

History of Sugarcreek

Sugarcreek had its beginning soon after the Conotton Valley Railroad was built through the Sugar Creek Valley in 1882. A depot was built along the railroad just one mile east of the thriving village of Shanesville in western Tuscarawas County, and a cluster of buildings grew up around the depot. On July 23, 1883, John S. Yoder officially recorded a plat of thirty-one lots in Sugarcreek Township, laid out on nine acres of his lands. The platted area was named "The Town of East Shanesville." The fledgling town continued to grow, in 1888, a post office was opened and given the name of "Sugarcreek" taken from the name of the nearby stream.

Because of extensive deposits of clay and coal in the area it was natural that brick and tile manufacturing soon became an important industry here. Sugarcreek is one of the nation's leading face brick centers.

The 15 years beginning with 1957 was a period of unparalleled industrial expansion in Sugarcreek. The commercial life of the community gradually gravitated from Shanesville to the new town along the railroad and Sugarcreek eventually overtook its parent village in both population and commercial development. Finally, in 1968, the two towns were consolidated under the name of Sugarcreek.

Sugarcreek's newspaper, "The Budget," was established in 1890 by John C. Miller. In addition to serving the Sugarcreek area, it has an international circulation among the Amish and Mennonite people. For a few years the town had one other newspaper, "The Independent," which was acquired by "The Budget" in 1923 and discontinued.

In the early 1800's a number of Swiss immigrants settled in the area. They set up small factories where they practiced the art of cheese-making which they learned in their native land. Sugarcreek eventually became the center of the Swiss Cheese industry in Ohio. New and larger factories were built and soon the cheese-makers began seeking new markets for their product. The idea of a Swiss festival was proposed to promote the Swiss Cheese industry and the village of Sugarcreek. The first Ohio Swiss Festival was held here in 1953 and it was an outstanding success. It has become one of Ohio's most important annual outdoor events. Due to the influence of the Swiss Festival, Sugarcreek merchants began to remodel their buildings into typical Swiss structures. As a result, Sugarcreek has become a tourist attraction of major proportion. Thousands of visitors throng the streets during the tourist season to see the Swiss buildings and visit the Alpine Hills Museum on Main St.

Sugarcreek is known for its many tourist attractions which, just to name a few, include the Historical Alpine Hills Museum with its displays that depict the early days of the community and its Swiss and Amish heritage, plus a trip to Amish country would not be complete without sampling Swiss cheese and wine at one of the many cheese houses and wineries.

Sugarcreek is a unique combination of Old World charm and modern industry. The Swiss atmosphere of the business section changes to a modern industrial scene in the outskirts of town. Then there is another quick change to the horse and buggy era in the Amish farm country surrounding the town. People from all parts of the country find Sugarcreek a delightful place to visit, and approximately two thousand people find it a delightful place in which to live.

If you wish to receive more information on the History of Sugarcreek contact the Tuscarawas County Convention and Visitors Bureau at 124 East High Avenue, New Philadelphia, Ohio, 44663, call (330) 602-2420, or visit our website at www.ohiotimelessadventures.com. For further information contact the Tuscarawas County Public Library in New Philadelphia at (330) 364-4474 or the Tuscarawas County Historical Society at the Tuscarawas Campus of Kent State University at (330) 339-3391 Extension 47494.