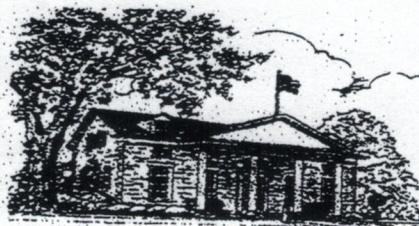


## HOLLAND LAND OFFICE



### Famous Batavians

#### JOSEPH ELLICOTT

Joseph Ellicott was born in Bucks County Pennsylvania on November 1, 1760. In 1772, Joseph's father and brothers were in Maryland where they bought 770 acres. They built a gristmill there and in 1774 the entire family and the Evans children (orphans in the care of the Ellicott's) moved to Maryland.

In 1789, Joseph helped his brother Andrew survey the southwest boundary of New York State in an effort to determine the state that Erie was in. By 1791, Joseph had struck out on his own and was hired to determine the boundary between Georgia and the lands of the Creek Indians. In 1794, he was hired by the Holland Land Company to survey 1.5 million acres of land in northwest Pennsylvania. This survey and other work lead the Holland Land Company to appoint him Chief Surveyor in 1795. The Holland Land Company purchased a large area of land from Robert Morris in 1797. Ellicott was given the responsibility to survey this land. He completed a preliminary survey in the fall of that year and throughout the winter he planned for a true survey.

In March of 1798, the "Great Survey" began. Joseph's brothers Benjamin and David assisted in the survey. In October 1800, the 3.3 million acres had been surveyed. The investors of the Holland Land Company had been searching since they purchased the property for an agent to sell the land. Based on one reason or another the other applicants were rejected. Ellicott had ideas about the land that agreed with the company's goals and he already knew the land, on November 1<sup>st</sup> he was signed as Land Agent. Joseph entered the political arena to encourage the formation of a new county that would consist of the land west of the Genesee River. On March 30, 1802 Genesee County was formed with Batavia as the county seat. In order to increase the voting population of the new County, Ellicott tried to convince Busti to revise the company policy about when the settler could receive the land deed. In 1803 Joseph accepted the position of County Treasurer, a position that he held until 1809. He used his political influence to propose the division of "Batavia" into four towns. In February 1805, Batavia was divided into Willink, Erie, Chautauqua and Batavia. In January 1816 Batavia formed a committee to publicly advocate the creation of the proposed canal; Ellicott was a member. Later in the same year, he was appointed as a state canal commissioner. Ellicott resigned this position in 1818 due to an injury that he received in a sleigh accident. The canal was finished in 1825. On October 26, 1821, Ellicott resigned his position as land agent. His health deteriorated at an alarming rate and he was recommended to go to Bellevue. On August 19, 1826 he ended his life by hanging himself. He is buried in Batavia.