UNITED STATES DEPART. IT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PA. SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

B7-150

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC: OELIA HISTORIC DISTRICT

AND/OR COMMON: OELIA

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: OELLA AVENUE, GLEN ROAD, HOLLOW ROAD — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: OELLA — VICINITY OF — CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: SIXTH

STATE: MARYLAND — CODE: 24 — COUNTY: BALTIMORE — CODE: 005

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	X PARK
STRUCTURE	X BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	X INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
		NO	MILITARY	OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: MULTIPLE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC OWNERS

STREET & NUMBER:

CITY, TOWN: — VICINITY OF — STATE:

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: BALTIMORE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

STREET & NUMBER: WASHINGTON AVENUE

CITY, TOWN: TOWSON — STATE: MARYLAND

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: (1) Historic American Buildings Survey, Baltimore County Historical Society Historic Buildings Survey (2)
(1) Library of Congress, Wash., D.C.

DATE: 1964-1975 — (1) X FEDERAL — (2) STATE X COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Baltimore County Historical Society (2) Agricultural Building, County Home Park

CITY, TOWN: Cockeysville — STATE: Maryland

DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X_UNALTERED	X_ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Topography and industry have determined the appearance of Oella, situated where the Patapsco River rushes through a steep, densely wooded gorge. The proximity to the Baltimore Harbor coupled with unharnessed water power brought the first industry here in the 18th century (see National Register Nomination for Ellicott Mills (site) Historic District). Factories requiring large floor space have since the 1770's been constructed on the narrow, level ground near the river. All other structures sought space on the remaining level ground or climbed the hill. The orientation of Oella is naturally and historically toward the factory at its heart. The hill acts as a natural barrier defining the district and turning the focus away from Baltimore County. Even today the post office and telephone exchange for Oella is shared with Ellicott City in Howard County, not Baltimore County.

Oella is unified by its industrial heritage as a working community. Its structures are functional, without ornamentation. This stark quality of the built environment placed in a dramatic natural setting still densely wooded gives Oella its special character.

Oella Avenue provides the access from the wilderness feeling of the southern boundary (just north of Granite Hill, Ellicott Mills (site) Historic District). It winds north for a half mile before turning to climb the hill at the Dickey factory at the intersection of Glen Road and Hollow Road. These two streets extend directly east up the hill while Oella Avenue continues north for several hundred yards before turning east. Oella consists of 19th century workers housing and one late 19th century church. The only known 20th century building is the 1919 mill. For a mile and a half north along the east bank of the Patapsco an early 19th century mill race still exists which until the 1970's provided power to the mill. Roughly 50 structures and two sites exist in Oella. A constant domestic scale is maintained by the residences. The Dickey factory may dwarf earlier buildings but could not be considered an intrusion since the focal life of the district has always been the factory.

Adaptive use is not a new term in Oella. The church houses the offices of the W. J. Dickey Company. The factory contains one "adaptive use" and the owner is looking for more people to join him in occupying the ample square footage. Community development planners at the state and local level are looking at Oella as a prime, untouched environment for the plan of their expertise. It is vital for the protection of this cultural resource that preservation is granted equal time.

The workers' housing in Oella consists of multiple units and sizeable family houses constructed of stone, brick and wood. All these buildings retain the same scale and proportions. They are sited close to the road on steeply sloping lots. The President of the Dickey Company owns most of the property. The detached houses located higher up the hill are privately owned.

Dating can be done by building material. The stone houses and the four log buildings (Logtown Road) were constructed in the first quarter of the 19th century when the Union Manufacturing Company began operation. The Maximilian Godefroy drawing (c.1812) shows most of the stone buildings. The brick houses date from the mid-century, while the frame buildings were constructed at the end of the century when the W.J. Dickey Company began operation.

(See Continuation Sheet 1)

The most impressive stone structure is the "Storekeeper's House" at 804-806 Oella Avenue. It is a three-story, four bay building with enclosed brick chimneys at each gable end. The stone arches on the windows and the 12-over-8 sash are two details which help make this building recognizable in the circa 1812 Godefroy drawing. The first floor is covered with a one-story porch.

Stone Row, on Oella Avenue, is multiple unit buildings two and one-half stories high with a gable roof and six-over-six sashes. The stone is well laid in circular courses. Each unit in Stone Row is two bays wide with a dormer in the attic. One porch extends across the facade.

The Johnson House on Hollow Road is one of the few detached stone buildings. It is three bays wide and two stories tall with a gable roof and central entrance. One room has been added to the gable end but this does not alter the integrity of the stone house.

The brick houses, like the stone ones, are plain, solidly constructed, functional dwellings. Long Brick Row (700-744 Oella Avenue) which contains thirty houses in an unbroken terrace along a curved street is the most impressive. Each two-story section is four bays wide divided by a parapet extending along the gable roof to the chimney and contains two units with the doors paired at the center.

Short Brick Row (700 block Oella Avenue) is a two-story terrace located behind a stone retaining wall. Obscured by the hill, trees and a single one-story porch, the brick dwellings are two-stories tall and two bays wide under a gable roof.

Spring Street contains five three-story brick duplexes, each of which is four bays wide with a gable roof. The six-over-six window sashes have flat brick arches. A hip-roofed porch covers the first floor facade.

The more numerous frame buildings offer greater variety than the brick and stone ones. The frame buildings are also larger. The 700 block of Oella Avenue (Pleasant Hill) contains four bay (two bay per unit), two-story duplexes with a bracketed cornice behind which the flat roof slopes downward. The windows contain two-over-two sash. Some of the buildings have a porch across the first floor.

The 500 and 600 blocks of Oella Avenue contain more two-story duplexes with first floor porches and a central chimney in the gable roof of each unit. This row, the frame row in the 700 block, and most of the remaining frame buildings are covered with asbestos shingles.

The frame, single-family houses are constructed with the gable end to the street They are two and one-half stories tall and two bays wide with a one-story porch.

(See Continuation Sheet 2)

The commercial building in the district is the County Corner Grocery at the junction of Oella and Westchester Avenues. The one ecclesiastical building is the Oella Methodist Church, a simple frame building with a tower on the northeast corner. It has been converted for offices. (The top of the steeple has been taken down.)

The dominant structure is the 1919 W. S. Dickey Company mill. The brick building varies in height between three and five stories depending on the ground level. It was constructed in the ruins of the Union Manufacturing Company's mills. The exterior is divided into bays by continuous brick pilasters from the ground to the cornice joined by an arch. In between are large, multi-paned windows to maximize the use of natural light. At the junction of two of the wings is a four-story tower with a hip roof.

Extending north from the factory is the Union Manufacturing Company's mill race which continues to Union Dam at U.S. 40. Flood gate controls remain on the race.

B-150

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	X INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		X INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oella Historic District is a major 19th Century industrial center in Maryland whose original character and setting is absolutely intact. One of the earliest and more extensive cotton factories in the United States, the Union Manufacturing Company, located in and chose the name of Oella. This company used water powered looms as early as 1819. The W. J. Dickey Company, the successor to the Union Company, was one of the largest textile firms in the South in the early 20th century. The influx of man-made fibers tolled the death knell of the W. J. Dickey Company, a producer of woven goods.

Industry has dominated the economy of Oella. The constant demand for newer facilities coupled with fires and floods on the Patapsco led to the frequent replacement of factories. The continuing rich history is reflected in the extant residential buildings. Oella, therefore, is a 19th century village of pristine, unpretentious, functional workers houses.

In 1808, the Union Manufacturing Company bought the site from the Ridgely family (later the company acquired land from the Ellicott family).

A group of prominent Baltimoreans (Robert McKim, William Wilson, William Jones, John Trimble, James H. McGullock, Ludwig Hering, August Jacob Schwartz, Nathan Levering and James Beatty) had organized the textile firm the same year. Under a state charter, the Union Company had an authorized capitalization of one million dollars, the largest in the state and one of the largest in the country. The company's first mill, completed on October 6, 1809, was five stories tall, measured 106 by 144 feet, and contained 800 spindles. In 1811 the Union Company had its property resurveyed and patented as Oella "in commemoration of the first woman who applied herself to the spinning of Cotton on the Continent of America." (Patents, liber IB #B, Folio 8; Hall of Records, Annapolis).

An excellent description of the company is found in the 1811-1812 diary of Sir August John Foster, the British minister to the United States. He recorded that an Englishman, Matthew Waddell, directed the mill which spun 200 pounts of cotton per day, chiefly into yarn and jean and royal rib for vest material. The cotton came from New Orleans, cost eleven cents a pound and was very dirty. Three hundred employees, including children, worked from sunrise to sunset with a half-hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. Foster thought this work day was too long.

(See Continuation Sheet 3)

Contemporaneously Maximilian Godefroy, architect of St. Mary's Seminary Chapel in Baltimore City, executed a remarkable drawing of the Union Manufacturing Company illustrating a mill with a water wheel and a second building, probably another mill, behind the first. Two substantial dwellings, a row of houses and an additional outbuilding (demolished) complete the drawing.

At the time of the War of 1812 the Union Manufacturing Company was the third largest in the United States. Plans to construct a third and fourth mill, announced in Niles Register, November 12, 1813, indicate the directors' ambitions. A fire on December 13, 1815, decimated the factories, but a month later the company was back in business. The two disasters added to the loss of the capital forced the company to scrap expansion plans. Business was continued in the first mill (1812) on its 5000 spindles.

In 1819 the Union Company introduced power looms operated by water-driven shafts, a recent invention. A year later the Patapsco was supplying power for twenty looms. Business improved, justifying the construction of an additional mill (1822) containing 150 power looms and 7000 spindles, making Oella the largest textile concern outside New England.

At that time, the company employed ten men, sixteen boys and 104 girls. One hundred fifty thousand pounds of raw cotton were made into 120,000 pounds of yarn and 240,000 yards of cloth a year. Eighty tenements existed in Oella; other buildings included machine houses, smith shops, a grist mill, a boarding house for the seventy apprentices and a school house.

Production expanded to such an extent that the company miscalculated the market and produced more than could be sold. In 1834 the factory was forced to close.

In the mid-1840's, undaunted by these financial problems, a second textile concern, the Granite Hill Factory, opened a mill with accompanying housing south of the Union Manufacturing Company. (This concern was located on the site of an Ellicott iron works. See Ellicotts' Mills (site) Historic District). By 1850 the company had built a four-story, steam-heated granite mill, 48 by 168 feet, with gas lights. It employed forty men and 110 women. The water-powered looms produced 1.35 million yards of muslin a year.

Financial problems plagued the Granite Hill Factory. These were compounded by an 1868 flood which reduced the mill to rubble and washed the mill dam and several houses down the Patapsco.

In the 1870's the Union Manufacturing Company bought out Granite Hill. The construction of new factory buildings followed the acquisition which, in turn, preceded financial disaster. In 1887 the W. J. Dickey Company bought the entire complex.

(See Continuation Sheet 4)

Dickey, born in Ireland, began a textile work in Baltimore in 1838 with seventy-five dollars. His business so expanded that by the end of the century he had purchased Oella and the Ashland Company at what is now Dickeyville. Dickey saw his concern become the largest woolen textile mill in the South. He constructed a new factory and expanded production into wool. The peak was reached in World War I. In 1918 an electrical fire destroyed mill buildings and threatened the housing of the 600 employees. A rebuilding program saw the construction of the present mill.

Manufacturing continued through the 20th century with a brief interruption during the Depression. The Patapsco continued to provide power to generate electricity until 1972 when hurricane Agnes flooded the power plant. The same year the Dickey Company ceased manufacturing.

The Oella district stands today as the visible remains of a past way of life, that of the company towns which grew up around the factories and mills of 19th century America. Villages such as this which have remained unaltered are some of the most important tools in the study of industrial archaeology.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

data on Oella. He is t authority on the mills of Ma and. His report on Oella is available at the Maryland Historical Trust in Annapolis or at the Baltimore County Historical Society in Cockeysville. The research was conducted in primary sources including 19th century newspapers; county land, probate and tax records; historic maps and manuscripts. Secondary sources included theses and articles in the Maryland Historical Magazine, the Society for Industrial Archaeology and contemporary newspapers. (See Continuation Sheet 1 for items 9, 10 & 11)

B 1-150

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately 130 acres 130

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A				B			
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION - The Oella Historic District is bounded on the west by the west bank of the Patapsco River, on the south by a line 600' southeast of the center of the Baltimore Gas & Electric right-of-way and parallel to it southeast to the rear property line of the property of Charles Wagandt II then east and north following the same rear property line to a point 250' southwest of the intersection of the Wagandt property line and Glen Road then southeast in a line paralleling Glen Road (250' southwest of Glen Road) for roughly 800' (See Continuation Sheet for items 9, 10 &11)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE (SEE Continuation Sheet for Items 9, 10 & 11)

ORGANIZATION DATE

STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN STATE

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE X LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DATE

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

9. Charles Wagandt, II, recognized Maryland historian on the Middle Period, has conducted detailed research on Oella in primary and secondary sources. His work on the W. J. Dickey records is ongoing. Mr. Wagandt is doing an extensive history project among the residents of Oella.

Alice (Mrs. Clyde) Martin of the Baltimore County Historical Society and the Baltimore County Committee of the Maryland Historical Trust compiled exhaustive maps on the district - dates of buildings, sites of structures, property lines - as well as a complete list of property owners.

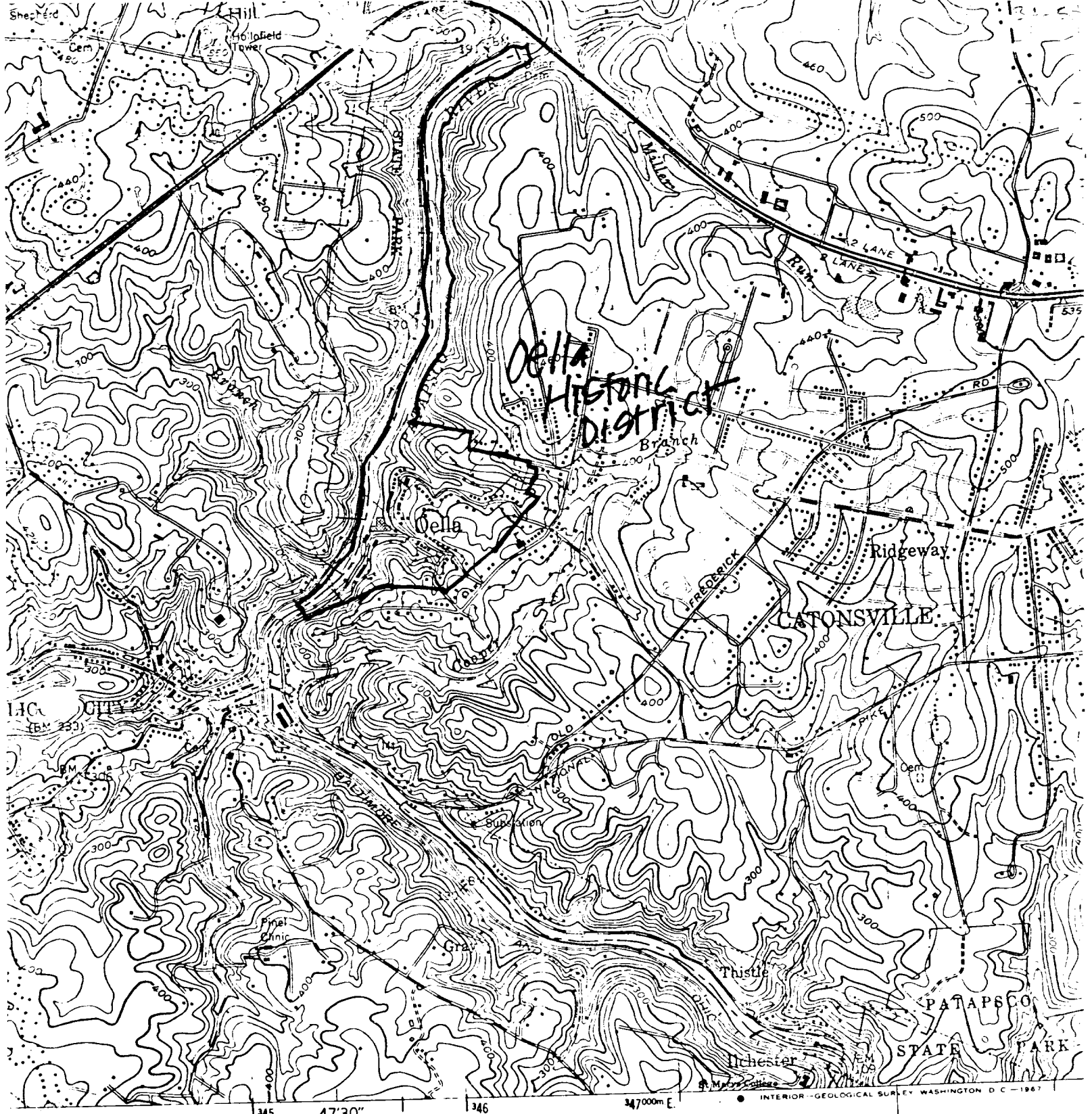
10. to the intersection of the rear property line of the properties on the west side of Westchester Avenue then north following the rear property line to the southern property lines on the south side of Oella Avenue, then east approximately 275' then north following the eastern property line to Oella Avenue then west on Oella Avenue approximately 125' then north following the east property line of 446 Oella Avenue and of the Oella Cemetery then west following the northern property line of the cemetery and Charles Wagandt's property to the 200' elevation line approximately 75' east of the mill race then north following a line marking 200' elevation north to the south side of the U.S. 40 bridge on the Patapsco and northwest to the west bank of the Patapsco.

11.

John McGrain
Vice President, Baltimore
County Historical Society
34 Willow Avenue
Towson, Maryland 21204
Summer 1975
301-823-1844

Alice Martin
Baltimore County Committee,
Maryland Historical Trust
Route 1, Box 98
Phoenix, Maryland 21131
Fall 1975
301-472-2128

Nancy Miller, Historian
Maryland Historical Trust
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Fall 1975
301-267-1438



.3 MI TO MD 175
WEST ELKRIDGE 5.9 MI.

1 MILE

4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

1 KILOMETER

20 F
LEVEL

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty — Light-duty

Medium-duty — Unimproved dirt

Interstate Route — U.S. Route — State R

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ELLICOTT CITY, M

SE/4 ELLICOTT 15' QUADRAN

N3915 W7645/7.5

1953

AP ACCURACY STANDARDS
Y WASHINGTON D C 20242

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Oella

AND/OR COMMON
Oella Historic District

2 LOCATION

Across the Patapsco River from Ellicott City

STREET & NUMBER
Frederick Avenue to Oella Avenue — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Oella — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Sixth

STATE
Maryland

CODE
24

COUNTY
Baltimore

CODE
005

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	X COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	X PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	X INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
		NO	MILITARY	OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Multiple Private Owners

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN — VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Baltimore County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER
Washington Avenue

CITY, TOWN
Towson

STATE
Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Topography and industry determined the appearance of Oella, situated where the Patapsco River rushes through a veritable canyon edged on both sides by curved steep hills. The proximity of this area to Baltimore and its harbor coupled with the unharnessed water power brought the first industry here in 1772. Mills and factories were from that time through the 20th century constructed near the river on the narrow, level ground. The other buildings, chiefly housing, used the remaining level ground or climbed the hill. The orientation of Oella has, since the 18th century, been toward the mill and the industry. The hill acted as a natural barrier separating the district from the rest of Baltimore County.

The unifying element of the district is both topographical and historical. Unlike urban districts where easily discernable architectural similarities unite a district (e.g. Annapolis, Georgetown), this area is united by two centuries of common industrial heritage. Two textile concerns acquired land from the Ellicotts. These were later consolidated into one company. The Ellicott flour mill, the "parent" industry, is now an archeological site, but the production of flour continued there to the present decade.

The southern end of the district consists of multi-story, mammoth mid-twentieth century industrial buildings constructed between the Patapsco and the Old National Pike, the location of the road originally constructed by the Ellicotts to transport their flour to Baltimore. An early smoke stack remains within the exterior wall of a two-story brick building to the south of the six-story Wilkins-Rogers factory. It is possible that this stack (except for the top fifteen feet) is part of the original Ellicott Mill. Fragments of stone walls, possibly from the early mill, have been incorporated into the brick wall.

In the mid-19th century the opposite side of the National Pike contained numerous houses, most probably similar to those further north which have been demolished and are part of the archeological site.

Traces of Ellicott's Mill race remain. At the intersection of Frederick (Old National Pike) and Oella Avenues, it is possible to see the remains of the race which first functioned in the 18th century.

Opposite the mill on the east side of the Old National Pike stands the shell of George Ellicott's house. A late 18th century structure, it is the chief aboveground structure from the early period. It is a two-story, five-bay structure constructed of granite cut into retangular blocks and laid in even courses. The windows contain two over two sash or are boarded up. The central entrance is recessed from the exterior wall. The ruined area is paneled. A rectangular transom exists above the door. The door frame consists of a pair of pilasters supporting an entablature decorated with swags which in turn support a pediment. The gable roof contains two dormers. A pair of enclosed chimneys project from each gable end. A wing perpendicular to the main block extends from the rear south elevation. This addition is attached to a two-story wing which was constructed parallel to the ridge of the main house. The building, severely damaged by Agnes (June 1972), is in a deteriorated condition.

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As the George Ellicott house relates to the beginnings of their family enterprise, the John Ellicott house (built on the brow of the hill, 1859), interprets the prosperity of an established and prospering business. The two-story frame house is Italianate in design. The exotic elements in the architecture are repeated in the name of the building, the Alhambra, probably for Washington Irving's collection of Spanish Sketches (1832). The principal facade (west) is three bays long. The northernmost bay consists of a two-story tower which projects from the facade. A two-story porch supported by pins on the first floor and columns on the second, extends across the facade. The southernmost bay supports a third story which gives the effect of a second tower. The three part windows (two over two sash flanking a six over six sash) have shutters. The central door supports a large six-pane sash and is flanked by windows. The second floor door which gives access to the porch is treated similarly. Arched shallow recesses flank both doors.

A contemporary newspaper account describes it as "... a very spacious DWELLING, suitable for a large family, finished with marble mantels, closets, and water fixtures complete."[1] (The Sun, (Baltimore), April 26, 1861).

In 1895 the Ellicott City Electric Railway Company took land from the Alhambra for a trolly line. The company made a deep cut sixty feet from the house. The 33 foot right-of-way, cut out of the hill, remains today in the gorge. Trolley service was discontinued in 1955.

Below the Alhambra and immediately north of the Patapsco bridge, is the McLaughlin House, an early tavern visible in Charles Varb's 1833 view of Baltimore. The tavern is a three-story stone and brick building painted white. The first floor of the principal (west) elevation has been altered for twentieth century tavern use. The remainder of the building is intact. The four second floor windows have four over four sash while those on the third floor are two over four. The cornice which extends around the northwest and south sides of the gable roof has brackets and modillions. The Italianate effect of the roof and broad areas of wall not constructed in stone leads to the supposition that the original tavern included the three southernmost bays, was two stories high and had a steeply pitched gable roof.

The Old National Pike (Frederick Avenue) crosses the Patapsco to Howard County at the McLaughlin House. The road north of the bridge becomes Oella Avenue which parallels the river for approximately one mile before beginning to climb the hill at the Dickey factory at the intersection of Glen Road and Hollow Road. There two streets extend east up the hill while Oella Avenue continues north for several hundred feet before turning east. This section of the Oella district contains the 19th century workers' housing. The only known 20th century building is the 1919 mill. Roughly fifty structures and two sites exist

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Oella
Baltimore County

north of the bridge. The southern section of the district (described above) contains three historic buildings, fragments of the 18th century mill and the mill site. The scale of twentieth century buildings dwarfs the earlier buildings. However, the factories are not an intrusion, but rather a continuation of industrual activity begun in 1772. (No federal property exists in the district).

The workers' housing in Oella consists of multiple units and sizeable family houses constructed of stone, brick and wood. All these buildings retain the same scale and proportions. They are sited close to the road on steeply sloping lots. The Dickey Company still owns most of the property. The detached houses located higher up the hill are privately owned.

Dating can be done by building material. The stone houses and the four log buildings (Logtown Road) were constructed in the first quarter of the 19th century when the Union Manufacturing Company began operation. (The Granite Factory store houses date from the 1840's) The Maximilian Godefroy drawing (c.1812) shows most of the stone buildings. The brick houses date from the mid-century, while the frame buildings were constructed at the end of the century when the W. J. Dickey Company began operation.

The most impressive stone structure is the Storekeeper's House at 804-806 Oella Avenue. It is a three-story, four bay building with enclosed brick chimneys at each gable end. The stone arches on the windows and the 12 over 8 sash are two details which help make this building recognizable as that in the Godefroy drawing. The first floor is covered with a one-story porch.

Stone Row and Granite Hill, both on Oella Avenue, are multiple unit buildings two and one-half stories high with a gable roof and six over six sashes.

Each unit in Stone Row is two bays wide with a dormer in the attic. One porch extends across the facade. Granite Hill (named for the Granite Factory) is a collection of stone duplexes three bays wide with a central entrance and separate porch.

The Johnson House on Hollow Road is one of the few detached stone buildings. It is three bays wide and two stories tall with a gable roof and central entrance. One room has been added to the gable end but this does not alter the integrity of the stone house.

The brick houses, like the stone ones, are plain, solidly constructed, functional dwellings. Long Brick Row (700-744 Oella Avenue) which contains thirty houses in an unbroken terrace along a curved street is the most impressive. Each two-story section is four bays wide divided by a parapet extending along the gable roof to the chimney and contains two units with the doors paired at the center.

Short Brick Row (700 block Oella Avenue) is a two-story terrace

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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located behind a stone retaining wall. Obscured by the hill, trees and a single one-story porch, the brick dwellings are two-stories tall and two bays wide under a gable roof.

Spring Street contains five three-story brick duplexes, each of which is four bays wide with a gable roof. The six over six window sashes have flat brick arches. A hip-roofed porch covers the first floor facade.

The more numerous frame buildings offer greater variety than the brick and stone ones. The frame buildings are also larger. The 700 block of Oella Avenue (Pleasant Hill) contains four bay (two bay per unit), two-story duplexes with a bracketed cornice behind which the flat roof slopes downward. The windows contain two over two sash. Some of the buildings have a porch across the first floor.

The 500 and 600 blocks of Oella Avenue contain more two-story duplexes with first floor porches and a central chimney in the gable roof of each unit. This row, the frame row in the 700 block, and most of the remaining frame buildings are covered with asbestos shingles.

The frame, single-family houses are constructed with the gable end to the street. They are two and one-half stories tall and two bays wide with a one-story porch.

The commerical building in the district is the County Corner Grocery at the junction of Oella and Westchester Avenues. The one ecclesiastical building is the Oella Methodist Church, a simple frame building with a tower on the northeast corner. It has been converted for offices. (The top of the steeple has been taken down.)

The dominant structure is the 1919 W. S. Dickey Company mill. The brick building varies in height betweeen three and four stories depending on the ground level. It was constructed in the ruins of the Union Manufacturing Company's mills. The exterior is divided into bays by continuous brick pilasters from the ground to the cornice joined by an arch. In between are large, multi-paned windows to maximize the use of natural light. At the junction of two of the wings is a four-story tower with a hip roof.

Extending north from the factory is the Union Manufacturing Company's mill race which continues to Union Dam at U. S. 40 . Flood gate controls remain on the race.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	X INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	X OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		local history

SPECIFIC DATES BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oella Historic District is one of the major 18th and 19th century industrial centers in Maryland. The first merchant milling operation in the colonies, Ellicott's Mill, was located here where an 18th century system of automating flour milling was used. One of the earlier and more extensive cotton factories in the country, the Union Manufacturing Company, located in and chose the name of Oella. This company used water-powered looms as early as 1819. The W. J. Dickey Company, successor to the Union Company in Oella, was the largest textile firm in the South during the early decades of the 20th century. A second early cotton mill, the Granite Hill Factory, operated in Oella on the site of an Ellicott iron works.

Industry continued to dominate the economy of Oella through the 1970's. The constant demand for newer facilities coupled with fires and floods on the Patapsco River led to the replacement of the earlier factories with newer structures. The rich industrial history is, however, reflected in the extant residential buildings. An 18th century house, built by George Ellicott, remains, as does John Ellicott's Italianate villa. An altered 19th century tavern still operates on the Old National Pike at the Patapsco River. The road itself is important as the major land route west and the Ellicott's access east to the Baltimore harbor..

Oella is best known for the 19th century village of pristine workers' houses. Few counties or states possess such a well-preserved intact company town. The picturesque setting on a densely wooded hillside on the Patpasco River enhances the unpretentious, functional houses.

The history of Oella begins in 1772 when the Ellicott brothers settled in the narrow Patapsco valley. Purchasing land from Charles Carroll of Carrollton, they established one of the first large-scale merchant milling operations in the colonies on the site of the present Wilkins-Rogers plant. The Ellicotts covninced farmers like Charles Carroll to produce wheat on a large scale for their mill. They were among the first millers to adopt the Oliver Evans patented system of automation (1789) which offered a cost-effective series of mechanical conduits for moving grain from the wheat storage bin to a packed flour barrel untouched by human hands. Herman Steen, historian of the flour industry, credits the early use of the Evans system with the establishment of Baltimore as the center of American flour production from 1805 to 1836. The Ellicotts continued flour production in Oella until the panic of 1837.

In the early 19th century, a village existed around the Ellicotts'

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Oella
Baltimore County

mills which has disappeared except for George Ellicott's house (1782), described in the 1798 federal direct tax assessment as a "Stone Dwelling House 2 Story 44 x 24 & Kitchen one story 25 x 16." George Ellicott was an accomplished mathematician and amateur astronomer. As a surveyor he laid out the Old National Pike from Baltimore to Frederick. He represented the United States on a mission to the Indians, a visit which was reciprocated in 1807 when half a dozen Indian chiefs visited him in Oella.

Part of the stone foundation of the abutments and remnants of the race are the only extant fragments of the Ellicott's flour mill.

In 1808 the Ellicotts sold land located upstream from their flour mill to the Union Manufacturing Company. A group of prominent Baltimoreans (Robert McKin, William Wilson, William Jones, John Trimble, James H. McGullock Ludwig Hering, August Jacob Schwartz, Nathan Levering and James Beatty) had organized the textile firm the same year. Under a state charter, the Union Company had an authorized capitalization of one million dollars, the largest in the state and one of the largest in the country. The company's first mill, completed on October 6, 1809, was five stories tall, measured 106 by 144 feet, and contained 800 spindles. In 1811 the Union Company had its property resurveyed and patented as Oella "in Commemoration of the first woman who applied herself to the spinning of Cotton on the Continent of America." (Patents, Liber IB #B, folio 8).

An excellent description of the Company is found in the 1811-1812 diary of Sir August John Foster, the British minister to the United States. He recorded that an Englishman, Matthew Waddell, directed the mill which spun 200 pounds of cotton per day, chiefly into yarn and jean and royal rib for vest material. The cotton came from New Orleans, cost eleven cents a pound and was very dirty. Three hundred employees, including children, worked from sunrise to sunset with a half-hour for breakfast and an hour for dinner. Foster thought this work day was too long.

At the same time Maximilian Godefroy, architect of St. Mary's Seminary Chapel in Baltimore City, executed a remarkable drawing of the Union Manufacturing Company illustrating a mill with a water wheel and a second building, probably another mill, behind the first. Two substantial dwellings, a row of houses and an additional outbuilding (demolished) complete the drawing.

At the time of the War of 1812 the Union Manufacturing Company was the third largest in the United.States. Plans to construct a third and fourth mill, announced in Niles Register, November 12, 1813, indicate the directors' ambitions. A fire on December 13, 1815, decimated the factories, but a month later the company was back in business. Two years later a severe flood caused further damage. The two disasters

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added to the loss of the capital forced the Company to scrap expansion plans. Business was continued in the first mill (1812) on its 5000 spindles.

In 1819 the Union Company introduced power looms operated by water-driven shafts, a recent invention. A year later the Patapsco was supplying power for twenty looms. Business improved, justifying the construction of an additional mill (1822) containing 150 power looms and 7000 spindles, making Oella the largest textile concern outside New England.

At that time the company employed ten men, sixteen boys and 104 girls. One hundred fifty thousand pounds of raw cotton were made into 120,000 pounds of yarn and 240,000 yards of cloth a year. Eighty tenements existed in Oella; other buildings included machine houses, smith shops, a grist mill, a boarding house for the seventy apprentices and a school house.

Production expanded to such an extent that the Company miscalculated the market and produced more than could be sold. In 1834 the factory was forced to close.

In the mid-1840's, undaunted by these financial problems, a second textile concern, the Granite Hill Factory, opened a mill with accompanying housing south of the Union Manufacturing Company. (This concern was located on the site of an Ellicott iron works.) By 1850 the company had built a four-story, steam-heated granite mill, 48 by 168 feet, with gas lights. It employed forty men and 110 women. The water-powered looms produced 1.35 million yards of muslin a year.

Financial problems plagued the Granite Hill Factory. These were compounded by a 1868 flood which reduced the mill to rubble and washed the mill dam and several houses down the Patapsco.

In the 1870's the Union Manufacturing Company bought out Granite Hill. The construction of new factory buildings followed the acquisition which, in turn, preceeded financial disaster. In 1887 the W. J. Dickey Company bought the entire complex.

Dickey, born in Ireland, began a textile work in Baltimore in 1838 with seventy-five dollars. His business so expanded that by the end of the century he had purchased Oella and the Ashland Company at what is now Dickeyville. Dickey saw his concern become the largest textile mill in the South. He constructed a new factory and expanded production into wool. The peak was reached in World War I. In 1918 an electrical fire destroyed mill buildings and threatened the housing of the 600 employees. A rebuilding program saw the construction of the present mill.

Manufacturing continued through the 20th century with a brief interruption during the Depression. The Patapsco continued to provide power to generate electricity until 1972 when hurricane Agnes flooded the power plant. The same year the Dickey Company ceased manufacturing.

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The Oella district stands today as the visible remains of a past way of life, that of the company towns which grew up around the factories and mills of 19th century America. Villages such as this which have remained unaltered are some of the most important tools in the study of industrial archeology.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

John McGrain compiled the historical data on Oella from numerous sources. His work is summarized in an essay available at the Maryland Historical Trust in Annapolis or the Baltimore County Historical Society in Cockeysville. The research was done in primary sources including Niles Register, the Baltimore American, The Sun (Baltimore), and county land records. Secondary source material consister of theses and articles in the Maryland Historical Magazine, the Society for Industrial Archaeology

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A				B			
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Oella district is bounded on the north by the Union Dam, on the west by the Patapsco River and on the south by Cooper's Branch. The eastern boundary follows Cooper's Branch upstream to the west of the hill then west down the hill to the rear property lines along the east side of Frederick Avenue (Old National Pike) then following the rear property lines on the east side of Frederick Avenue and Oella Avenue north and east following the property lines of the Union Manufacturing Company as

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE John McGrain IS

ORGANIZATION

DATE Summer 1975

STREET & NUMBER 34 Willow Avenue

TELEPHONE 301-823-;849

CITY OR TOWN Towson

STATE Maryland 21204

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____ STATE ____ LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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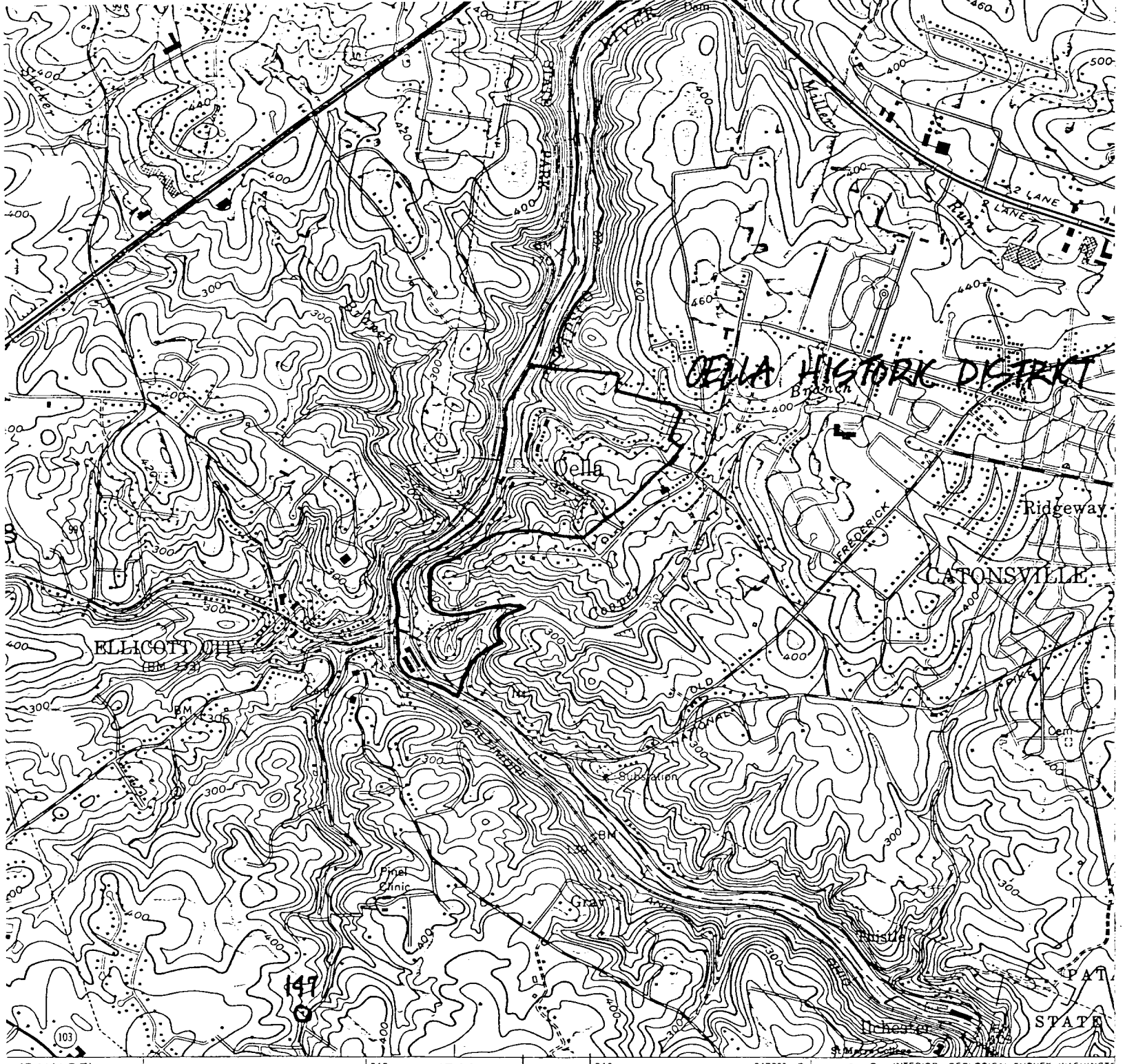
#9
and contemporary newspapers.

Charles Wagandt, II, historian and President of the W. J. Dickey Company, is the recognized authority on Oella. His research has included work in the Dickey archives and an extensive oral history project among the residents of Oella.

#10
printed in the second volume of G. M. Hopkins City Atlas of Baltimore, Maryland, and Environs of 1876-1877, which is the rear property line on the west side of Westchester Avenue and continuing north to include the Oella cemetery then turning west along the south side of Rest Avenue to the east side of the Mill racé and following the mill race north to Union Dam.

#11
Alice Martin
Baltimore County Committee, Maryland Historical Trust
Route 1, Box 98
Phoenix, Maryland 21131
301-267-1438
Summer 1975

Nancy Miller, Historian
Maryland Historical Trust
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
301-267-1438
September 1975



(SAVAGE) 1.3 MI. TO MD. 175
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INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTO

SCALE 1:24 000

0 1 MILE

3000 4000 5000 6000 7000 FEET

0 1 KILOMETER

INTERVAL 20 FEET
IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
ICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

B4-150

Ellicott City Quad

MARYLAND

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATI

Heavy-duty — Light-du

Medium-duty — Unimpro

Interstate Route — U. S. Route

ELLICOT

SE/4 ELLICOT

N3915-

PHOTOR

AMS 5662 IV

BA-150

Preservation Program
[redacted] 6-1
Ocala Historic District