**Patapsco Valley Firsts**

- European to explore & map the Chesapeake Bay & parts of the Patapsco River
  - 1608 Captain John Smith
- First croakers in Colonial America
  - 1761 at Dorsey Forge
- First two flour mills
  - 1761 & 1764 John Comnithwaite’s & James Hood’s mills
- First successful steamboat in the US
  - 1789 John Ellicott’s boat
- First black astronomer and publisher of an almanac in America
  - 1792 Benjamin Banneker of Ellicott’s Mills (now Ellicott City)
- First textile mill in Maryland and the nation’s largest cotton works at the time
  - 1811 The Union Manufacturing Company (later the Dickey Mill)
- First American woman to spin cotton (also had a community named after her)
  - 1811 Celisa, who worked at the Union Manufacturing Co.
- First mobile home in America
  - 1816 Made and used by the Ellicott Brothers. It included a kitchen and supported the building of the National Road
- First federally-funded interstate road in America
  - 1816 The National Road ran through Ellicott’s Mills and was later moved to what is now Rt. #40
- First railroad bridge in America
  - 1829 The Carrollton Viaduct
- First commercial railroad in America
  - 1830 The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad’s Old Main Line ran from Baltimore to Ellicott’s Mills
- First railway depot in the world
  - 1830 Ellicott City, now a National Historic Monument
- First town created by an American railroad
  - 1830s Relay
- First successful steam engine in the US
  - 1830 The Tom Thumb, which ran from Baltimore to Relay
- First sitting US President to ride a train
  - 1833 Andrew Jackson, who rode from Ellicott City to Baltimore
- World’s first multi-arched, curved, stone railroad bridge
  - 1835 The Thomas Viaduct is still in regular use today, and is a National Historic Monument
- Site in the valley of the first telegraph line from Washington DC and Baltimore
  - 1844 The Thomas Viaduct
- First US President-elect to ride a train to his inauguration
  - 1845 James Polk riding from Relay to Washington, D.C.
- First fish ladder in Maryland
  - 1856 The Orange Grove Flour Mill
- First hotel built by a railroad for the exclusive use of railroad patrons
  - 1873 The Viaduct Hotel in Relay
- First highway to link Baltimore with Washington, D.C.
  - early 1900s, the Washington Turnpike later became U.S. Rt. #1
- First State Forester in Maryland
  - 1906 Fred Besley revolutionized forest fire control and encouraged public use of the Patapsco Forest Reserve
- Maryland’s first State Park
  - 1907 Patapsco Valley State Park. The first 48 acres were donated to the State by then-Catoctinville farmer John Glenn.
- World’s First Underwater Hydro-Electric Plant
  - 1907 The Bladet Dam located just 0.8 of a mile upstream from the Orange Grove Area
- Maryland’s first summer stock theater
  - 1930 The Hill Top Theater formerly the Patapsco Female Institute in the mid 1800’s and later a World War I veteran’s hospital located in Ellicott City
- Site of the first government-approved CPS Camp for conscientious objectors
  - 1941 Civilian Public Service Camp for World War II conscientious objectors was in the Avalon Area, where the Civilian Conservation Corps’ Camp Tydings was located from the 1930s
- First major war planned in the valley