

Proud to be in ...

CLARKSVILLE

Clarksville was settled by many families in the early 1600's but takes its name from a descendant of the Clark family that emigrated from northern Ireland. They settled in Anne Arundel County in 1790 and became successful planters, merchants and importers.

In the 1830's John R. Clark bought property on which he built a store and a hotel and gave his name to the area. Mr. Clark later became president of Ellicott City and Clarksville Pike begun in 1869. Its ten-mile route over old Columbia Pike joined with other roads to form one of the many "crossroads" communities of that period. The town continued to grow, adding a post office in 1840.

Clarksville economy depended on what the crops yielded at harvest time. In G.M. Hopkin's 1878 Atlas, Dawson Lawrence describes estates which "lay on fertile sections of land responsible for producing 40 bushels of wheat per acre, and large crops of other cereals raised in the county." Some residents still recall taking these crops to the Ellicott City Mill via what was then known as Route 29 or the Clarksville turnpike. Cattle were driven down the old dirt roads to the Baltimore stockyards during this period as well.

Visitors and politicians followed these same roads to Clarksville in the late 1800's. Sources say they came from everywhere to rendezvous at the "Paris of the Fifth Election District" where they could find good conversation and rest for their horses at a local tavern.

Public activity was centered around election day and church picnics, the most famous of them held at St. Louis the King Church built in 1855. The original church was replaced by one built in Gothic revival style and dedicated by Cardinal Gibbons in 1890. The Clarksville Picnic at St. Louis Church is still an annual event over 100 years later.

The community continued to move forward in the early 1900's. During this period, a blacksmith shop, a new school, and a bank made Clarksville the center of activity. Paved roads and automobiles in the 1920's and the construction of homes later added to the town's changing appearance.

Today Clarksville still calls itself a farming community although the farms slowly disappear as a result of rural development. But visitors can still see what Joshua Warfield described as land "rich in limestone and beautiful in landscape" hidden in this small "crossroads" community.



"The Big Week"
HoCo Chamber of Commerce May 1982