

THE SWEETEST PLACE ON EARTH

MIKE ABBOTT spoke to Club members about a recent visit to Hershey, Pennsylvania where he discovered the legacy of Milton Hershey. MIKE noted that the story of Hershey is a great example of the 'American Dream' where a man of humble origins with a grand dream can rise to be a notable contributor to society. Mr. Hershey, born in 1857, learned to make candy as an apprentice and developed a dream of making chocolate affordable to everyone. At that time chocolate was made at small factories in Europe mainly for the wealthy because it was so expensive. Mr. Hershey failed three times at candy making before success in making caramels. He sold that business for a million dollars in 1900! MIKE explained that with these funds Mr. Hershey was able to perfect his milk chocolate recipe and five years later he was producing Hershey chocolate. By using imported German machinery and inventing additional machines, Mr. Hershey applied mass production principles to chocolate making. Thus he was able to achieve his early dream of making affordable chocolate. To provide for workers at his plant situated in the remote dairy farm country in Pennsylvania, Mr. Hershey began building a town near the plant and trolley lines to neighboring towns. He also build a boarding school to train orphans and the poor for work at his plant. During the depression of the 1930's there was no recession at the Hershey plant. Mr. Hershey used out-of-work men to build hotels, parks, and other infrastructure for his town, Hershey, Pennsylvania. Today, the main Hershey Plant there is the largest chocolate plant in the world. That is why this is the 'sweetest place on earth.'