



Elizabethtown

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CHICAGO  TORONTO

Credits

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Thomas Brozek

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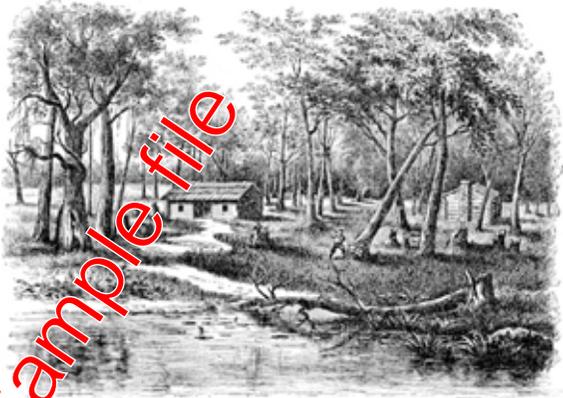
Player Section

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History of Elizabethtown, Maryland: 1739-1780

Hager's Fancy

In 1739, Jonathan Hager, a German immigrant from Pennsylvania and a volunteer Captain of Scouts, purchases 200 acres of land in the Great Appalachian Valley between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains in Maryland and calls it Hager's Fancy. At this time, there are already about 100 settlers in the area. In 1762, Hager officially founded the town of Elizabethtown which he names after his wife, Elizabeth Kershner. Although the town's official name is Elizabethtown, the popular name for it becomes Hagerstown¹.



In 1745, the Hager family sells Hager's Fancy and moves to a farm west of the present site of Elizabethtown. There, they build the first two-story log house, with an arched stone cellar so constructed that if the family is attacked by the Indians they can seek refuge there. It is an unfortunate, but necessary, need in these early days of the area. By this time there are about 100 families, or 500 hundred people, living in Hager's Fancy who are designated the "Salisbury Hundred."

In the beginning, the Hager family is frequently assailed by the natives, and his family finds the cellar a most useful asylum. It is often necessary to protect the dairy-maids with armed men while they milk the cows. As a rule, however, Captain Hager generally manages to keep on pretty friendly terms with the Indians of the area. Thusly, unfriendly Indians from out of the vicinity are Hager's target when he is made a Captain in the French and Indian War in the late 1750's.

Captain Hager lays out the town in about 520 lots of 82 feet front and 240 feet deep, making half an acre each, which are then leased for £5 consideration money, £1 or 7 shillings and 6 pence, per annum as a perpetual ground-rent. He

¹ **Historical note:** The City Council officially changed the community's name from Elizabethtown to Hagerstown in 1813 because the name had gained popular usage, and in 1814, the Maryland State Legislature officially endorsed the changing of the town's name.