

BELLEFONTE INDUSTRIES

Western Maryland Dairy Company

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What is the Historical Resources Series?

Under a local history grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bellefonte conducted research and documentation of the industrial heritage of the Spring Creek waterfront. As part of this project, Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey forms were completed to document each surviving industrial resource and evaluate its significance. The Eagle Silk Mill was determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register as a contributing element of the Bellefonte Historic District.

—by Erin Hammerstedt

THIS BRICK BUILDING, WHICH WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1920 BY THE WESTERN MARYLAND DAIRY COMPANY, HOUSED OFFICES ON THE FIRST FLOOR AND A PASTEURIZING ROOM ON THE SECOND LEVEL. THE WESTERN MARYLAND DAIRY COMPANY'S BELLEFONTE CREAMERY WAS DETERMINED ELIGIBLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER INDIVIDUALLY BECAUSE OF ITS IMPORTANT HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS.

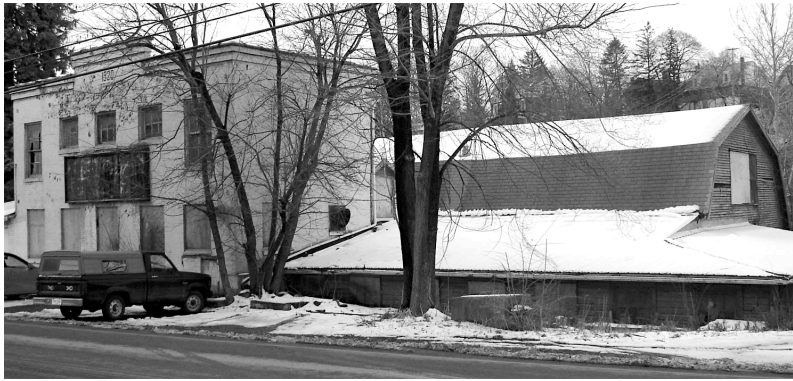
Western Maryland Dairy Company's Bellefonte Creamery

In 1920, Martha Thomas sold a small tract of land that had been part of the Thomas estate to Irvin D. Baxter, proprietor of the Western Maryland Dairy Company based in Baltimore, Maryland. The brick building that stands on the property today boasts tile work that reads "1920 Western Maryland Dairy," confirming that the building was constructed that year. In 1921, Baxter transferred the property to the Western Maryland Dairy Company. The Western Maryland Dairy Company acquired additional land from Martha J. Thomas in 1922.

After just four years of operation in Bellefonte, the Western Maryland Dairy Company sold the two tracts that comprised its Bellefonte Creamery to Sheffield Farms in 1924. The property was transferred "together with the improvements located thereon and the equipment located therein, excepting, however, all cans and supplies." The words "Sealtest Sheffield Farms" are still visible on a large wooden signboard located between the first and second story windows.

With plants at Bellefonte, Centre Hall, Howard, Coburn, and Jersey Shore, Sheffield Farms dominated the local dairy market. They paid \$2.50 to \$2.90 per hundredweight, enticing farmers to sell their milk to the company and driving several other companies out of business. Farmers who sold to Sheffield Farms were required to build milk houses on their farms to meet the sanitary requirements of New York City, but most did so willingly due to the financial incentives offered by Sheffield Farms. Larger processing and distributing facilities, such as the Western Maryland Dairy Company's Bellefonte Creamery, were also updated to meet the company's sanitary requirements.

In 1956, "separate corporate existence of the Sheffield Farms Company, Inc., terminated and all of the estate, property, rights, privileges, and franchises of Sheffield Farms Company, Inc. became vested in and were held and enjoyed by National Dairy Products Corporation." In addition to acquiring Sheffield Farms, the National Dairy Products Corporation purchased other



VIEW OF THE DAIRY BUILDING LOOKING NORTH FROM NORTH THOMAS STREET ILLUSTRATING THE OFFICE BUILDING AND WING HOUSING THE BOILER ROOM,



VIEW OF THE DAIRY BUILDING AS SEEN FROM THE RAILROAD TRACKS. THE REAR OF THE BUILDING SERVED AS THE PRIMARY SHIPPING AREA, WHERE CREAM AND MILK WERE LOADED INTO RAILROAD CARS FOR SHIPMENT TO MARKET, PRIMARILY IN NEW YORK CITY.

franchises and facilities, including Bryers ice cream in 1926 and Kraft-Phenix Cheese Corporation in 1930. Like many components of National Dairy Products Corporation, Kraft-Phenix Cheese continued to operate as an independent subsidiary of National Dairy Products Corporation for many years. It was eventually absorbed into the parent company, which changed its name to Kraftco Corporation in 1969 and Kraft in 1976. Kraftco Corporation sold the Bellefonte Creamery to the Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative Association, Inc. for \$15,800 in 1973. After six

years of operating the dairy, the Eastern Milk Producers Cooperative Association, Inc sold the property to William H. Klaban III for \$18,000 in 1979, ending the building's association with the dairy industry.