

Acknowledgments

It has long been an aim of mine to publish a book of selected local history newspaper articles that I have written and by doing so to accomplish twin objectives: to preserve the articles in permanent book form before they are forgotten and lost, and to use proceeds from sales of the book to financially assist historic preservation efforts in Brownsville and the surrounding area.

Now that this book is in print, both goals have become a reality. I have written this book, and I have gifted to BARC (Brownsville Area Revitalization Corporation) the exclusive right to print and sell it for the first four years of its “life,” with all of the proceeds from its sale to be directed toward BARC programs promoting historic preservation and community improvement in the Brownsville area.

BARC has been able to take advantage of my offer thanks to the initiative of BARC board member Norma Ryan and the assistance of Pennsylvania State Representative H. William DeWeese. Through their efforts, BARC has been awarded a legislative grant by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The grant will help defray BARC’s costs of printing and marketing this book, thereby allowing proceeds from sales of the book to be put directly to work in the Brownsville community.

It is fitting that foremost in my acknowledgments should be Norma Ryan, who not only sought the grant that enables BARC to take advantage of this opportunity, but who also has worked tirelessly with me during the preparation of this book and has been passionate in her determination to preserve these historical articles. Norma has been and continues to be a relentless dynamo in promoting Brownsville and looking after its historic preservation.

During the eight years of my writing these local history columns for the Uniontown *Herald-Standard*, I enjoyed great working relationships with the two editors with whom I worked: Mike Ellis and his successor, Mark O’Keefe. The *Herald-Standard* has been unfailingly cooperative in every way in helping me make this book a reality, with publisher Val Laub leading the way by graciously offering the newspaper’s assistance in marketing the book.

I appreciate the sharing of vintage photographs by the Brownsville Historical Society, whose CD of historic Brownsville photographs is available at Nemaquin Castle, and by the many individuals who are recognized in Appendix B. I am grateful to proofreaders Kathy Krainak, Cheryl Adams, Esther Tunney, Caroline Fecek, Norma Ryan, Louise Jencik, and Joseph Jencik for their careful scrutiny of the manuscript,

and to Colleen Schmidt of BARC, who developed the cover design and has played a key role in marketing the book. Kari McConnell at Mechling Bookbindery has been invaluable in helping me avoid software pitfalls as I prepared digital files of the articles and photographs for publication.

I owe great thanks to my wife Melissa, my daughter Kristen, and my son Kelly. Their patience has been put to the test on more than one occasion over the past years, not only during the preparation of this book, but during the years when I was writing a weekly newspaper column while teaching full-time. It is my hope that this book and its possible sequels will justify their sacrifices by establishing a permanent anecdotal record, albeit an episodic and far from complete one, of the events and personalities of the past century in the Brownsville area.

Most of all, I owe a debt of gratitude to literally hundreds of people all over the United States, residents and expatriates of Brownsville and southwestern Pennsylvania, who over the years have shared with me their colorful tales and their family photographs. It is their personal stories that made my local history-themed newspaper columns a popular feature in the *Herald-Standard*.

Through the mail, over the phone, via email, and in person, these folks have poured their intensely personal tales into a melting pot of memories, trusting me to forge them into stories to be shared with the readers. To the extent that these efforts to preserve the community's history and cultural heritage have been successful, all of the credit rightfully belongs to them.