

Kutztown, Pennsylvania

PCC Bill Smith, Editor, LITPC "Trading Post"

Welcome to the Pennsylvania Dutch Country. More specifically, welcome to Kutztown, Pennsylvania, the home of Kutztown University, and the Kutztown Lions and Kutztown Lioness Clubs. This rather picturesque community is located geographically between Reading and Allentown, Pennsylvania, and its primary "industry" is education. My wife and I first became familiar with Kutztown back in the early 1950's when we traveled between our home in Virginia and her birthplace in the suburbs of Allentown. There was a little diner adjacent to the local airfield that provided us with an ideal comfort stop, as well as some of the best food we've ever tasted on the road. Funny thing is we still visit that same diner next to the airfield most every time we're in the area for some of the outstanding food. Anyway, the most prominent thing about the town then, and now, was the quaint little Kutztown State Teachers College along the highway. The only difference now is that it's a good-sized institution called Kutztown University. Not being in Lions at the time, we obviously were unaware that one day this little Pennsylvania Dutch Country town would become famous for us as the home of what arguably is one of the most collectible series of pins in our pin trading community.

The first pin in the Pennsylvania Dutch Farm Life series was issued in 1976 and it depicted a farmer behind a plow. This pin and the next six pins have only the Lions emblem. Beginning with the two pins issued in 1983, which depict a Farm Lady and a Farmer, a local artist who just happens to be a member of the Kutztown Lioness Club, started designing the pins and she included both the Lions and Lioness emblems on many of the pins thereafter. As a matter of fact, the pins from 1983 to the three Spinning Wheels issued in 2005 were actually issued by the Lioness Club. Since most of the members of that Club had and still have some kind of affiliation with the members of the Lions Club, there has been acceptance by all concerned. The last pin to have been issued in 2006 is strictly a Lions Club production and shows the Lions food stand that is a permanent fixture at the Kutztown Fair Grounds. Each year during the Folk Festival, many Lions from all over the country stopped by the food booth and inquired about the availability of Kutztown Lions pins.. Finally, it was decided to create a pin that the members could have for trade or sale when they were asked for pins. In addition to the farm life series, there are two other Kutztown Lions Club items that were produced by the Club for their 50th Charter celebration. One is a pewter key chain and the other is a gold Lions Club pin that attests to the 50 years of service. Both items are shown below. Although they are not considered a part of this farm life series, they are highly collectible and can attract much interest at any auction.

We featured the Farm Life series in an article in the LITPC "Trading Post" in 1996 and that seems to have helped create the interest that is so widespread today in the pin trading community for anything that says "Kutztown". Another significant contribution was when the first pin in the series was initially offered at an auction during a Virginia pin swap and the price soared to \$100. Getting that kind of interest for a club pin certainly caught the attention of many more collectors who have joined in the hunt for the pins..

Although we would have liked to have revealed the name of the designer of most of these pins, we respect the request that she remain anonymous. She is obviously a very talented artist but is not a pin trader and does not have samples of her little creations. As a matter of fact, it's not even clear whether she owns a collection of the pins. As you can see from looking at the pictures, she produced pins on a yearly basis up until 1999. There were even multiple pins in a couple of years during this span. Since then, there was one in 2001 and then the three spinning wheels in 2005. Being avid collectors, we certainly hope that she will find the time and the urge to share some more of her creations in the near future. This is just simply too good of a series to let it "die" while there are so many other objects of Pennsylvania Dutch Country to cover.

Because the demand for the pins remains high, it makes sense that other pins and badges from Kutztown seem to attract the collectors, even though they are clearly not originated by the Lions. They have that magic word "Kutztown" and that's about all it takes. The ones we have shown in this presentation are from the fabulous Kutztown Festival that is held annually during the first week of July. The little quilt pins are outstanding and give some emphasis to the fantastic handmade quilts that are on display in the quilt barn at the Festival. If you happen to be in the area of Reading or Allentown, Pennsylvania during the Fourth of July annual celebration, and you have some spare time, we highly recommend a visit to the Kutztown Fair. We think you will agree that the effort was worthwhile.



1976 Plowing the Fields



1977 Hot Air Balloon



1978 Blue Milk Can



1979 Wood Cook Stove



1980 Farm Lantern

Kutztown, Pennsylvania



1981 Pennsylvania Dutch Barn



1982 Coffee Pot



1983 Farm Lady and Farmer



1984 Chicken and Rooster



1985 Sleigh



1986 Bonnet



1986 Water Pump



1987 Butter Churn



1988 Pot Belly Stove



1989 Outhouse "One Seater"



1989 Water Jug



Bucket



1991 Hay Wagon



1991 Pink Boot



1990 Coal

1992 Four Poster Bed

Kutztown, Pennsylvania



1993 Blanket Chest



1994 Rocking Chair



1995 Crib



1996 Red Milk Can



1997 Amish Buggy



1998 Scales



1999 Basket



1999 Brogan



2001 Quilt Patch



2005 Spinning Wheel - Pink



2005 Spinning Wheel - Blue



2005 Spinning Wheel - Green



2006 Lions Food Stand



50th Charter Celebration



NOTE: Although these are NOT Lions pins, because of the "Kutztown" collection, many collectors have added them to their "Want Lists"