



CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1999

Chevy Chase Events Celebrate Past Century

Spring Gala To Be Held at Hundred-year-old House

Joan and Richard Marsh and Susan and William Kirby have agreed to host the annual spring gala of the Chevy Chase Historical Society. The Marshs' house at 101 East Kirke Street was built in 1899 and is one of the houses featured on the Chevy Chase Century walking tour. The Kirby's house at 102 East Lenox, now greatly expanded and renovated, was the carriage house for 101 East Kirke Street.

101 East Kirke Street was built in 1899 by John L. Weaver, the last of three houses he built in the Village for his growing family. Arthur B. Heaton, who was to become a renowned Washington architect, designed this house for his sister, Mrs. Weaver, as his first commission.

The circular driveway in front was constructed so that carriages could drive up to the door. In the center of the driveway, Mr. Weaver planted 4,000 tulip bulbs, according to his daughter Constance. The Weavers lived here until 1915, when they sold the house to Arabella Macfarland.

The next owner, Dr. and Mrs. Whitman Cross bought the house in 1924 and commissioned Rose Greely, the pioneer landscape architect to design the garden (1924-29). Two full-time gardeners and two part-time gardeners tended the plantings. Dr. Cross was a rose fancier and was a founder of the Potomac Rose Society. According to one oral history, he developed the Chevy Chase Rose, a climber the color of crimson glory, and several other roses as well.

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A Family Walking Tour of The Oldest Houses in Village

In celebration of the century, the Chevy Chase Historical Society is organizing a family walking tour of Chevy Chase Village on Saturday, April 24 from two p.m. to four p.m.

The purpose of the tour is to highlight the exterior architecture of some of the eldest houses in the Village. The tour is from only the sidewalk and does not include the interior of any of the houses.

Following the tour, refreshments will be provided at the Village Hall, from four to five p.m., where the Chevy Chase Garden Club's annual flower show will be on display. This year's show includes instructions on "How to Create a Butterfly Sanctuary" and a special exhibit on Rose Ishbel Greely, pioneer landscape architect and designer, lent by the Historical Society of Washington D.C.

Featured on the walking tour will be twenty-five houses and the Village Hall, all built prior to 1899. These buildings are ones whose age the Chevy Chase Historical Society was able to document. Others probably exist in the Village, but the documentation of their exact date of construction has not been found. The tour is free; no tickets are required. Brochures and maps will be available at the Village Hall or at any of the marked designated houses. Included in the brochure are detailed sketches of various architectural styles drawn and donated by Chevy Chase native and folk artist W. Sharon Farr.

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Spring Gala set for Sunday, April 25 at 101 East Kirke St. from 4 to 7pm.

Our outstanding neighborhood restaurant, **La Ferme** has agreed to cater the annual champagne dinner. Previous guests will remember the versatile pianist Bruce Steig who will be providing the music. The Chevy Chase Two-Step written in 1895 and respectfully dedicated to the residents of Chevy Chase will be premiered. Invitations have been sent to Historical Society members and others who have expressed an interest in the Society. Reservations are by mail only. For more information, please call Helen Secrest, 301-652-4878. Our most grateful thanks to **La Ferme** who has donated, in part, its services.

Spring Gala (continued from page 1)

The fourth owners, Don and Sara Glassie bought the property in 1945 from the Crosses and donated the rose plants to the Chevy Chase Club to start its rose garden. The current and fifth owners of the house have lived there since 1954.

The two and one-half story house has four bays. The floor plan is an unusual off-center plan with a through center hall. The richly detailed entrance has a lovely fanlight and sidelights. Both the first and second floors have six pane over six pane windows. A major addition was added across the back of the house in 1924 along with a solarium on the side.

The spacious lot is circumscribed by a noteworthy Colonial Revival fence with round pickets on a stone wall base that was part of Rose Greely's garden.

According to Joanne Seale Lawson, in Washington History Magazine, Greeley believed "The city house demands a garden of architectural treatment; the large country house, a formal garden with informal planting on a big scale away from the house; and the country cottage or the small suburban house, a simple country garden. City gardens were always enclosed by walls, often of the same materials as the house, or a fence. Connections between the indoors and outdoors were emphasized as were views of the garden from within the house. Greely always preserved a balance between intricate paving patterns and intricate planting schemes. Her planted areas also reveal a thoughtful balance between evergreen and deciduous plants with evergreens on the perimeter providing a framework for the design in winter."

102 East Lenox was originally a carriage house. Later a large greenhouse was attached to the building when Dr. Whitman Cross owned 101 East Kirke. In 1954, 102 East Lenox was sold separately from the house on Kirke Street and became a residence.

Over the years the house was expanded and changed masking most of the original use of the building. The greenhouse became a sunny den. Wonderful carved paneling was added to the library walls; heart of pine wide planked floors to the living room and hall. The original brick floors can be seen in the area used as the dining room. On the exterior, the cupola and weathervane are reminders of the previous use of the building.

Susan and William Kirby, owners of 102 East Lenox, will welcome spring gala guests between four and four-forty-five p.m. to view their home.

House Tour (continued from page 1)

By considering the disparate, broad range of architectural styles—from Craftsman to Queen Anne to Colonial Revival—one can appreciate the unique beauty and charm of this neighborhood which has evolved in the last 100 years from a rural street car suburb of Washington, into a mature established neighborhood of eclectic housing styles.

The walk will take place rain or shine and there will be a police escort for crossing Connecticut Avenue.

Four Houses on the Family Tour

Descriptions of the following houses have been excerpted from the brochure for the family walking tour.



10 East Lenox

This excellent example of Colonial Revival architecture was probably built in 1899 by Lewis Earle as part of his Chevy Chase Land Company-sponsored construction in the Village. Mr. Earle bought the property from the Chevy Chase Land Company in 1898 for \$2000 and sold it one year later, presumably after building on the land, to Lewis J. Davis of Washington for \$8,000 (see also 16 West Kirke, another Lewis Davis house). Note the similarities between this house and 17 Primrose Street, a later Arthur Heaton designed house and 101 East Kirke Street.

On the east side is a second-story enclosed sleeping porch with an open porch below. The front door and sidelights are particularly attractive, with an alternating circle and diamond design traced on the glass. The porch centered on the second

story over the portico is accessible through a door-styled window. The rear addition telescopes back and is the work of prominent Washington architects, Hartman and Cox. The roof is side-gabled, and the windows in both stories are six panes over one. The two bays on either side of the front door provide the symmetry and balance to the house.

The current owners of this house have been there since 1975, and the previous owners, the William Sabine family, lived there for 40 years. Prior owners were the Connor family, who lived there beginning in 1922.



9 Chevy Chase Circle

This classic Tudor Revival estate is one of the earliest houses built in Chevy Chase. It was built in 1894, designed by Lindley Johnson, and its original owner was Francis C. Newlands, founder of the Chevy Chase Land Company, and originator of the concept of a suburb for Washington, DC, serviced by the trolley car. Newlands occupied the residence until 1898 when the property was turned over to the Chevy Chase Land Company and leased as a summer residence.

In 1909, William S Corby purchased the house and made extensive changes. The architect was Arthur Heaton. The gateway was built in 1915, and the garages were added in 1924 and 1927. Arthur Heaton also did the landscape plan. The Corbys lived here for over 50 years.

The half-timber and stucco exterior gives the house its Tudor characteristics. Notice the fieldstone facing on the first floor

and the transition to the second floor's attractive Tudor design. There are three full floors of living space. In the front of the house there are leaded windows looking into Chevy Chase Circle. Casement windows are on the first floor, and twelve panes over twelve pane sash windows are on the second floor. There are many other window types and a variety of dormer styles, which give the house a picturesque asymmetrical character. The port cochere at the front door provides a covered entryway and stone pedestals frame this door. Notice the well-proportioned brick chimneys with their clay chimney pots.

The property originally covered the entire block between Western Avenue and Connecticut Avenue and back to East Irving Street. A field stone wall now surrounds much of the property.

The estate is listed as a Montgomery County Historic site.



14 West Kirke

Built in 1894 for the Henry Cozzens family, this Queen Anne/Folk Victorian house is an excellent example of the era's style and of the functionality of that design. The box-like massing in the center of the house is indicative of the Colonial Revival style popular at the turn of the century. The combination of Queen Anne and

Colonial Revival styles give this house its four-square characteristics embellished with projecting bays, gables and wrap-around porches.

Wood shingle was considered at the time to be an outstanding material for the exterior of a residence. Not only is it durable but also, if properly maintained expands and contracts with the changing weather, especially in the summer months of high humidity common to this area.

The architect was Chevy Chase Land Company architect, Leon Dessez. He considered in his design the form and function of the then popular sleeping porches, one on either side of the residence, integrating them into the main frame and design of the house. The three large bay windows allow for superior airflow through the first and second floors. The gabled roofline softens on the front corners to lead the eye into line over the sleeping porches.



8 West Irving Street

Built in 1895, 8 West Irving Street is a unique combination of design and construction materials. The craftsman style shows variations on the facing from the foundation up to the dormer roof. The house features an off-center through center hall with two bays of windows on the east side and only one bay on the west side.

The materials used in the construction are noteworthy. The stone foundation gives way to a Victorian-styled cedar shingled first level. The shingles are in two and one half inch thick layers, one above the other, with a layer of bric-a-brac detailing between. Note the zigzag row of shingles set between every two rows of straight shingles. The second floor exterior is pebble stucco, which is unusual because of the bearing weight on the first level. Another unique

feature of this residence is the Tudor style trim on the top of the second level, offset by the bracketed eaves. The windows in the bays on the first floor are tri-part with the center twelve panes over one and the sidelights six panes over one.

One of the persistent stories about this house is that an inventor owned it at the turn of the century, perhaps an assistant to Thomas Edison. The inventor was one who conducted electrical and acoustical experiments in the house. Lending credence to this story, a later owner, in the process of renovation, indeed found thousands of old-styled glass insulators in the walls, and left them there undisturbed. Or this house may have been the one that Professor Gates, occupant of the Lodge, used for "scientific and educational purposes." The house also has most certainly been used as a music hall and was known in the 1920's as the "Chevy Chase Music Hall" since many performances were held there.

In 1923 the property was purchased by Aubrey Clarke, a wholesale lumber merchant, contractor and a director in the Federal-American National Bank.

This article is in response to an article written in the Washington Post on Monday, February 15, 1999 by Marc Fisher on the development of Chevy Chase. It was submitted to the Washington Post but has not, as yet, been published.

Marc Fisher's article, "Chevy Chase, 1916: For Everyman, a New Lot In Life" draws attention to a significant early suburb of Washington. As authors of recently published books, Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital (Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 1998). And Bethesda: A Social History (The Innovation Game 1996), we would like to correct the record of several inaccuracies and misleading points in Mr. Fisher's story.

First, the suburb of Chevy Chase was conceived by Francis Griffith Newlands, Mr. Fisher's article revives an old myth surrounding the founding of Chevy Chase that credits Major George Augustus Armes with the idea. While Armes played an important early role in the buying of land, he was in no way Newlands' equal, and in fact, was not involved with the development of Chevy Chase beyond the initial phase of land purchase.

Second, there is no evidence that Newlands or the Chevy Chase Land Company supported the establishment of Rock Creek Park out of a desire to separate Chevy Chase from the "increasingly black" areas east of the park. In fact, the residential suburbs east of the park such as Takoma Park and Silver Spring were not black in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Third, neither Frerick Law Olmsted, Sr., nor his firm was ever hired to work for the Land Company in the planning of Chevy Chase. While Newlands was obviously influenced by Frederick Law Olmsted's theories, spelled out in correspondence between them, and would have welcomed Olmsted's collaboration with Nathan Barrett (the landscape architect hired by the Land Company), Olmsted declined this role. The Olmsted firm was later retained by the District to prepare the street layout for much of northwest Washington.

Fourth, no "summer cottages" existed in the territory that would become Chevy Chase. Prior to its suburbanization, the area was remote and rural farmland, five miles distant from the edge of Washington. The only existing properties in the area were farms with their associated buildings. Chevy Chase was never meant to be a summer community. Even the first "model cottages" built by the Chevy Chase Land Company were intended for year-round living.

Fifth, while it is accurate that the Chevy Chase Land Company began to make lots in Chevy Chase available to a broader market beginning in 1916, the motivation for those sales was financial and not social, as implied in the article. At that

time, the Land Company's activities began to be controlled by the need to stay solvent and to make payments on its bonds and debts. As a result of its financial situation, as well as an explosion in the government workforce during World War I, Chevy Chase did experience a building boom, but not until the 1920s.

Sixth, regarding the failed land venture of Belmont, there has yet to be any primary research uncovered that supports the long-held notion that the area was to be dedicated to housing for domestic servants.

Finally, the overall tone of the article presents Francis Newlands as a one-dimensional character. Mr. Fisher places great emphasis on Newlands' positions on race, ignoring the man's complex persona. While Newlands' political viewpoints are not to be apologized for, the article's lack of context overshadows the man's considerable achievements.

In sum, while it is exciting to see the Washington Post undertake this series on the development of Washington D.C., it is unfortunate that Chevy Chase's fascinating history was misrepresented in critical areas, especially when recent scholarship based on primary documents is readily available.

Elizabeth Jo Lampl
Kimberly Prothro Williams
William Offutt

SLATE TO BE ELECTED
AT ANNUAL MEETING

The following officers have been nominated
for the following positions:

Fran Schorr for President,
Angela Lancaster for Vice-President;
Alice Kinter for Recording Secretary,
Margaret Adelfio for Treasurer, and
Helen Secrest for Corresponding Secretary.

Annual Meeting Tuesday May 11, 1999, 8p.m. Chevy Chase Elementary Reach For 2000

Chevy Chase Elementary School will be renovated into a 6.8 million-dollar state of the art facility this coming year and will reopen in its new incarnation in September of 2000. A committee of parents, teachers, alumnae was formed called **Reach for 2000** to raise supplemental funds to build the school as designed and approved by the Chevy Chase Modernization Committee.

Bridget Hartman, a Chevy Chase Elementary School parent alumna and community resident will talk to us about the work of this committee and just what a state of the art school plan involves. In addition to looking to the future, the planning committee also looked to the past and restoration of the schools historic 1930's wing.

The school celebrated its one-hundredth anniversary in 1998. The Chevy Chase Land Company donated the land and built the original two-room school building at 3905 Bradley Lane. That building stands today converted to a private residence. In 1912, the school moved 108 pupils to a house at 6812 Delaware Street, which is now a private residence. It was not until 1917 that a school was built at its present location on Valley and later Rosemary Street. Over the years there

have been other additions to the school including the current "east wing" which is the 1930's addition and the memorable "third grade doors".

(Noted area portrait artist Nancy Derr is making a watercolor of the historic doors. A limited edition print, signed by the artist will sell for \$100)

In the 1980s, Chevy Chase Elementary School was designated a Math, Science, Computer Magnet School and became the first elementary school to introduce a coordinated curriculum using computers. In the 1980s Chevy Chase also created a communication studio, the first studio specifically designated as a communication studio in the county. With major financial and volunteer support from the parents, the studio has become an integral part of the education at the school. In the 1990's the school's internationally recognized chorus traveled to Russia. And in 1994 Chevy Chase Elementary was awarded by the U.S. Department of Education a Blue Ribbon Award for Education Excellence. In 1995 the school was awarded the Best Public Elementary School Award by Redbook Magazine.

What elements from the past do we retain? And what new architectural arrangements will be made to house the technology of the future and new curriculum standards? Come on May 11, at 8p.m., to the Chevy Chase Village Hall to hear the news.