

Temi Apata

Ellicott City: Understanding the History of our City

Middle School Division



Introduction

Ellicott City could be seen as just another ordinary town. It is full of ordinary people living ordinary lives and with ordinary jobs. People in Ellicott City are very happy with their surroundings and their community. Ellicott City is known as the largest unincorporated county seat in the country. But some of the people living in Ellicott

City do not really know about the significant history of their area. We may know about Old Ellicott and sure, it may be a nice town with historic buildings, restaurants, and shops. Sure, some of us have seen Old Ellicott and we have seen historic parts of Ellicott City. We may also know about our environment, the weather, the constant floods, and we may know all the nice places to go to, but we might not fully or really understand the rich history of Ellicott City. There are many hypotheses of how our town came to be but believe it or not, this town started with just a simple mill.



Historical Timeline

- In 1776 there was an inventor named James Hood who claimed 20 acres of land right by the infamous Patapsco River Which forms the line between Baltimore County. This site is known today as Ellicott's Upper Mills.
- After a long time his son Benjamin rebuilt the mills after a Patapsco River flood in 1768 he then sold the mill to Joseph Ellicott in 1774 for about 1,700 pounds.

Joseph Ellicott and his brothers John and Andrew then expanded the mill and founded **Ellicott's Mills** which became one of the biggest manufacturing and milling towns in the East. The brothers built many types of mills including grain mills, oil mills, saw mills and many more.

- They continued to thrive until a fire in January 11th 1809 and there were many funds that could not be paid and people could no longer support their operations and soon the Ellicott Brothers had to shut down all of their mills.
 - Then in 1830, Ellicott's Mills became the first terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad outside Baltimore, the first operated cargo and passenger railroad in the country at that time. Over many years, many manufacturing plants and mills were opened in today's Ellicott City.
 - Then in 1955 they started suburban development. A county commissioner Norman E. Moxley created the first major sector of Ellicott City called Normandy Heights. He also constructed the first major shopping center there, called Normandy Shopping Center.
 - Before 1962, the only polling location for Howard County voters was in Ellicott City. In May 1962, voters were offered a second location to vote, also in Ellicott City at the National Armory on Montgomery Road.
 - The same year, the state health department ordered the city to stop dumping its raw sewage into the Patuxent River and develop a modern disposing system.
 - In 1964 the Corinthian Conservation Company operated a non profit partnership for a slum removal program in Ellicott City, demolishing the residences and replacing them with mostly federal funded apartment complexes.
 - In 1977, the country chose a site outside of the city for a new landfill, leading to the closure of the local New Cut Road landfill which served the county from 1944 until May 1980 for trash and hazardous materials. The New Cut landfill became the Worthington Off Leash Dog Park that we have in Ellicott City today.
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- Historic Main Street has been the site of several devastating fires, most notably in November 1984, three in 1992 and again on November 9, 1999. The 1984 fire was started by Leidig's Bakery's faulty conditioning unit and it ruined six buildings.

- A 1999 six-alarm blaze which destroyed five businesses and caused an estimated 2 million dollars in damage was accidentally started behind a restaurant by a disposed cigarette.
- The fairy tale-themed amusement park, the Enchanted Forest, was located in the western part of Ellicott City. The park has been closed to the general public since the early 1990s.

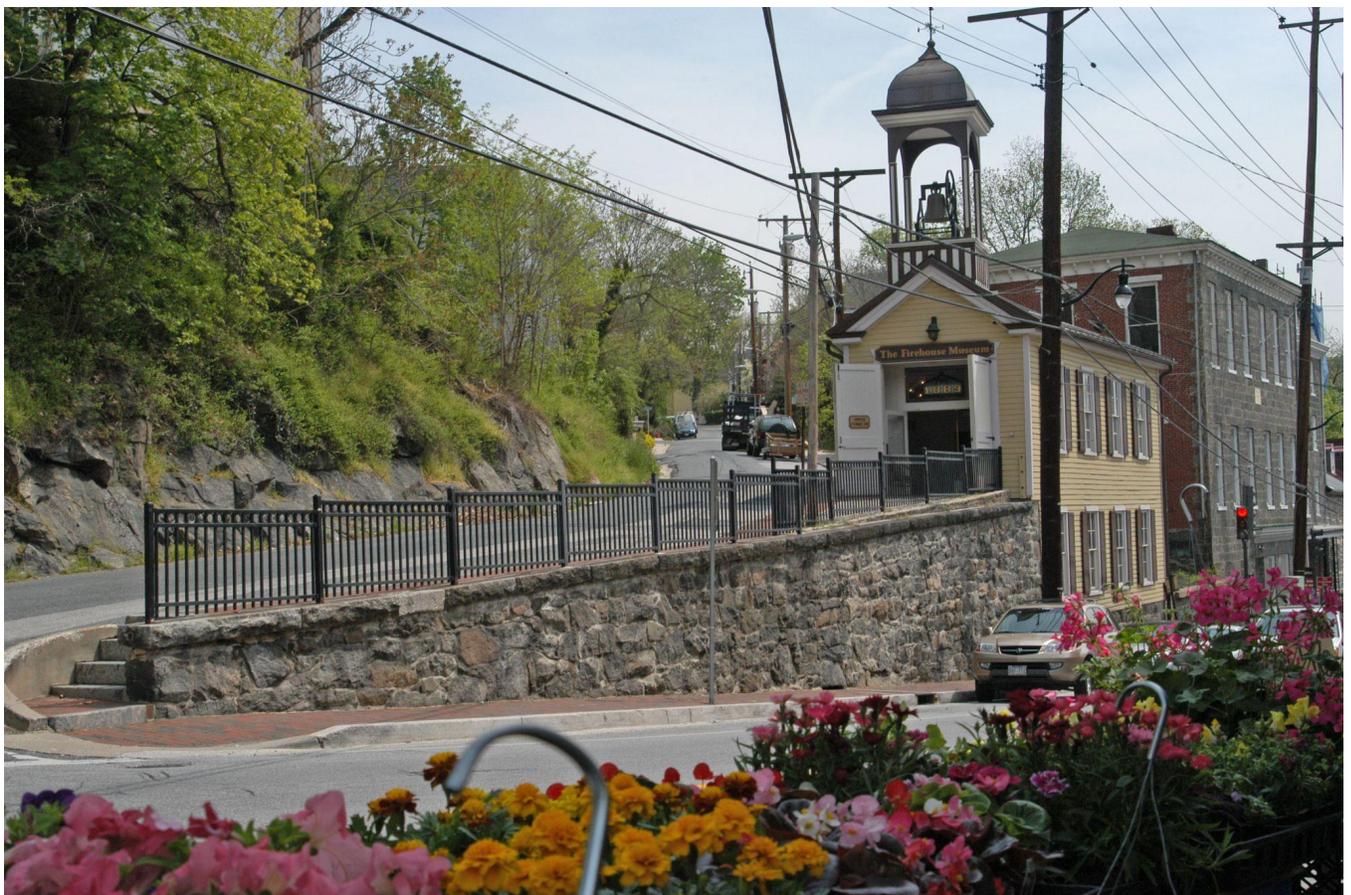
The Significance

You might be thinking by now, what is the relevance of this backstory? Where is the significance? Well, the significance is all around you. Your neighborhood, your community, your stores, your schools, and everything around you shows the significance of Ellicott City. This city would definitely not be here without the history and without the people who helped. If James Hood didn't build a mill by the Patapsco River, Ellicott City may have a different story. If the Ellicott Brothers did not leave a foundation for others to build on Ellicott City may have not even existed. There would be a different name, different backstory, different circumstances and overall a different town for us today. So in order for us to really understand the history of our city, we must realize and acknowledge the significance of each part of the history.

Ellicott City Today

Today's Ellicott City shows the significance of our history. Over the years, many immigrants and citizens of the United States have moved to Ellicott City. We have a very diverse town with people of every race. Our population consists of 75,947 people. Our community has many great schools and beautiful homes and the community is always welcoming. Ellicott City is known as one of the most haunted towns on the East Coast. There are many historic mansions in Ellicott City. Ellicott City has been argued to have been built on seven hills that lie southeast of the Historic district, west of The Patapsco River. The heart of the Historic District is Main Street, where the oldest

structures of the town stand. The summers here in Ellicott City are hot and humid, with some persistent thunderstorms. Spring and fall bring delightful temperatures. Winter is often considered chilly, with lighter rain showers of longer duration. Because of the geography of our Ellicott City, the town is prone to some flooding. There are many rivers around Ellicott and the city is built on many hills. These floods have had a very crucial and important impact on the history of the town, frequently destroying important businesses and killing many people. There have been over fifteen different tragic floods in Ellicott City which some have been caused by the hurricanes Agnes and Eloise. It has destroyed several homes, several manufacturing mills, and it has killed many. It is well known for its paranormal activities in the area and has been used for many tourist attractions. But overall, today's Ellicott City is a wonderful place with many things to do and many things to learn.



Closing

Now that we have read and seen many aspects of Ellicott we can understand the history and the significance of it. There are still many things to learn, still many things to uncover about our Ellicott City. But what we know is very important and we live in our history everyday.