

Milton Hershey and His Chocolate Factory



Milton Hershey didn't build just a chocolate factory. He built a city and a legacy as well as a chocolate factory.

Milton Hershey was born in 1857 in Derry Township, Pennsylvania. Derry Township was (and still is) home to many dairy farms. When he was 10, Milton's parents separated and his father moved away. When he was 14, Milton began to work as an apprentice to a candy maker in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. An apprentice works for a master craftsman in order to learn the trade. He worked in this job for four years.

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Milton had the heart of an entrepreneur. An entrepreneur is someone who starts his or her own business. Milton didn't want to work for someone else. He wanted to start his own business.

When Milton was 19, he set up his own candy shop. It was in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, his store was never a great success. Despite all his hard work, Milton closed the shop after five years and moved to Denver, Colorado to live with his father.

While in Colorado, Milton began to work in a candy shop and learned the art of making caramel. With caramel on his mind, Milton struck out again on his own. He tried and failed to start two more businesses before striking caramel-colored gold.

In 1883, Milton returned to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and started the Lancaster Caramel Company. He worked hard and became very successful. Soon, Milton was shipping his caramels all over the country.

In 1893, Milton went to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. There, he fell in love with the art of chocolate making. At the exposition, he saw chocolate-making demonstrations and knew that chocolate was in his future.

Making good milk chocolate was easier said than done. Milton worked for years to come up with his recipe. And when he finally got it, he knew he had a winner.



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In 1898, Milton married Kitty Sweeny. She later supported Milton in the many charities he created.

In 1900, Milton sold his Lancaster Caramel Company for \$1 million. (In today's terms that would be more than \$27 million.) He then began to build a gigantic, modern candy factory in Derry Church, Pennsylvania. He chose this location because it was close to the dairy farms from which his factory would



get the milk to create its chocolate. His company quickly grew and prospered with new ideas and innovations. Milton invented the Hershey Kiss in 1907 and the world of chocolate hasn't been the same since.

As his business grew, Milton wanted to give back and help others. He started with the people who worked for him. Milton built a town near his home and factory. He wanted it to be a model community, with nice houses, schools, parks, and so on. He even built a trolley system to help his workers get to and from work.

Milton and Kitty were never able to have children of their own. Instead, they built the Hershey Industrial School for orphaned boys. They felt like these boys were their children. The school is still around today and is now called the Milton Hershey School. It has changed a bit, too. The school is for children from struggling families and it now accepts both girls and boys. Before he died, Milton created a fund that would support the school for as long as his company was around.



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Milton constantly made improvements to his town, now called Hershey, Pennsylvania. He added more amusements to the park, including rides, a zoo, and more. As time passed, the park grew. Today, it is known as Hershey Park. It features more than 70 rides and rollercoasters.

Milton Hershey worked hard all his life. He dedicated a lot of his time and money to charity. He put a lot of effort into building a nice place for his employees to live. Milton worked well into his eighties. He died in 1945.

