

Foreword

There has been no formal history of the Brownsville area written since J. Percy Hart's *History and Directory of the Three Towns* was published over one hundred years ago. The book in your hands is not its long-awaited successor. Instead, this book is a collection of down-to-earth stories from a history-rich town and its energetic people, set in the past century and told by the folks who have lived there, in their own words and their own style.

For eight years, I wrote about these people and shared their stories in the Uniontown *Herald-Standard*. But newspaper clippings age and crumble. Articles on web sites are here today and gone tomorrow. The purpose of this book is a simple one – to preserve in book form a healthy sampling of those eight years of weekly columns. It is my hope that for the enlightenment of future generations, this book and its planned sequels will preserve these stories about an exciting, bustling era in southwestern Pennsylvania's history.

Many of these articles are based upon the recollections of local residents, freely passed on to me to be shared with my readers, for which I was grateful when I originally wrote the columns for the newspaper. I re-express that gratitude now with the publication of this book, which contains sixty-six articles chosen from the nearly four hundred that appeared in the *Herald-Standard* from 1998 to 2006.

The chapters entitled *Looking Back with . . .* are wide-ranging conversations with some straight-talking sages of the community. They dipped into the hoarded memories and insights of a lifetime and shared them with me.

The chapters entitled *Brownsville Close-up* are in-depth looks at the lives of Brownsville notables past and present, some of whose renown has transcended their small-town roots.

Interspersed among these two thematic units are individual chapters that take a nostalgic look at “the way things were” or share true stories of larger-than-life local characters. Others explore the community's rich history or detail dramatic events still etched in the memories of long-time residents.

Most of these articles were originally published in the newspaper as parts of a series. One article was printed each week, and each series often stretched over a month or more. In this book, all of the articles in each series are unified into a single chapter, allowing a continuous reading of each series from start to finish.

Keep in mind that the articles are presented just as they appeared when originally published in the *Herald-Standard*. For this reason, an

individual who is mentioned in an article may have since passed away or moved from the town where he lived when the article was published. Readers who wonder when a particular article first appeared in the *Herald-Standard* may consult Appendix A, which provides the original newspaper publication date of each series.

I have always believed that every person, no matter how ordinary his daily routine or how unremarkable his station in life, has had his share of fascinating life experiences. My interviews with people over the years have consistently borne out that theory.

After you have heard some of them speak from these pages, I think you will agree. It gives me great pleasure to share their tales with you.