

PRESS RELEASE

24 October 2005

Kutztown Area Historical Society Releases Second in Series of Landmark Publications

The Kutztown Area Historical Society is pleased to announce the publication of *A Most Agreeable Town: A Photographic History of the Borough of Kutztown, Volume 2: Railroad & Industrial Corridor / East Main Street*. Published on high-quality glossy paper in a limited hardcover edition consisting of 1500 copies, this volume contains more than 300 vintage black-and-white photographs, most previously unpublished, of the Borough's industrial section that developed along the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad's spur from Topton and of the residential neighborhoods that appeared along the Easton Road (today East Main Street) shortly after the turn of the 20th century.

Authored by society librarian-archivist Brendan D. Strasser with the assistance of the library committee, *A Most Agreeable Town, Volume 2* traces the development of the eastern sections of the Borough of Kutztown in the wake of several converging factors, beginning with the completion of P. & R. trackage from Topton in 1869 and the acquisition that same year of adjacent farmland by the Kutztown Foundry & Machine Co. As fields proximate to the railroad became the core of the Borough's emerging industrial base, witnessing the construction of an iron company, shoe factories, and mills devoted to silk and textiles as well as to feed and grain, the town's growing population led to increased pressure for residential development. That factor, combined with the Foundry's need for additional land, led to the company's decision in the early 1900s to purchase the former Bieber farm from the Kramlich Estate, thus making available much of the land along both sides of Park Avenue east of the Saucony Creek for development.

Many of the photographs date to the first decades of the 20th century, including a marvelous array first produced as real photo post cards by the Rev. Dr. W. W. Deatrick, a KSNS professor whose images are nationally recognized for their composition and clarity. Each image is accompanied by a full caption providing historical details about the properties pictured and many other details about Kutztown's establishing families and their descendants. The book's introduction concentrates on the years between the mid 19th century and the Borough's original self-promotion in the 1920s as "A Most Agreeable Town."

Copies of *A Most Agreeable Town* will be available for \$40.00 (tax included) through the historical society or at any of the following Kutztown establishments: Adam n' Eve Boutique (309 W. Main St.), Berkleigh Travel Services (236 W. Main St.), Business Link (314 W. Main St.), The Crewel World (361 E. Main St.), Feed & Read Book Store (26 S. Whiteoak St.), Heatwaves Tanning Salon (218 W. Main St.), Jackie & Daughter Flower Shop (271 W. Main St.), the Louisa Gonsler Community Library (70 Bieber Alley), J. A. Meyer, Jeweler (156 W. Main St.), Mr. Food (342 W. Main St.), and the Saucony Book Shop (41 W. Main St.). Mail-order copies are also available for \$45.00; please contact Dr. Strasser directly at 484-646-9097 or brendan@hometownnu.com to reserve a copy, then send a check payable to the Kutztown Area Historical Society, P. O. Box 307, Kutztown, PA 19530. For further details, visit the society's website at www.kutztownhistory.org.

The Society has already begun work on Volume 3, focusing attention on the Borough's side and back streets, for November 2006 release, and Volume 4, on the Kutztown Park, Kutztown Fairground, and the original Kutztown Swimming Pool, to be published in time for the 100th anniversary of Kutztown Day in August 2007. Future plans also include separate volumes on the Keystone State Normal School, Maxatawny and surrounding townships, and the Kutztown Area School District.