Episode 16 250 Year Celebration

Ronan: Welcome to episode 16 of HoCoCast, your local podcast sponsored by the Howard County Library System. We are Claire, Ronan, and Mikhail bringing you local Howard County happenings, from good reads to Ellicott City's deeds. In this episode, Howard County residents share what they love about our hometown and to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the city's founding, and we revisit a special interview that reveals the spooky side of our history.

Ronan: Hello, I am Ronan. I'm with Claire and we are going around the Miller branch interviewing people about what they love about Ellicott City to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Ellicott City. What's your favorite thing about Ellicott City?

Cheryl: So part of the things that I love about Ellicott City is the main street downtown. I think so much of Howard County is big and populated and you don't get a small town feel, but the main street downtown brings it all in for a home small town feel.

Ronan: Is there a specific shop or restaurant down there that you'd like to shout out?

Cheryl: We really love to go to the new Cozy Cafe that's down in the corner. That's one of our top spots. And then of course Umi Sushi is the place we go for everybody's birthday and for big celebrations.

Ronan: Two very fantastic places, thank you.

Claire: So can you tell us a little bit more about the Cozy Cafe? I've never been there.

Cheryl: So that's one of the newer places that opened up right down at the end, I think it used to be grace… something grace that used to be down there, and it opened up and it just has a little bit of everything. We usually go for breakfast. And it's just a really fun little place to go.

Claire: What is your favorite dish to get at me sushi?

Cheryl: Oh my gosh, I mean everything we love the Umi appetizer and all the sushi. I mean everything there is fantastic.

Claire: All right, thank you so much.

Ronan: What is your favorite thing about Ellicott City?

Guest: I like to go to the Meadowbrook park because I like to go there with my friends.

Ronan: Hi, Rohan. What are your favorite things about Ellicott City?
Rohan: I think my most favorite thing about Ellicott City is the people here, the people who are really nice, actually. And the schools here are amazing.

Ronan: Hi, Nancy. What are some of your favorite things about Ellicott City?

Nancy: There are lots of big buildings. I never went to a big house and I never go because I like watching them.

Ronan: Do you have a favorite building in Ellicott City?

Nancy: This one!

Ronan: Hi, Isabel. What do you love about Ellicott City?

Isabel: Um, I love French Twist cafe. It's definitely one of my favorite spots here and I love going with my friends and trying new crepes, and yeah, it's just definitely one of my favorite spots here.

Ronan: Is there a specific dish you'd like to call out?

Isabel: Whenever I go with my friends, we get two crepes, one sweet and one savory. So I personally love the Nutella banana crepe for sweet. And then I like to switch things up with my savory pick, but I like the Canadian, it has like maple syrup and bacon and it's really good.

Kadia: Hi, Kadia. What is your favorite thing about Ellicott City?

Kadia: My favorite thing is that people are so resilient here, because we've reviewed so many times and you're working again, together as a community.

Ronan: Hi Kelsey, what do you love about Ellicott City?

Kelsey: I like the restaurants.

Claire: All right, so we're here with Gabrielle! Gabrielle, what do you love about Ellicott City?

Gabrielle: I love going to Old Ellicott City, I went there all the time when I was younger, and it was with my mom. We'd always go to the restaurants and the shops and I love seeing how it was transformed after everything that happened. So that's my favorite place.

Claire: Is there a particular store or restaurant that you'd like to share?

Gabrielle: Manor Hill, I go there a lot with my friends, I love it.

Ronan: What is at Manor Hill?
Gabrielle: It's like a tavern and they have drinks. It's just fun to go and talk to your friends and it's so good.

Ronan: We're here with Stacy, and Stacy, what is your favorite thing about Ellicott City?

Stacy: So I really like going down to Old Ellicott City, I think that's a really cool place to go, lots of really interesting shops and restaurants down there, all very walkable, all very kitschy if you will. Tons of cool stuff. So I like that because it's a big part of Ellicott City and just the, also the survival there, you can't keep us down from all these floods and such. So I think that's a really great thing. And of course I'd be really remiss if I didn't tell you about the awesome library, where we all are right now! So the Miller Branch in Howard County, in Ellicott City, and got a lot of great stuff here. A lot of great programming. You know, one of the best around a lot of cool stuff for everyone of all ages to do.

Ronan: We're here with Areen, and we are going to be asking, what do you love about Ellicott City?

Areen: Personally, I love the staff and the schools and how inclusive everyone is.

Claire: The staff and school, so would you be comfortable sharing what school?

Areen: Marriotts Ridge High School.

Claire: Oh, are there any teachers you'd like to shout out?

Areen: Probably like, Mr. Miller, my English teacher.

Ronan: We're here with Julia, and so Julia, what is your favorite thing about Ellicott City?

Julia: Well, I really love that there are so many Korean restaurants that I can go to. Even on route 40, it's even called Koreatown now, or Korean Way, I think. So whenever I really want some Korean food, and maybe my mom's not home, I can always just drive by there and get my favorite meal.

Ronan: Is there a specific place you'd like to share?

Julia: Um, well, one place I go with my friends a lot, because it's not too expensive, and there's some really good food, like 빵수 (bingsoo), which is like this iced dessert. It's called 시루 (siroo). And yeah, it's around that area.

Ronan: Right. Fantastic.

Ronan: Hey, Skip, so what do you love about Ellicott City?

Skip: Well, I lived here for 22 years, and Ellicott City is one of the finest cities that I can imagine. To me, it's comparable to Georgetown. It's a big rendition of the past interlaced with future dreams, hopes and peoples. I remember when Howard County was a rural farm county in the 70s. It's transpired into a big...
new development. Everybody gets along, so far as I could tell. I've met people from all ages, nationalities, faiths, religions, colors, everything and people just seem to mesh. It's a friendly town. Got a ton of history. People just should know about this place. It was rated second in the nation several years ago as the ideal place to live. So if that's a feature, you should be living here.

**Ronan:** It is a truly fantastic area. Thank you so much.

**Skip:** You're welcome.

**Ronan:** Hi Hannah, what is your favorite thing about Ellicott City?

**Hannah:** I love being close to the Patapsco River and all the parks we have around here. It's just a beautiful place to live. There's a lot of good nature, which is kind of rare to live so close to.

**Ronan:** Is there a specific area, or like, trails you like to go on often?

**Hannah:** In high school, me and all my best friends used to go down to the river in Old Town all the time, and that's where we would kind of hang out. So, that's a special place.

**Guest:** What I love about Ellicott City is the history. There's been a lot of famous people that have come through a wicked city. Babe Ruth had his first wedding there at St. Paul's and Ellicott City. I have read that John Wilkes Booth started his career in Ellicott City, but I don't know if that's true or not. Robert E. Lee visited relatives around Ellicott City when he was growing up. I heard Edward Snowden was born here in Ellicott City. And they also filmed different movies and TV shows in Ellicott City. One of them was called The Goddess with Lloyd Bridges, and another one was Cry Baby with Johnny Depp. Paris Hilton even went through there and she was doing This Simple Life. There's a lot of history that people can explore in Ellicott City.

**Claire:** All right, we’re here with Annie. Annie, what is your favorite part about Ellicott City?

**Annie:** I grew up here. I have lived here for 60 years. I like the quaintness of Ellicott City. When I was a little girl, it was not full of antique shops and boutiques and things like that. I do remember the bakery on Main Street had delicious chocolate covered doughnuts. So, I like that it used to become very quaint and very welcoming.

**Ronan:** In this segment we hear from Laura Torres with the Howard County General Hospital about the new 988 Mental Health helpline. Laura Torres is a licensed clinical social worker who received her master's in social work from Fordham University and has been working in the mental health field for the past 25 years in a variety of different settings. In her current role in the population health department at Howard County General Hospital, Laura develops and supports the behavioral health initiatives of the hospital and assists in aligning and coordinating hospital activities linked to behavioral health.

**Laura:** Do you ever experience feelings that are overwhelming and feel like they are too much? Are you or someone you know having thoughts of suicide or experiencing a mental health or substance use
crisis? Help is here. 988 is the new three digit dialing code for the suicide and crisis lifeline that connects you to compassionate confidential support for free. The lifeline, formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, has answered 10s of millions of calls and has helped people overcome mental health related distress. 988 is the same trusted resource with a three digit number that is easy to remember and available for you 24 hours a day.

Call 988 offers emergency emotional support to residents in four counties, including Howard County. It is a part of a national network of local 988 helplines. Anyone who calls the 988 helpline from this region will immediately be connected to local call centers for safe, supportive and confidential mental health services. People can call 988 to talk about a number of things: thoughts of suicide, relationships, anxiety, sexual identity, drinking too much, drug use, feeling depressed, mental and physical illness, loneliness, stress, trauma, and more.

When you call the helpline, you'll hear a message telling you that you've reached 988. There will be a little hold music while you are quickly connected. A specialized counselor at the 988 call center closest to you based on your area code will answer the phone. Your counselor will listen and provide emotional support. They can also share resources for longer term support. Helpline services have been shown to reduce depression and suicidal thoughts while increasing feelings of hope. Nearly 80% of calls are resolved on the phone. Over time, the new 988 number will serve as an alternative to calling 911, or going to the emergency department for emergency emotional support, and will make access to mental health care in the county easier.

Call 988 is operated by a partnership of Baltimore Crisis Response, Affiliated Sante Group, and Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center. When you call, text, or chat 988, you will be quickly connected to trained crisis counselors, who will listen to your concerns, provide support and get you additional help if needed. There is hope. The lifeline works. You are not alone in crisis. Just call, text, or chat 988.

**Lori:** In honor of Ellicott City's 250th anniversary, HoCoCast revisits our 2019 interview with Rissa Miller, a guide with Maryland history tours. She loves spooky stories whispered by candlelight, enjoys spending hours poring over research about yesteryear, and is a complete sucker for a good ghost story. Along with the other guides, Rissa brings history to life in Ellicott City.

In honor of elegant City's 200 and 50th anniversary Hococast revisits our 2019 interview with Rissa Miller, a guide with Maryland history tours. She loves spooky stories whispered by candlelight, enjoys spending hours poring over research about yesteryear, and is a complete sucker for a good ghost story. Along with the other guides, Rissa brings history to life in Ellicott City.

Why do you think this geographic area is so concentrated with ghosts? Well, Emerson, there are a lot of reasons why experts believe Ellicott City is a hotbed for supernatural activity. The first is what it's made of Ellicott City is built on a bed of granite. Ellicott City granite is very unique, because it has layers of crystal in it. Oh, so anybody who knows anything about crystals or their energetic properties can tell you that one thing they do is sort of track and keep energy sure pins so that's one of the things that happens as spirits pass they aren't able to leave. The bedrock of grant on allocates in Ellicott City

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keeps them there. And even more so when the town was founded back in the 1700s. They quarried a ton of this granite and built a lot of the city out of it. So all these buildings and homes and shops were made of Ellicott City granite and more any of the older homes, even when they've been rebuilt and renovated. Their foundation is still made of elegant city granite. Yeah. So the next reason has to do to reverse. The Tiber and the Patapsco are part of Ellicott City. I mean, a big part of it everybody knows about. It's right. But it was also one of the reasons that Ellicott City became a town. It provided they provided transportation, water, they provided a great way to have farms and grow crops. But when it comes to the paranormal, those rivers are yet another thing moving and holding energy down. So many experts in the paranormal field believe that running water will always retain spirits. So yeah, interesting. So we have tourism's now, moving in. As time passed, and Ellicott City became a bigger town, and the electrical grid was built on top. So when you go right down Main Street, you will see the whole power grid is on top, above the buildings or in the street. So it creates yet another electromagnetic field, keeping things from going up. Oh, so there's like a perfect a perfect storm, a trap, where these ghosts can't leave. And then there's one more thing I like it city is just full of antiques and original built. Many ghosts aren't necessarily bound to a place but to a thing. So there are ghosts who might be bound to a necklace or a chair or a doll. And they stay with that until for whatever reason, they decide to cross over and move on. So all of these reasons combined to make Ellicott City into what we call a thin place. Then place meaning the curtain between our will in the next is sheer, and it's very easy to step back and forth. Wow, that's so interesting. I didn't realize that Ellicott City just had so much going for it to be such a ghost hotspots. That's crazy. Absolutely. And a hotspot it is indeed they say that. In Maryland, it is the most haunted town per square foot, or crazy.

So how do you research the history of a ghost? So there are a lot of ways that you can go about looking up who is your ghost? The first and most obvious way would be to simply research the history of the property. So this sometimes yields results and sometimes doesn't. When you can discern who built a house? Did anybody died during the process? Who has lived there? Who has died there? And where was it built? Was it built on a on a ground of interest, like say on top of a graveyard? All of these things can contribute into the story of how a house would become haunted. They don't necessarily answer all the questions, though, in a town as old as Ellicott City, as a guarantee than all those old properties. Somebody has died there. I promise it. So you don't know necessarily who you're getting who we are interacting with. Sometimes ghosts are pretty forthright and they'll simply tell you what their name is. That's convenient. It doesn't always happen. You can employ the services of a medium. So mediums are psychics not all psychics or mediums, but all mediums or psychics and mediums have the gift or ability to be able to interact with spirits. So a medium can tell you if the ghost wants to talk, I guess a medium can tell you who is in your house. Who's Who's the spirit that's residing there. And why are they still there? Is there something they want? Is there something they're looking for? Is there someone they are clinging on to? Or do they simply just want to be there? Some go simply want to be where they are? And there's no other reason they don't want to move on? They know they can, but they're happy there and that's where they want to be. They just want to hang out? Exactly. We do have some spirits like that in Ellicott City, mystics and Claire Williams and shaman have come in and tried to release them into like, no, seriously, I'm good. I don't want to go. The other way to research ghosts. Besides looking at the historical facts, or using a medium is to employ the services of a paranormal investigator or a ghost hunter. Ghost Hunters use
more scientific methods. I say that loosely because most scientists think that ghost hunting is pseudoscience. They don't think it's real. But ghost hunters or paranormal investigators will do things like measure electromagnetic fields or measure differences in room temperature in different spots. They use video and sound equipment, night vision goggles, other things to try to record and or figure out where any house there's an entity and they often also use mediums to try to reach that spirit as well. So a bit like the movies or no depends on which movie.

I'm going to simply say yes, frequently like the movies. A lot of times people know they have a haunting, because things are moving, or they simply can feel it. It's easy to get confused and be like, what was that creek? Like? Oh is actually the cat, you know. But sometimes when there's no other logical explanation, the illogical explanation is the one.

So Rissa, can you tell me anything about the age ranges of the ghosts featured on the tour? Are there any teenagers featured on the tour?

Sure. You know, it's an interesting question bears because we have a lot of ghosts that we know a lot about, for a variety of reasons. Some of them have revealed information on their own. And some we simply know who they were in their life from historical data. And some simply aren't that old. I mean, everybody thinks ghosts are from the 17, or 1800s. But that's not the case. Or ghosts are from the 1900s or 2000s. So just because you know, you're using the word ghost, you're referring to a spirit doesn't mean they're very ancient.

So when people pass when they die, and they're, for whatever reason, decide to remain in this realm as a spirit, the age range can be wildly different. We do have a lot of ghosts from the Victorian era. And some of them were women who were probably teenagers to their early 20s. But times were very different than a woman who was a teenager that shouldn't be married and have children at that point. So, you know, it was a very different way of looking at life. And we do have some women who definitely fell into that category. at Manor hill. We have Gertrude they call her Trudy. She's a very active spirits, and she's very saucy. And she was probably in her late teens when she died. There is another ghost who is commonly seen at Patapsco female Institute. She was a student there, but and her Her story is a sad one, she did die of pneumonia. She was originally from the Deep South, and the hard Maryland winters were not something that were familiar to her. And although she begged to be taken home, and his parents were just kind of like, No, you have to stay at school, you're at this wonderful reputable school, you need to make the best of it. And she got sick and unfortunately passed away. But Annie is very regularly seen on the ground, Patapsco female students, she was most certainly a teenager. So there are other ghosts in Ellicott City with ages ranging from like very small children, to people who are more mature into their 50s 60s 70s when they decided to stick around in Ellicott City and haunt the town. And they're even spirits of animals. So

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So yeah, there's a pretty broad range. As far as ah, do you tend to find any difference in activity depending on the time period that the spirit is from? Well, we don't, it's the very individual. And, you know, one of the things I tell people is when you're, when you're thinking about a ghost, don't think of a ghost, the way you would think of them from a novel or a movie. Of course, think of a ghost the way you would think of any other person, you know, or animal, you know, or whatever. They're an individual.
They're unique. And some people are more active and talkative, and some are less active and talkative and more reclusive. And it's really no different with ghosts. Ghosts, are mostly benign, they mostly have their own agenda that if you happen to cross paths with them, that's great. But if not, they aren't really super worried about you. Some are benevolent and have good intentions and want to help. And then the ones that are the most famous that everybody writes books and scary, scary movies about are the malevolent ghosts. But for the most part, all of the ghosts that we talk about on our tours, and then have been encountered, no matter when they died, or how old they were, when they passed, their personality stays with them. Of course. Thank you. So would you say there's any way of knowing whether or not someone is like, likely or not to become a ghost? So in the interest of full disclosure, I am not a medium and the interactions I've had with Ghost have been completely on their terms, not because I was asking them questions and they were willfully answering. But that said, it is my understanding that there are a variety of factors that can determine whether or not upon death someone decides to stay or pass over. And one of those could be that they simply have unfinished business. Unfinished business can be someone they love. There is a ghost in Ellicott City who is still protecting something that's buried in a wall in one of the buildings, there are ghosts in Ellicott City that died not that long ago who still have loved ones that live in the talent. So my my guess without being a medium would be that they're simply sticking around because a lot of times, sir severe trauma can determine that somebody has become a ghost, murderer, accidents, things like that. Or war. We do have a lot of ghosts from the civil war and the war of 1812. But that exactly like they don't even realize sometimes that they passed. There was there's a particular ghost in Ellicott City who died during a roofing accident. And he simply stuck around because he didn't know he could go over, into into you know, whatever. Whatever happens he ever finished the roof. He did not but the building has been intact for for several 100 years. Are there any notable animal ghosts or are they all human? There are a lot of notable animal ghosts. The most famous animal ghost in Ellicott City is definitely Casper the cat. He haunts the Envy salon. So if you want to, you know, chance an encounter with Casper the ghost, literally the cat ghost. All you need to do is go and get a haircut. All of the stylists there sooner or later feel Casper rub up against the side of their leg. Or they see him doing cat like stuff like knocking things off of shelves.

Interesting. Well, I'm planning on getting a haircut this weekend, perhaps I might run into a spectral cat. That would be awesome.

Okay, so obviously, you've probably had a bunch of different encounters. But can you tell us anything about your favorite ghosts? Do you have a favorite ghost?

Favorite ghost?

Well, I'm going to have to pick the ghost of the Howard County visitors center on Main Street. She has interacted with me a lot. And I always say hello. When I come and go now from the building. I first realized that she was interacting with me when I was standing alone in the parking lot. There was literally no one else there. And I felt a hand grasp my shoulder so hard that I spun around. Oh boy. And at first I thought maybe it was my husband. But then I saw him he was still walking down the drive. He was way far away. And so I was like, Oh, I guess that was her. And the next time I was leaving from
there, and the dome light in my car, which I didn't even know where the switch was to be honest. Embarrassing flicked on. Oh, like you heard it. Click it flipped on. And I said to her, I was like, Oh, hey, I'm leaving, but I'll come to you again.

And the most recent encounter I had with her I was using the restroom downstairs and there's a ledge. And I had my phone, my cell phone firmly placed on the ledge several inches from the side. And I watched it lift a few times and then slide over and dropped to the floor. Kidding. And I said to her Loretta Please don't break my phone. Chris, please. I don't even have it paid for you. Please took my phone. And then the phone stayed. And I carry a lantern to my tours with a metal handle. And the metal handle lifted and dropped. Ah, I'm getting shivers this even hearing that sorry. Ah, that's crazy. So she's probably my favorite because she's kind of friendly. And she's interacted with me personally. The vetrix through a little bit her phone thing? Yeah. Well, I think that she's just trying to communicate. When she when she was alive. It was a totally different time. They didn't have cell phones. So yeah, for sure. She wouldn't have understood. You know the value of that to me. Yeah. it to her. It's just like a an object that's sitting on the ledge. Yeah. So that's so neat. Yeah. Thank you.

All right. And Rissa. Can you tell us about any interactions that you've had during the tour?

Yeah. Is there is a building on mountain misery that is not inhabited. Nobody lives there. It's owned by the county and it's used for storage. But it is a very old building. It dates back to when the elegance founded the elegant, elegant Mills now elegant city. And there's something about it, something about it. Before we even knew the ghost stories of the building. It's just one of those places that kind of gives you shivers. Right. And I can tell you for sure that three times on tours that I've been there, the lights on the building different lights each time have gone on and off. So it is a very spooky place. And we do believe that there could possibly possibly be malevolent spirits, there are not good intentions. Other guides have had other kinds of interactions. They've had spectral form show up in people's photos that were they were taken during tours.

And that's probably the most is glamorous thing but you can't count on that to happen of course. And we've seen figures in Windows there have been orbs that have shown up in photos. And yeah, that's that's pretty much the most exciting stuff that's happened that I know of on the tours. How are you able to tell if a spirit is malevolent or otherwise?

Well, quite honestly they do bad stuff right? They push people downstairs they

injure people they tell you get out Yeah, literally. So there's no there's not usually a question in your mind that you've got someone back house okay? Because there are other spirits that like will stop you from falling down the stairs there I tell you like you know, wake you up the house was on fire get out like there didn't have good intentions they want to help malevolent spirits want to hurt just like in a storybook? All right. So are there any demons or just really truly malicious spirits in Ellicott City.

So demons is one of those heavily charged words. And I wouldn't know unless one encountered me personally. However, we do have reports in several places of shadow people. So shadow people are dark figures. And they will usually leave you chilled to the bone. And they are sometimes known to
attach to the living. And we have had reports around some of the older buildings, especially buildings have a lot of bad feelings attached to them. That shadow people have been seen there is not just a shadow passing it is a whole form of a person. And sometimes you will see a shadow walk up to you. There's no one attached to it. So yes, we have had reports of shadow people. And there have been unofficial reports of possession in some of the buildings as well. We don't actually usually include that information on our tours, because a lot of the families are still there. And they don't necessarily want the story shared. Yeah, for sure. But so yes, like I do, I do know things like that, but not not for the most part. Most of our ghosts are either benign or very, very friendly. All right, well, thank you so much. Thank you.

Mikhail: 2022 is the 250th anniversary of Ellicott City, the county seat of Howard County. We interviewed an Ellicott City historian about Ellicott City’s history, etymology, and more! We talked to Ellen Flynn Giles, the president of the Howard County Historical Society.

Ronan: All right, so we are here with an EC250 historian Ms Giles. Hi, how are you?

Ms. Giles: Hi, I'm fine.

Ronan: All right, so we're gonna start out with our first question. So, who founded Ellicott City and when?

Ms. Giles: Well, as you may or may not know, given the hint with ECE 250, we're celebrating our 250th anniversary this year. So we were formed in 1772 by three Quaker Miller brothers, Andrew, John and Joseph Ellicott, who came down from Bucks County, looking for a place to start their own mill, their own business, to move out from the influence of their family's successful business in Pennsylvania and create a new world for themselves. And so they found a site on the Patapsco River, which you may or may not know, is actually a tidal river, you can get to the bay from the Patapsco River. So seagoing vessels actually landed at Elkridge landing and embarked from there, two points in Europe and the wise around the world. So it was a sight that provided them with power, but it also provided them with access to markets. And so they built a mill and they grew the wheat that would help them start their milling business and then provided services to those in the area. When they came here, it was virtually a wilderness. One of the nicknames for Ellicott City is the hollow because the river runs through steep granite cliffs sort of on either side, so it wasn't like it was a well trafficked or populated area when they came here. There certainly were prosperous farms in Baltimore County and in Howard County, mostly plantations growing tobacco, but there were indigenous trails from Native Americans for hunting and such but not really settlements or anything. So they proceeded to buy property on both sides and they cleared it in order to grow wheat, and they bought maybe 85 acres on both sides, and tilled it and then they used the wood to build buildings and that required they built a sawmill. So they did that. They mined or quarried granite, which was abundant in order to form the bases, and then they proceeded to convince farmers in the area to move away from tobacco, to wheat as a cash crop because tobacco really didn't make much money for the growers, the money was made at the end of the process by the people who were selling it in England or in other parts of Europe. And the main person they convinced
to do this was Charles Carroll, who is Maryland’s signer of the Declaration of Independence, who lived at the Reagan Manor, and was at that time, either the first or second wealthiest man in America. He owned something on the order of 13,000 acres in Howard County, and when he could be convinced of the appropriateness of converting to a different cash crop, that kind of helped change the minds of other people in the area. One of the reasons that tobacco also wasn't as profitable is that it took about three years for the land to recover between crops. So you had to lie fallow and make it work again, and so one of the things that the very ingenious and enterprising Ellicott brothers did as well was to form gypsum to build gypsum mills, which allowed them to provide fertilizer that farmers could use to bring their soil back to convert to another crop, and be able to use it on a regular basis. And so essentially, they changed the economics of at least the central part of the Patapsco River Valley by making a new crop. And that could also be corn or rye, you don't just have to mill wheat. But they did that. And then they also saw the need to build on what they created as a base. So they actually expanded into a bakery. And they got the contract with the US Navy for hardtack, which is the virtually impossible biscuits to eat on a six month to one year seabeard which would not mold or anything, but you could dip them in liquid and you'd get some sustenance from it, but they captured the contract and were able then to build even more of a business, hire more people, bring more people into the area. They also changed the economy from one based on enslaved labor, to one that was based essentially on bringing in tenant farmers with families who could take care of wheat fields in smaller parcels. It didn't have to be as large as tobacco had to be in order to yield a crop that would sort of take care of you for three years until you could get another one. And so they were really forward looking. They also did not, as Quakers, they did not believe in slavery, so they did not support that as part of what they were doing. They built a meeting house so that the people would have a place to worship, they built stores, they built up a town. And from those three young men coming in the 1700s, by 1825, Ellicott City was something on the order of 3000 people and was a prosperous town and their mills were as prosperous and prominent as those they had left behind in Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

Ronan: Wow, that is a rich history, you know, wouldn't have expected it to be such an industrious town. As a bounce off question, as it moved into the 20th century, how did the city change? So how did Ellicott City move away from being a very farm based town into being a more business based town like we know it today?

Ms. Giles: Well, that happened over time and started earlier. Ellicott City was the first railroad station in America. Okay, and that was in the early 1800s. All right. So the stop in Ellicott City was the first stop on the b&o which was the first railroad and so it was the first station. So they started originally hauling goods, not hauling people. But eventually you needed a hotel for people who were going to stay here, or knew needed places for them to eat, in the same way that you needed places for the workers to live and worship and everything. In addition, their partnership with Charles Carroll, who was also a very enterprising and imaginative young man allowed them to expand even farther. They partnered in building the first part of the National Road. Okay, so Frederick Road, which is also route 144 is the start of the national road leading westward to Cumberland. They recognize that they needed not just road, most travel in colonial times we've done by boat, most exploration and most habitats that were established were done by boat, because there were no roads or paths or anything that have been created because there weren't vehicles that were traveling those roads. People rode on horseback, they didn't necessarily have to create that. So by starting to establish roots inland that lets you go...
someplace else, they really helped support the Western movement of early America, and made it possible for them to get raw materials from farms further and further out as a town industrialized and became more populous and less farm centered. And then also, they got the ability to have markets for their products. So whatever the industrial part was, then he now had a market for their goods, as well as a source for raw materials. And Charles Carroll laid the cornerstone for the b&o Railroad, so he was an early investor in the railroad. And he was also an investor in the C&O canal. So again, ways to look at building an economy and creating a town around an industry was sort of a new idea. And there is newer scholarship, the traditional view is that the first results of the Industrial Revolution in America were the textile mills in New England, okay, there is now scholarship to suggest that you really could say that Ellicott City was the first industrial town in America. Because, again, not only did they create their source materials, they grew the wheat, they ground it, they sold it, they used it, they ground it for other people as a service, and they also then created an outlet for a final market for that. And all of the people that it took to create that and make it work, you had to have coopers who could make barrels, you had to have horsemen who could take care of the horses who helped you with your crop and actually transported it to someplace else you had to have, then for all those people, you had to have goods for them to buy, you couldn't create all of them. So you had a company store, and you had schools, the Quakers also believed that everyone should be educated. So while they didn't educate boys and girls together, they did provide educational locations for both boys and girls as well as indentured servants and slaves, and even established a relationship with Chief Little Turtle in Missouri, and helped educate some of his Braves who were sent to learn as young people to understand how to deal with the new inhabitants of their world. So they were very forward looking, very much thinking about growing and building a town, and all that it would take to support that, because you were no longer living under the kind of situation you had in colonial America, everything changed, we were no longer subject to the restrictions of the British. I mean, one of the big things about being a British colony is that you were supposed to, we were only supposed to provide raw materials. Okay, you couldn't make Iron, you could, you could quarry the ore and you could do that, but you couldn't sell it and move it. One of the big reasons that patriots were homespun during the Revolution was defying the order not to make your own fabric, everything the cotton that was grown, the linen, of the all was to be shipped to England to be made into material it was not to be done here. So that change after the revolution, and being able to use raw materials to actually create things and products that were used here was a huge change in the ability of the new country to grow. Because they could create their own goods and services and market them and hire people and fire people and move things around and consolidate. So it was hugely important that there be an understanding of how those markets work together and what the supply chain had to look like and how you, what you had to do in order to make that work. You couldn't expect people to come to you, you had to build a road so that they could get to you and you could get to them. You had to invest in the railroads. So there was a possibility that you would have, again, other markets. You had to build facilities in Baltimore City, so that you could take goods and store them in a warehouse and get them on a ship and send them elsewhere outside of the country. So, they were hugely interesting and influential and quite enterprising people. I mean, you may not know that Andrew Ellicott was a surveyor who was hired to assist when surveying for the town of Washington was being done. And L'enfant left. Andrew Ellicott, and with the assistance of Benjamin Banneker, who was also a surveyor and an astronomer, and a friend of the Ellicott family joined together, and they actually finished the survey of Washington, DC, and placed the stone markers that outlined it and everything.
very much interested in doing what it took to get things done, and to make a living for themselves, but also for other people, to actually build a community.

Ronan: That is really interesting. I had no idea that Ellicott City was so deeply rooted in the American side of the Industrial Revolution. We’re gonna change gears a bit. You have talked about this before. But let’s dig deeper into the etymology of the name Ellicott City. Where does it come from? What exactly does it mean?

Ms. Giles: Well, Ellicott was their name. Sort of hard to get away from that! They were the Ellicott brothers, and they came from England. In English derivations, it actually comes from cott is a short name of cottage, and Elli would be a name, so a place but it was a name well established in England for a long time. So when they first came here, Ellicott Mills was the name of their company. The town just took on the name of the company that was the hub of employment and of prosperity, and eventually then got changed to be Ellicott City. So it was Ellicott Mills. So when the Historical Society opened its new children’s museum this year, it is the elegant Mills Children’s Museum, because that equates to what the name of the town would have been, at the time it first functioned as a school. So the name has a history that grew as the town developed, and it stopped being a mill town and became an actual city, which is somewhere around the 1850s.

Ronan: Yeah, okay. Previously, you mentioned the school system, and I’d like to talk a bit about that. So, of course, the school system today is Howard County Public School System. When the schools were founded, was it Howard County Public Schools? Was Ellicott City part of Howard County?

Ms. Giles: Yes, Ellicott City has always been a part of Howard County, but Howard County didn’t exist until the 1850s. Howard County was the Howard district of Anne Arundel County, until around into the 1850s when it became a separate government. And so Howard County and we currently in Howard County have no incorporated cities. All right. That’s why we have a county council form of government. We don’t have a mayor of Ellicott City, we don’t have a mayor of Dayton, or of Lisbon, or of Elkridge. But earlier in its development, those were incorporated cities, and then as the county grew, and Colombia was developed in 1967. So, again, you know, 50, 60 years, you started to see a change in how the county operated, but the governing system stayed a county based system. So we have a county council, whereas earlier it was a charter county, so yeah, but it’s yeah, there’s they’ve always been Howard County schools, but it changed as the size of the county changed, because as in with the advent of Columbia, a huge portion of farmland was converted into residential housing, and commercial space, and everything. So the while the western part of the county remains agricultural to a large extents in district five, the other four districts are much more densely populated and occupied.

Ronan: Wow, that is really interesting. So, we’re gonna move a bit to the future now. So what are some upcoming Ellicott City 250th anniversary events that our listeners should know about?

Ms. Giles: Well, I think one they should certainly know about is we have an artifact, where we’re using the actual artifacts from the 250 years, were selected by local artists, to draw inspiration from and create new modern pieces of art of a variety. And that just opened on Friday at the Howard County Center for the Arts, and that's on Pine Ridge Road in the city. And it will be running from the 19th of
August to, I think, the 24th of September, the 24th of September. And so you’re able to see pictures of those artifacts and then see and hear from the artists, you know, what they took from that and why they chose to explore the media that they did. But also all of those artifacts are on display at the Museum of Howard County history, which is in Ellicott City in the old First Presbyterian Church at the top of Mount misery, right next to the old courthouse. They’re all on display there as part of the Ellicott legacy, so that you can get a sense, again, of what they actually look like in person, rather than picture and see that. There’s also an exhibit at the Welcome Center that runs to the end of the year on Main Street in Ellicott City, which is Mills to Ellicott City, Milltown to City, which has pictures showing the evolution of the town over time and documents that relate to certain events and such. And, trying to think, on September 2 there will be a lunch lecture at noon on Friday, September 2, about Benjamin Banneker and particularly focusing on his friendship with the Ellicotts. One of the granddaughters of the Ellicotts wrote two biographies of Benjamin Banneker. And of course, he partnered with Andrew Ellicott in doing the surveying, but that relationship between the Ellicotts and the Bannekers lasted a pretty long time. And that will be on the 2nd. And then from the 15th of September to the 7th of October, there will be an exhibit by Wiley Perky, who’s a local watercolor artist, which is called a brush with history, and that will be on exhibit at the Columbia Art Center. So, as part of EC 250, lots of historical organizations as well as artists, groups, as well as musicians, and educators are all coming together to find ways in which they can highlight parts of that illustrious history and find ways to connect with people in the present day, and help them understand what got us to where we are and what lessons we want to take from that and how we want to move forward as a community by understanding where we came from.

**Ronan:** Wow, EC250 really has a great lineup these next couple of months. Alright, so there’s just one final question. And it’s a personal question for you. It’s a quintessential question that we ask every interviewee on HoCoCast. If you had a box of chocolates in front of you, which one would you eat first?

**Ms. Giles:** I think the one I didn't recognize. If there wasn't clearly, you know, a flat one that indicated that maybe it was caramel, hard caramel inside, or didn't have a piece of coconut on the top, or didn't clearly have a nut marked underneath it. I think I'd want to try one where I wasn't really sure what I was trying to get. So that it would be an adventure.

**Ronan:** Yeah, that's really adventurous of you. Well, Ms. Giles, it has been a pleasure having you on today. Thank you so much for coming on. Listeners just for details. For the 250th anniversary of Ellicott City website, you can go to EC250.com. Miss Geils is part of HCHSMD.org, the Howard County Historical Society. Thank you so much for coming on today.

**Ms. Giles:** It was a pleasure. Thank you for having us. And thank you for being so interested in the semester centennial. And that's your quiz word for this for today.

**Ronan:** Thanks for listening to HoCoCast.

**Mikhail:** We hope you enjoyed Z’s special episode highlighting what we love about Ellicott City as we celebrate 200 and 50th anniversary

**Ronan:** Let's continue to make our community a special place for everyone now and in the future.