



Kreider Shoe Factory 155 South Poplar Street

It is August and time to get ready to go back to school. For many families this means shopping for school clothes. Perhaps purchasing new shoes or sneakers. One of the largest manufacturers of shoes in Elizabethtown, the second largest in Lancaster County from 1901-1954, was Kreider Shoe Manufacturing at 155 South Poplar Street.

Aaron Shenk Kreider (1863-1929) was a member of the Annville Church of the Brethren. He attended Lebanon Valley College. He graduated from Allentown Business College in 1880. He was on the board of trustees for Elizabethtown College. He was a contributor of resources for the Brethren Historical Records collection, currently the Earl H. and Anita F. Hess Archives and Special Collections of Elizabethtown College's High Library. He was president of the National Association of Shoe Manufacturing from 1913-1916. He served as a Republican in Congress from 1913-1929. In the U. S. House of Representatives he chaired the House Committee on Expenditures in the Department of the Interior. He owned grain and coal businesses in Palmyra. With his wife Elizabeth Horst he founded the town of Lawn five miles from Elizabethtown. In 1893 he purchased Palmyra Boot and Shoe Company, opening new factories in Annville, Middletown, and Lebanon.

In 1901 he opened Kreider Shoe Manufacturing in the former A. Buch & Sons factory at South Market and College Avenue (the topic of this column for September). In 1904 Kreider built a new factory at Washington and South Poplar Streets. By 1915 the factory was daily producing 5,000 pairs of shoes. In the 1930s the company was dependent on contracts with the Pennsylvania State Police. In 1954 the A. S. Kreider Company sold the building to the Elizabethtown Garment Company.

Elizabethtown hosted a number of shoe and garment factories and related industries. In 1918 William A. Withers, superintendent of Kreider shoe factories, established a subsidiary company producing 1,000 pairs of shoes daily. In 1928 this firm became the Lancaster Shoe Company before merging with Gerberich-Payne Shoe Company. In 1920 Louis Charleroy of the French firm Charleroy Shoes built the Savoy Shoe Company at 453 West High Street which is now an apartment complex called Savoy Shoe Factory Lofts. Charleroy manufactured women's shoes, in 1946 becoming a subsidiary of A. S. Beck, Inc. New York. In 1909 Elizabethtown Shirt Company started on Bainbridge Street. In 1925 Lewis Brothers manufactured pajamas at the same location; later in 1935 this was Greenberg Garment Factory. In 1927 The Elizabethtown Garment Factory was built on Poplar Street. In the 1920s Harvey and Jacob Stern opened the first dress factory on East High Street. In 1949 Jacob Risser opened Tiny Tots and Celeste manufacturing. In 1935 this became Classic Hosiery. In 1935 Joseph and

Josephine Greenberg opened the Greenberg Garment Factory on West Bainbridge Street moving to a new factory in 1957 on North Poplar Street. In 1938 Benjamin Weiman and his son-in-law Milton S. Goldstein established the Empire Shoe Company on West Washington Street, making 3,000 pairs of boy's shoes daily. The Weimans and Goldsteins were the first employers in Elizabethtown to provide hospitalization for employees and proposed child day care for working mothers. In 1938 Max Hess, a Jewish shirt manufacturer, escaped the Holocaust moving from Germany to Elizabethtown. With his sons Werner and Gunther, and his nephew Fred Stern; they opened the Hestteco Manufacturing Company on West High Street and in 1972 the subsidiary Hummelstown Manufacturing Company. Hestteco made women's dresses and specialized in children's clothing. In 1957 John B. Greenberg and his son Joel started J. B. Athletic Shoes manufacturing ice skates, soccer and basketball shoes in Elizabethtown.

The architect Cassius E. Urban (1863-1939) designed many of Kreider's factories and his home Hill Farm Estate in Annville. Urban designed Milton Hershey's homes and factories as well. Urban designed the Allegheny House at the Masonic Village, the Elizabethtown Public High School on South Poplar Street, the Moose lodge and theater complex on Market Street, and the telephone company building on North Market Street. Some historians believe Urban designed the Kreider shoe factory in Elizabethtown. Currently the property is an apartment complex called Peach Alley Court. In 1979 the building was placed on the Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places maintained by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. In 1980 through the efforts of John J. Snyder and David H. Lynch representing the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster this building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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