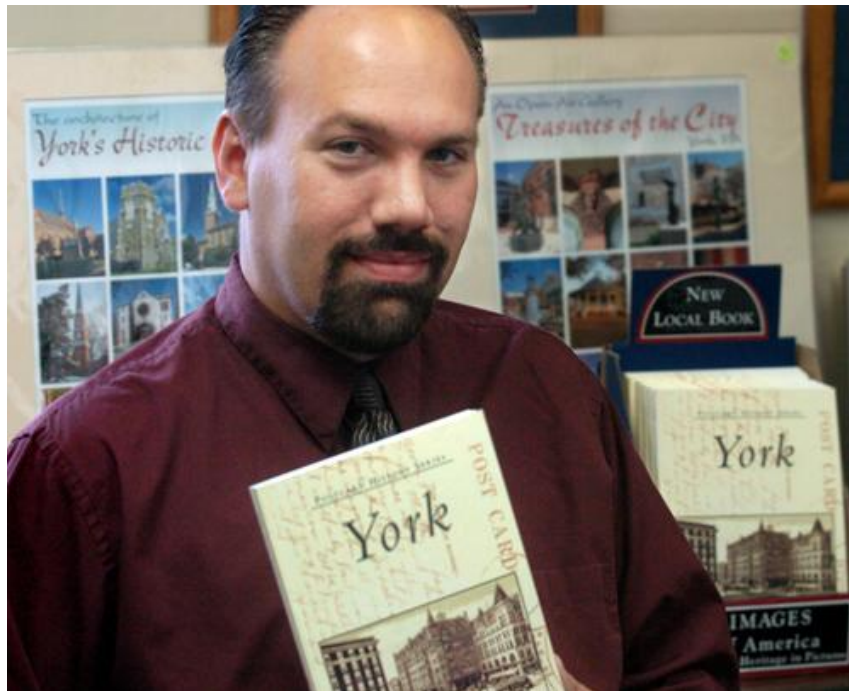


# The York Dispatch

## Of fountains and facades: Exploring York's history

Local author offers a glimpse of city's past with book of postcard reproductions

By JOHN BUGBEE *The York Dispatch*



Monday, August 01, 2005 - Not all of York's buildings are historic or architectural gems, but the city has a trove of significant buildings that have survived the decades when other cities rushed to modernize, starting with the wrecking ball.

What survived in York may be more a matter of economics than a desire to preserve history, said author Scott Butcher.

"I like to think it's the Pennsylvania Dutch heritage that's very stubborn and slow to change," Butcher said.

As a result, many of the city's oldest and most prestigious buildings are still standing, spared the tacky facades and gimcrackery that otherwise cheapen so many buildings.

Butcher, 36, is the author of "York," an illustrated history of the city's buildings and neighborhoods portrayed in vintage postcards.

Published by Arcadia Publishing of New Hampshire as part of its Postcard History Series, the book contains 180 postcard reproductions portraying the city's churches, the downtown, commercial and public buildings and parks.

"In looking at these old postcards, you're really getting a history of York," Butcher said. "This shows what a vibrant community York was."

Among his favorite buildings, Butcher said, is the York City Fire Department's Rex-Laurel Fire Station at the corner of South Duke and East King streets, the U.S. post office on South George Street and the old Federal Building, built in 1895, at the corner of West Philadelphia and Beaver streets.

Memories of past: Not all the buildings and places depicted in the book's postcards have survived.

"It shows a lot of what we've lost over the years, too," Butcher said.

For example, the imposing City Market House with its tall clock tower, built in 1878 on South Duke Street and expanded over the years, was demolished for a gas station in 1963.

Gone, too, is the French chateau-inspired Western Maryland Railroad passenger station on North George Street along the Codorus Creek, although the original freight station and office still stand at the site.

Except for the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Penn Park, the park's ornate "Rebecca at the Well" fountain, the Elks Monument and fountain, the park's walkways and pavilions have long disappeared.

Missing in the book are illustrations of the Central Market and the Strand-Capitol Performing Arts Center, simply because he couldn't find postcards of them, Butcher said.

A native Yorker, Butcher is director of marketing for NuTec Design Associates Inc., an architectural and engineering firm.

He's working on a second book on the architectural history of 140 buildings in York, Hanover and the county, due out sometime next year.

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