a dream that I'm afraid will seem unreal or too abstract for you to realize. Words alone are not enough to describe the beauty, wonder, and charm of my home town. But I will try.*

*"Right now it is a very special time of the year in which we celebrate the birth of our country, the Declaration of Independence and like your country, a revolution against Imperial tyranny. Now the weather is much like Kunming in the autumn, winter or spring: everything is blue sky and very sunny. The people ride their bikes, fish, boat, swim, garden, walk their dogs, tend their lawns and the upkeep of their homes, or just go for a country drive to enjoy the scenery. Depending on the time of day you will smell fresh cut grass, sweet fresh air born upon a northerly breeze or the cooking smells of backyard barbecues that make your stomach growl.*

*"A few puffy clouds hang in the blue sky like strange dreamlike castles or otherworldly sky galleons made of pure cotton. These clouds look thick and solid enough to climb, walk or jump on, if only you can fly up to one. All around there are green forested hills where you can hike or ride your horse on trails, and depending on the time of day, see wildlife such as deer, coyotes, foxes, and black bears.*

*"In the morning before sunrise all the birds of the region hold congress. Their commotion gently eases you out of sleep and negates any need for an alarm clock. The starry night fades away as a silvery, lacy mist saunters through the valley leaving much of Smethport's allure to the imagination. Mourning doves croon to each other while brown cottontail rabbits with nervous ears nibble on blades of grass. And as the sun rises, the mist shimmers slightly with a pink blush.*

*"By mid-morning the heat of the sun has pulled the clinging wisps of mist away to reveal a clear blue sky, Victorian mansions festooned with the red, white and blue of American flags, and an authentic Main Street modestly bustling and catering to residents and travelers alike. Part of a great East-West road*

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*running from coast to coast, Main Street was once part of a major thruway for west bound migrants in quest of a better life. But it now serves travelers of a different stripe, each hoping to catch a glimpse of an older, traditional America.*

*“During the day you will hear happy children home for summer vacation playing ball games in a nearby park, swimming at the town pool, or riding bicycles. And in the late daytime hours before twilight, shadows grow long and stretch across golden fields and green lawns. A blue river and a lake in the middle of our town glitter like diamonds in westering sun. Older couples stroll around town for evening exercise while younger people walk briskly or go for an evening jog. Still others visit the porches of their neighbors for gossip, a friendly debate about current events, or just to unwind and reflect on their day with a glass of wine or a cold beer.*

*“In the darkness beyond Main Street enigmatic points of light blink in random patterns creating an ever-changing constellation. After being away and living in a Chinese city for some time, it takes me a moment to realize that I am witnessing Smethport nightlife at its best: the miraculous bioluminescence of fireflies getting their groove on.*

*“Except for the occasional bird singing to his lover, things quiet down at night – that is of course unless you live in my house. The kitchen especially is a loud and noisy place. Here our pet birds chirp and squawk incessantly like a discordant gallery of pipsqueaks as I chop vegetables fresh picked from the garden and prepare dinner for my family. If it is too cool to eat dinner outside on the deck, then we will eat at the kitchen table where I share stories with my parents about teaching and traveling in China”...*

*...“That is just a snapshot of my hometown during the summertime. It is very different in the autumn, winter and spring. Each season colors the town in a unique way and has a rhythm of life that changes accordingly. And our town – like many other towns scattered across America – is one of a kind. Every person, family, house, shop, and street has a rich story to tell and a different way to tell it. I hope my story helps you to see the town of Smethport through my eyes.”*

Matt Muller 2010

Pause and enjoy a “snap-shot” of Matt’s hometown; its beauty, history, people, activities, and its scenic qualities.

The town’s mystical charm will captivate your imagination and beckon you to discover a “timeless moment” in a “Timeless Home.”

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# Timeless Smethport



# Courthouse-Community Center



Smethport serves as the center of government for McKean County. The Courthouse is one of the town's most prominent features.

The Courthouse serves as the focal point of the borough's most important events, activities and celebrations.

The famed Bucktail regiment of the American Civil War had its beginnings here.

Smethport's earliest commercial buildings were built around the square on the gently sloping hillside where the first Courthouse was constructed in 1826.

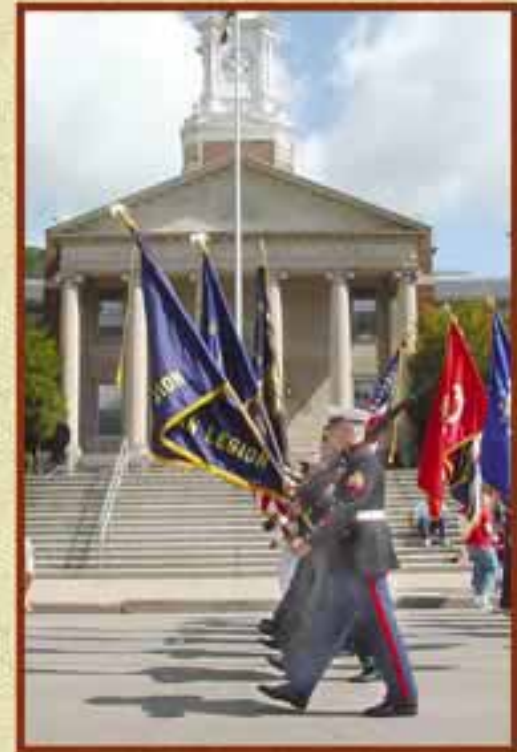
Larger Buildings were constructed in 1851, a third in 1881, and the present Courthouse in 1942.

The Annual "Wheel Around The Hub" bicycle race has its start adjacent to the present building, as does the annual Woolly Willy Wonderdaze Festival.

Veteran organizations use the plaza in front of the building for Memorial Day dedications and other military tributes.

It also serves as the central gathering area for special events in town, class reunion photos, and anything worthy of a large social gathering.

# Courthouse-Community Center



# Courthouse-Community Center



Civil War Memorial



Woolly Willy Wonderdaze opens at the Courthouse.



The Smethport High School Band leads a parade in front of the Courthouse.

# Birth Place of The Bucktails

The 42nd Regiment of the Union Army was formed in Smethport in April of 1861 with Thomas L. Kane as leader.

The regiment became known as the "Bucktails" because of the buck tails they placed in their hats as they left Smethport and marched off to fame in the American Civil War.

The regiment gained respect quickly from both the Confederate and Union army because of the intense courage they showed under the most adverse of conditions.

At the Battle of Gettysburg, where Confederate General Robert E. Lee hoped to win a decisive victory in the Union's own territory, he would face the courage of the Bucktails and other units that turned the tide of battle in favor of the Union forces.

As the Confederates forced their way slowly up the slopes of Little Round Top to capture the high ground overlooking the battlefield, Union forces were hurriedly transferred up to that small hill to defend it at all costs. The Bucktails charged down the hill with a vengeance and helped drive back the rebels with the terrifying screech of wildcats.

Their legacy survives through displays of living history performed the Bucktail Re-enactors.





# Birth Place of The Bucktails



The Bucktail Re-enactors provide living history that honors the Bucktails.



# Small Town America

American values of friendliness, trust, patriotism, and faith abound in Smethport, and are mixed with a wonderful blend of modern ideas.

In Smethport you will find someone to smile and say hello to you, even if they don't know you. And there will be neighbors joining together to help each other in an emergency.

The effect creates an atmosphere of a "Timeless Home."



# Small Town America



# Mansion District Walking Tour

Much of Smethport's "Timeless" character comes from its popular Mansion District.

These large Victorian-era private homes were owned by bankers, merchants, McKean County law officials, many of whom had large interests in the lumbering, railroading and oil industries.

The Smethport Heritage Counsel developed the Historic Smethport Mansion District Walking Tour so that tourists to Smethport can learn about the history behind the majestic old homes. The tour is very popular.

Christmas is a wonderful time to view the special decorations and wonderful lights with which many homeowner's decorate their homes. A lighting contest is held each year and the winner is judged by members of the Smethport Senior Center.



# Mansion District Walking Tour



# Mansion District Walking Tour



# Special In-Home Tours

Magnificent woodworking from a lost era is visible once a year during in-home tours during the height of the autumn foliage season.

Tours are sold out immediately upon availability of tickets. Notices of the tours' times, details about ticket prices and a list of homes scheduled for the tour are available on the [smethportpa.org](http://smethportpa.org) web site.



# Historical Churches



**The United Methodist Church is Smethport's first.**

Another example of Smethport's traditional values is reflected in the beautifully maintained churches that survive in the community. Three of these churches are included in the Historic Mansion District Walking Tour.

The United Methodist Church was built in 1838 and has undergone several renovations. The church was Smethport's first formally organized church.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church sits on Main Street below the Methodist Church. St. Luke's was built of stone in 1892. Its interior features beautifully crafted oak wood beams and alter decorations.

St. Elizabeth of Hungary Catholic Church was Smethport's second Catholic church building. It was built in 1906-7 following the tragic fire that destroyed the original wood frame building erected in 1876.

An abundance of other congregations continue to offer spiritual services in Smethport and the surrounding area,



# Historical Churches



St. Elizabeth's Interior



St. Luke's Interior



St. Elizabeth of Hungary Roman Catholic Church



St. Luke's Episcopal Church

# Downtown



The slow pace of Smethport's downtown makes it easy to enjoy talking with the friendly local people.



The downtown district of Smethport has something to offer everyone. There are fine restaurants, specialty shops and the the slow pace of a friendly town where you can meet some of the local people who make Smethport such a unique place.

Friendly and helpful Senior Center members will greet you at the Visitor Center. The Country Porch Cafe has gourmet coffee and sandwiches, and specialty gifts. Lindgren's Variety Store is the last one existing on U.S. Route 6.



The Country Porch Cafe is located beside the Smethport Visitor Center.