

history of hershey pa

history of hershey pa is a fascinating journey that encapsulates the evolution of a small town into a global icon synonymous with chocolate and sweet treats. The town of Hershey, Pennsylvania, founded by Milton S. Hershey, has transformed from its humble beginnings into a vibrant community known for its rich chocolate heritage. This article will delve into the origins of Hershey, its development throughout the 20th century, the establishment of Hersheypark, and the cultural significance of the town today. By exploring these topics, readers will gain a comprehensive understanding of how Hershey, PA, became a pivotal location in American history and culture.

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Early Beginnings of Hershey, PA

The story of Hershey, PA, begins in the late 19th century. Originally inhabited by Native Americans, the area was later settled by European immigrants in the early 1700s. The land was primarily agricultural, with farming being the mainstay of the local economy. In the 1880s, Milton S. Hershey, a successful caramel producer, saw potential in a site near the Lebanon Valley railroad that would later become the town of Hershey.

The Founding of Hershey

In 1903, Milton Hershey purchased land to establish a chocolate factory. His vision was not just to produce chocolate but to create a community around it. By 1906, Hershey founded the Hershey Chocolate Company, and the town began to take shape around the factory. The town was officially incorporated in 1906,

reflecting Hershey's commitment to building a community that would support his business.

The Role of the Railroads

The establishment of the railroad was crucial for Hershey's development. The Lebanon Valley Railroad facilitated the transportation of cocoa beans and other raw materials needed to produce chocolate. This accessibility allowed Milton Hershey to expand his business rapidly. As a result, the population grew, attracting workers who were drawn to the new job opportunities offered by the Hershey Chocolate Company.

The Rise of the Hershey Chocolate Company

With the establishment of the Hershey Chocolate Company, the town began to thrive. Milton Hershey's innovative approach to chocolate production, including the introduction of milk chocolate to America, set the stage for the company's success. By the early 1900s, Hershey's products became household names, and the brand's popularity soared.

Innovations in Chocolate Production

Milton Hershey was a pioneer in the chocolate industry, introducing several innovations that changed the way chocolate was made and consumed. Some of these innovations include:

- The use of fresh milk in chocolate production, which was a novel idea at the time.
- The establishment of mass production techniques that increased efficiency and lowered costs.
- The development of iconic products like the Hershey Bar and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, which became staples in American candy.

Economic Impact on the Region

The success of the Hershey Chocolate Company had a profound impact on the local economy. The factory's expansion led to job creation and increased

economic activity in the area. By the 1920s, Hershey was not only known for its chocolate but also as a model for corporate philanthropy, with Milton Hershey investing in community projects, schools, and infrastructure.

Hersheypark: A Community Landmark

One of the most significant contributions to the town's identity is the establishment of Hersheypark in 1906. Originally created as a leisure park for factory employees, it has since evolved into one of the most popular amusement parks in the United States.

The Evolution of Hersheypark

Hersheypark began as a simple picnic area featuring a few attractions and gradually grew into a full-fledged amusement park. Over the decades, it has added numerous rides, attractions, and shows, making it a premier destination for families.

Attractions and Events

Today, Hersheypark boasts a variety of thrilling rides, including roller coasters, water rides, and family attractions. The park also hosts seasonal events, such as Halloween and Christmas celebrations, which draw millions of visitors each year. Some of the most notable attractions include:

- Skyrush – a high-speed roller coaster known for its airtime.
- Fahrenheit – a vertical lift coaster that offers a thrilling experience.
- The Boardwalk – a water park section featuring slides, wave pools, and lazy rivers.

The Legacy of Milton S. Hershey

Milton S. Hershey's impact extends beyond the chocolate industry. His vision for a community-oriented town and his philanthropic efforts have left a lasting legacy. After his death in 1945, the Hershey Trust Company was established to oversee his philanthropic endeavors.

Philanthropic Initiatives

Hershey's commitment to education and community welfare is evident in several initiatives, including:

- The Milton Hershey School – a private school providing education and care for children in need.
- Community investments – funding for local projects, parks, and recreational facilities.
- Support for the arts and culture – promoting cultural events and institutions within Hershey.

The Hershey Story Museum

The Hershey Story Museum, opened in 2009, serves as a tribute to Milton Hershey's life and the history of the Hershey Chocolate Company. The museum offers interactive exhibits, historical artifacts, and educational programs that showcase the legacy of Hershey and his impact on the community.

The Cultural Significance of Hershey Today

Today, Hershey, PA, is known as “The Sweetest Place on Earth.” The town attracts millions of visitors each year, drawn by its chocolate heritage and family-friendly attractions. Hershey's blend of history, entertainment, and community spirit makes it a unique destination.

Tourism and Economic Growth

The tourism industry plays a vital role in Hershey's economy. Attractions like Hersheypark, The Hershey Story Museum, and chocolate-themed experiences continue to draw visitors from across the globe. This influx of tourists contributes significantly to local businesses, hotels, and restaurants.

Community Events and Festivals

Hershey hosts a variety of events and festivals throughout the year,

celebrating its chocolate heritage and community spirit. Events such as the Hershey Chocolate Festival and seasonal celebrations enrich the cultural fabric of the town, fostering a sense of community and pride among residents.

Conclusion

The history of Hershey, PA, is a remarkable tale of innovation, community, and legacy. From its early beginnings to its transformation into a global chocolate powerhouse, Hershey continues to enchant visitors and residents alike. The town's commitment to preserving its rich heritage while embracing growth and development ensures that it remains a beloved destination for generations to come. As it stands today, Hershey exemplifies the sweet success of a vision turned reality, deeply rooted in the spirit of Milton S. Hershey.

Q: What year was Hershey, PA, founded?

A: Hershey, PA, was officially founded in 1906 when Milton S. Hershey established the Hershey Chocolate Company and the town began to take shape around it.

Q: How did Milton S. Hershey contribute to the community?

A: Milton S. Hershey contributed to the community by investing in local infrastructure, establishing the Milton Hershey School for underprivileged children, and supporting various community projects and philanthropic initiatives.

Q: What are some of the main attractions in Hershey, PA?

A: Some main attractions in Hershey, PA, include Hersheypark, The Hershey Story Museum, Hershey Gardens, and Chocolate World, each offering unique experiences related to the town's chocolate heritage.

Q: How has Hershey, PA, changed over the years?

A: Hershey, PA, has evolved from a small agricultural community to a thriving tourist destination known for its chocolate industry, amusement park, and cultural events, attracting millions of visitors annually.

Q: What is the significance of Hersheypark?

A: Hersheypark is significant as a community landmark that began as a picnic area for factory workers and has grown into a major amusement park, contributing to the local economy and providing entertainment for families.

Q: What products is the Hershey Chocolate Company known for?

A: The Hershey Chocolate Company is best known for iconic products such as Hershey Bars, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, and Hershey Kisses, which have become staples in American candy culture.

Q: When did Hersheypark open?

A: Hersheypark opened in 1906, initially serving as a recreational area for employees of the Hershey Chocolate Company before evolving into a major amusement park.

Q: What is the Hershey Trust Company?

A: The Hershey Trust Company was established to manage the philanthropic endeavors of Milton S. Hershey, particularly regarding the Milton Hershey School and other community welfare initiatives.

Q: What role did the railroad play in Hershey's development?

A: The railroad played a crucial role in Hershey's development by facilitating the transportation of raw materials for chocolate production, allowing for the rapid expansion of the Hershey Chocolate Company and the growth of the town.

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