

# Hershey, Pennsylvania: America's Most Popular Town!

...Well, it must be! It's the chocolate capital of the world! And I always associate chocolate with Christmas because I always receive a box of chocolate covered cherries under the Christmas tree!

Milton Hershey picked rural Derry Township against the advice of friends and business associates. They saw isolation. He saw a ready supply of fresh milk for his chocolate and a steady labor force made up of hardworking Pennsylvania Germans. His advisors saw the tiny town of Derry Church. Mr. Hershey envisioned a complete, new community.

The town quickly emerged, following a plan that had been carefully thought out by Mr. Hershey. Workmen started digging the foundation for the Hershey chocolate factory in early 1903. Before the year was half over, a school and several other key buildings were also underway. In designing his community, Mr. Hershey was influenced by other "manufacturing communities" which were springing up at the turn of the century, both in this country and abroad.

The community's most impressive tourist attractions were constructed during the town's 1930's building boom. The Depression provided Milton Hershey with the means, a sizeable labor force of unemployed workers, to carry out his large scale building plans. He was able to build at the lowest possible cost while helping the local economy by maintaining full employment.

*Hershey chocolate factory—1976*

The construction of the Community Theatre, Hotel, Park, Arena and Stadium transformed Hershey into a major tourist attraction, capable of entertaining thousands of people at a time. By the end of the decade Hershey emerged as a nationally known tourist destination.

Since Milton Hershey's death in 1945 tourism has become increasingly important to the Hershey community. Most of the support services originally provided by Mr. Hershey, and managed by Hershey Estates, have been sold to private interests. Hershey Estates, now HERCO, Inc., has concentrated on developing its resorts and recreational facilities. Today, these attractions, as well as the chocolate factory, draw millions of visitors to Hershey each year.

