

# Walking Tour of Wellsboro



A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE & MAP OF HISTORIC WELLSBORO



**Wellsboro Area Chamber of Commerce**  
114 Main Street  
570-724-1926 • [www.wellsboroPA.com](http://www.wellsboroPA.com)

# Wellsboro - Gateway to Pennsylvania's Grand Canyon

Wellsboro, a town of beauty and culture, rich in natural resources and the County Seat of Tioga County, might be set down in any section of New England and find itself in familiar surroundings. Although founded by settlers from Delaware, Maryland and Philadelphia, it is a matter of historical record that this section of the State was part of the Connecticut Grant; consequently it was settled by many of the early New England Colonists. The large houses set well back from the streets on spacious well-kept lawns are truly indicative of the planning of New England towns. Noted for beautiful elms, maple trees and wide boulevards with gaslights, this is a village of pleasant homes and hospitable people.

Wellsboro was founded in 1806 to be the County Seat and was incorporated in 1830. The town was named in honor of Mary Wells,

wife of one of the original settlers, Benjamin Wister Morris. Wellsboro stands today a symbol of beauty, exactitude in planning and cultural living. It gives to its visitors evidence that here amid the natural beauty of the surrounding country there may be found people who take pride in maintaining their own town in the traditions they cherish.

The population of Wellsboro is 3,342 and Tioga County has 41,649 residents. An additional 5,000 people live within a radius of five miles and another 5,000 within ten miles.

The public square is known to residents and visitors as "The Green". Huge trees shade the paths and benches while a fountain splashes over the figures of Wynken, Blynken and Nod in their wooden shoe. Here amid the peace and beauty one can wonder how a town today can remain so relaxed.

## The Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania

Located approximately 10 miles from Wellsboro on Route 660 is the Pennsylvania Grand Canyon. In 1968, the Canyon was designated as a Federal Registered Landmark. The 50-mile canyon embraces a natural waterway – Pine Creek – and was formed about 26,000 years ago during the glacial period. Bordered by Leonard Harrison State Park on the East Rim and Colton Point State Park on the West Rim, the Canyon is truly a magnificent sight and attracts thousands of visitors year round.



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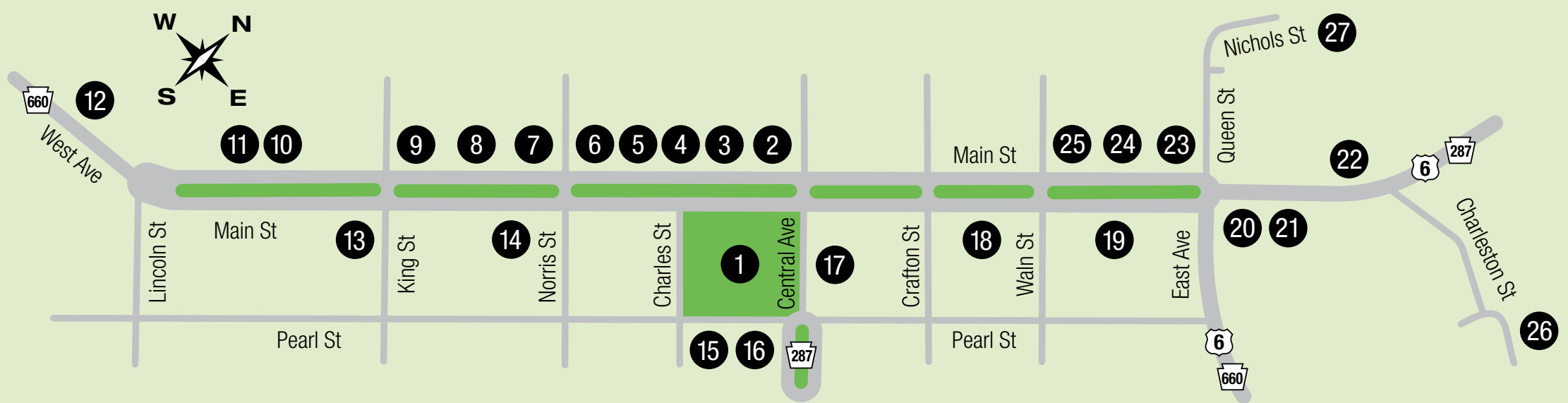
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The fountain in the middle of **"The Green,"** our town square on Main Street, is our starting point. This statue of **Wynken, Blynken and Nod** was given to Wellsboro in 1938 by Fred W. Bailey in memory of his wife Elizabeth, who was a daughter of Judge Cameron. This statue was inspired by **"The Dutch Lullaby,"** written by Eugene Field in 1889. There are several other statues and markers on **The Green** which are also of interest. Then we cross Main Street at the traffic light.



The red brick building on the corner at 114 Main Street is the former Tioga County Sheriff's residence and was constructed in 1860 at a cost of \$10,000. The two-story brick structure served as the Tioga County Jail until 1985. It is now occupied by **Develop Tioga, Wellsboro Chamber of Commerce, and Growth Resources of Wellsboro.** The elm tree in the front yard is one of the largest in existence and has been growing since sometime in the 1700s. This tree is older than Wellsboro and has been here since before the first settlers.



The **Tioga County Courthouse** was built in 1835. In addition to the court room and the judge's chambers, it houses the offices of many county officials.



Wellsboro was founded in 1806 by settlers from Delaware, Maryland, and Philadelphia; it was incorporated in 1830. The town was named in honor of **Mary Wells**, wife of one of the original settlers, Benjamin Wister Morris. **Mary Wells** (1761-1819) was a Philadelphia Quaker who came with her husband to this part of Tioga County in about 1805. This life-sized sculpture of **Mary Wells Morris**, is located on part of the land deeded by Benjamin and Mary Wells Morris to Tioga County in 1806. Frank and Mary Herzel of Harrisburg, PA, and Rita Bocher of Wynnewood, PA, commissioned the 5'7" figure.



120 Main Street is the **Robinson House**, home of the Tioga County Historical Society. The building was originally a tavern operated by Alpheus Cheney, Tioga County's first Sheriff. In the early 1830s, Samuel Dickinson added four more rooms to the front of the tavern, two upstairs and two downstairs. It was later purchased by John L. Robinson. The annex at the right rear is a replica of the First National Bank of Wellsborough, of which Mr. Robinson was a founder.



126 Main Street, the former law offices of **Walrath & Coolidge**, was the residence of the Honorable Henry W. Williams, constructed in 1885. At that time he was President Judge of Tioga County and in 1887 he was appointed to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.



The **First Presbyterian Church** at 130 Main Street was built in 1894. At that time it was held to be "the finest church of its size" in Northern Pennsylvania.



The **Green Free Library** at 134 Main Street was established in 1912 by an endowment from Charles Green of Roaring Branch. In 1916, the library moved into the beautiful house called "Chester Place," which was built by Chester Robinson, brother and business associate of John J. Robinson. The **Gmeiner Art and Cultural Center** at the right of the library was a gift to Wellsboro from the late Arthur Gmeiner of Denver, originally from the Nauvoo area of Tioga County.



140 Main Street is known as the **"Lincoln Door House."** The front door of this residence was a gift from Abraham Lincoln to Dr. and Mrs. J.H. Shearer when they bought this house in 1858. Mrs. Lincoln and Mrs. Shearer were close friends in Springfield, Illinois and the door came from a building there.



148 Main Street is the **"Lawyer House,"** childhood home to Leonard Harrison, whose father and brother were lawyers. Later home of attorney Bastian, attorney Jack Lewis, attorney George Linton and presently the home of attorney Thomas Walrath and his wife Brenda.



Located at the west end of Main Street is the oldest grocery store in Wellsboro, the **West End Market.** First opened in 1902, the store has been operated as a convenience market, a fish market, and a bulk food store.



Just around the corner at 10 West Avenue is the **Carleton Nursing Home.** Formerly the home of Leonard Harrison, banker and businessman, who donated 121 acres of land bordering Pine Creek, and known as **"The Lookout,"** to the commonwealth in 1922. This area is now known as Leonard Harrison State Park.



Across the street and down a block on the corner at 141 Main Street is the **Jesse Robinson Manor**, which was built in 1887 by a son of John L. Robinson. It has been described as **"Queen Anne style in the true English Spirit."**



As you start back toward **The Green**, the second and third houses were originally one building. It was constructed circa 1840s as the residence of the **Packer** family. After the death of the Honorable Horace B. Packer in 1942, the house was cut in two, the land divided and each piece sold separately.



Continue along Main Street to Charles Street, then turn right one block to Pearl Street. On the opposite corner is **St. Paul's Episcopal Church.** This parish was organized in 1838 and the present building was erected in 1897.



The building at 33 Pearl Street was erected about 1846 as the office of the **Bingham Estate**, a land company. It was moved from its original site in 1897 when St. Paul's Episcopal Church was built.



Across Central Avenue is a block of red brick buildings, in which law firms and insurance companies have their offices. These buildings date back to the 1860s and 1870s and several were built with law offices on the street floor and living quarters upstairs. This was the case with 19 Central Avenue, which was built by the Honorable Mortimer F. Elliot, who served as congressman-at-large in the Forty-Eighth Congress, now the law offices of **Cox, Stokes, & Lantz, P.C.**



Walk three blocks down Main Street through our **central business district.** Almost all of these buildings date back to the last century and are second- and third-generation family owned businesses.



Dunham's Department Store has operated in the same location since 1905. Although the original building was lost to a fire, owners Roy and Fannie Dunham rebuilt in 1913. The original tin ceiling remains in what is now the Housewares Department. The Art Deco building was constructed in the early 1930s, an effort to keep local tradesmen working during the Great Depression. No trip to Wellsboro is complete without grabbing a coffee in Café 1905, picking up a souvenir, or just browsing through the many departments to see why the locals say, "There's More in Store at Dunham's."



Across East Avenue is the **Wellsboro Diner**, which opened in 1939. This is a fine example of the diners of the 1930s and is more unusual in that it has been in continuous operation as a diner and has never been removed from its original site.



The former **Shattuck House**, completed in 1909, is one of the last three homes in what was one of Wellsboro's beautiful tree-lined residential sections on lower Main Street. It is now the home of Main Street Creamery.



The **Sherwood Motel**, formerly the house of Walter Sherwood, Esq. and family, the son of the Honorable Henry Sherwood and US Congressman. The **Sherwood House** was built circa 1886. It was converted to a motel in 1952. The house is the oldest of the three remaining homes on lower Main Street and is the only one that is still a residence.



Crossing the street again to the corner of Main and Queen Streets you will find the **United Methodist Church.** This building was completed in 1905.



The Art Deco **Arcadia Theater**, at 50 Main Street, was built in 1921 for silent pictures. This theater was one of the first in the state to show talking pictures in 1929. The theater is still in operation with four state-of-the-art screens featuring films, which change weekly.



Just next door at 62 Main Street is the **Penn Wells Hotel.** Wellsboro's first tavern or inn built in 1816 on this site, and the site has always been occupied by a tavern, inn or hotel. In 1869 A.P. Cone erected a four-story brick hotel. A fire in 1906 damaged the fourth floor so badly that it had to be removed. The building was purchased in 1885 by J.S. Coles and renamed the **"Cole House."** A group of local residents purchased the hotel in 1925 when it was closed for extensive remodeling and the addition of a fourth floor. At the time, the entire hotel was fire protected by a sprinkler system. The hotel re-opened in 1926 as the Penn Wells Hotel.

#### OTHER AREA POINTS OF INTEREST



The **Tioga Central Train Station** was a star of the rail line when it was rebuilt in 1914. Among other things, it boasted two toilet rooms and a "commodious" waiting room. Although now it is the Wellsboro House Brewery the owner maintains the historic exterior, walkways and lighting.



The **Wellsboro Cemetery** on Nichols Street is beautifully situated. This land was purchased in 1855, and the first burial took place in 1856. Here are the graves of the Morris family, founders of Wellsboro, which were moved from the original cemetery: George Washington Sears, known as "Nessmuk," writer of both prose and poetry; Honorable William A. Stone, who was a U.S. Representative and the only Governor of Pennsylvania from Tioga County; and many others. You may be particularly interested in the tomb on one of the main roads which was built in the form of a log cabin.

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