

Leading Local Historians to Present Spring Program on *Chevy Chase:* *Washington's First Streetcar Suburb*

Did you know that the “technology” behind the Chevy Chase electric streetcar was developed by one of the founders of General Electric? Would you like to see the program from the evening John Philip Sousa played at Chevy Chase Lake? Did you know that the National Bureau of Standards was located in Chevy Chase because its distance from the city ensured that the scientific instruments would not be disturbed? Did you know that locomotives once carried “fill” down Connecticut Avenue to fill in valleys along the route to create a level bed for the streetcar line—or that the Uptown Theater stands where one of those valleys once was? Did you know that the U.S. Department of Agriculture once used Connecticut Avenue to test 16 different paving materials, and that photographs from that project provide significant documentation of the history of Chevy Chase? Do you know why the streetcars were equipped with cow-catchers?

Find out more about each of these tidbits and the fascinating history of Chevy Chase at the Chevy Chase Historical Society (CCHS)’s Annual Meeting and Spring Lecture. The meeting will be held on Thursday, May 16, 2002, at 8:00 pm, in the meeting room on the lower level of the Chevy Chase Community Library at 8005 Connecticut Avenue. The meeting room is adjacent to the society’s new headquarters space.

The lecture will be presented by Robert A. Truax and Lee H. Rogers, both historical experts on transportation in the greater DC area, consultants to the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. Inc. (HSW), and frequent public speakers on the history of Washington and of Chevy Chase. They will provide colorful information and little known facts about the important history of Chevy Chase from its development by Senator Francis G. Newlands through the 1950s. The program will feature slides from the extensive collection of Mr. Truax, who is a former librarian of HSW and who oversaw the Washingtoniana Room at the Martin Luther King Library.



Chevy Chase streetcars circa 1890

Photo courtesy of Robert A. Truax

The commentary accompanying the slides will be delivered by Mr. Rogers, who has worked as a transportation planner and economist in 14 countries and is a founding member of both the National Capital Trolley Museum and the Baltimore Streetcar Museum. The expertise and enthusiasm our speakers bring to their topic ensures a lively discussion and enjoyable evening for all.

The Spring Lecture will be preceded by CCHS’ Annual Meeting, a brief business meeting at which two at-large members of the CCHS Board of Directors will be elected. Light refreshments will be served, and guests will have an opportunity to visit with our speakers.

—Mary Sheehan

MEMBERS AT LARGE, CCHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Reported by Nominating Committee of Joan Marsh,
Mary Anne Tuohey, and Harriet Hobbs, Feb. 19, 2002

Patti Rosenfeld	At-large Member	2 yr. term
Julie Thomas	At-large Member	2 yr. term

Gala Champagne Supper on Sunday evening, April 21, at 16 Magnolia Parkway in Chevy Chase Village. Despite gray skies and persistent rain, the gala was well attended, and warmth abounded inside the beautifully restored, Craftsman style home of Catherine Cotter and John Finneran. In the spaacious garden, a heated party tent sheltered guests from the elements in elegant style.

The sumptuous buffet supper arranged by Alain Roussel and La Ferme Restaurant proved as deliaous as it was attractive, with perfectly poached salmon and an array of sophisticated French salads. Of course, CCHS board members labored long and hard the day before, skillfully preparing the traditional bounty of fresh asparagus. In their spare time (!), many of these same members put their culinary talents to work, baking tray upon tray of delectable desserts that disappeared quickly for reasons obvious to those who partook.

A pianist provided a melodious backdrop as board members' husbands moved among the guests filling champagne glasses with skill and charm. Every detail reflected the talent and hard work of those involved, espeaally hostess, Catherine Cotter, who also co-chaired the event with village resident Laura Smith. From colorful balloon bouquets at the home's front entrance to exquisite flower arrangements prepared by board member Fran Schorr and placed throughout the interior, the ambience reflected the exuberant spirit of the soaety and its supporters.

Many thanks to Catherine and John, to Alain and La Ferme Restaurant, and to everyone who attended, for making the evening a smashing success.

—Laura Smith

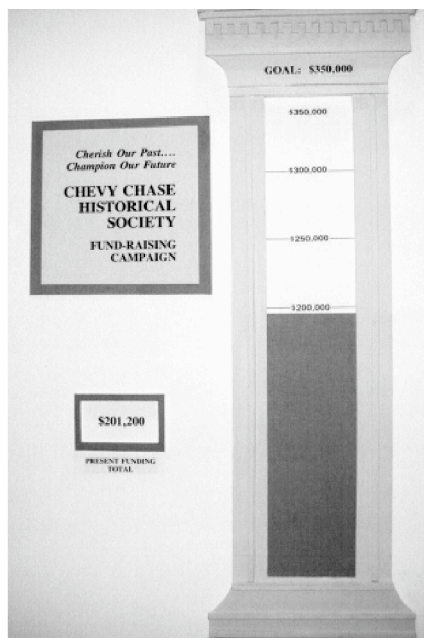
In all the merriment, neglected. Detailed soaety, archival phot extraordinary photog *Clean Drinking*, an 18 *Woodend*, known to ma in North Chevy Chase offiaal kickoff of the so Our Past, Champion C



Photo by Richard Marsh

In the front row, host homeowners John Finneran and Catherine Cotter share the stairway with former owners, Barbara Goodbody, (center), who flew in from Maine for the occasion, and with the three daughters of Alan and Sally Cassidy.





Display by W. Sharon Farr; photo by Angela Lancaster

Construction of Society Headquarters Nears Completion

Although a few details remain to be attended to, creation of a CCHS headquarters space in the Chevy Chase Community Library to which the public will have access is virtually complete. Pending final inspection and move-in approval, the society is poised to pack the contents of its archives and carefully transfer them from the attic of Joan and Richard Marsh to the library, at 8005 Connecticut Avenue.

CCHS has transformed the library's lower level from a nondescript storage area to a handsome headquarters with climate control and archival storage for the society's valuable documents, historic photographs, and oral histories. In the near future, CCHS will announce the headquarters' opening and its availability to those who wish to access the society's rich resources.

In return for the rent free use of the library space in perpetuity, CCHS has underwritten the renovation of the neighboring room for the use of the library staff. The society deeply appreciates the flexibility, patience, and generosity of Kathie Meizner, Agency Head, her staff, and Montgomery County officials in helping to realize the dream of a well designed, publicly accessible headquarters.

—Fran Schorr



Photo by Carol Coffin

CCHS Headquarters

Carol Coffin, the other campaign co-chair, reports that the society will be contacting community members over the next several months to request donations. "We have been so pleased with the reception we have received to date from so many of our neighbors and friends in the Chevy Chase community," she says.

"We are deeply appreciative of the support that has been shown to the society in this, our first ever, fund raising campaign. Our supporters really do want to be our champions."

CCHS Library Staff Feted, Tours New Headquarters Space

On April 30, the Board of Director of CCHS held a buffet luncheon at the Chevy Chase Community Library to show its appreciation of the assistance and cooperation of the staff in the creation of the headquarters. Kathie Meizner, the head librarian, and her staff, as well as representatives of the Friends of Chevy Chase Library and the Library Board attended. CCHS President Angela Lancaster welcomed everyone and expressed thanks on behalf of the board. Joan Marsh and Eleanor Ford gave tours of the new space. Susan Elwell chaired the event.

Judge Edward S. Northrop Reminisces About Life Along the Trolley Line in Early Chevy Chase

The following account of the land, the services, the influence of English gentry, and the lake along the streetcar line in the early days of Chevy Chase is excerpted from the oral history, "An Interview with Judge Edward S. Northrop," taken in 1985 for the CCHS Oral History Project by Mary Anne Tuohey and Marjorie Zapruder. Born in Chevy Chase, Edward Skottowe Northrop attended the E.V. Brown Elementary School; graduated from Virginia's Woodberry Forest School in 1930; and received his law degree from The George Washington University in 1937. He served with distinction in the United States Navy in World War II, after which he returned to the practice of law. In 1954 and 1958 he was elected to the Maryland Senate, and in 1961 he was appointed to the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. He was the first Democrat to be appointed to the federal bench in Maryland since the Civil War, became Chief Judge of the court in 1970, and became a Senior Judge in 1981. In 1985, he was appointed by Chief Justice Burger to serve as a Judge of the United States Foreign Intelligence Court of Review.

"My father bought [15 East Lenox Street in] . . . 1910, 1908, when they moved up from South Carolina, from Charleston. . . I was born [in the house] in 1911. I'm an old son of a bitch! . . . [T]he doctor that delivered me, the only doctor, came from Kensington. [Dr. Lewis.] There wasn't any doctor there at that time any closer. Possibly in D.C. There wasn't anything in D.C., hardly, until you got way down, oh, I don't know how far down. There wasn't anything except farms, let's put it that way. And my doctor . . . came in a horse and buggy, in a big thunderstorm or something, my mother always said.

"And what happened was that they brought the streetcars. That's one development, as you know . . . that [Senator Francis G.] Newlands, anywhere [the Chevy Chase Land Company] developed land they put streetcars in. Because obviously streetcars were really the only means of getting around. When you think back, there weren't many motor cars. . . And so, they would send out the groceries. The groceries would come out by the streetcar. And people shopped downtown. They would get on the streetcar and go downtown. And they would leave off the groceries, let's say, on the corner of Lenox Street, for you and for people who lived there. . .

"I think [my mother did our grocery shopping] at a place called Fisher's, downtown. She would call up. . . [She did her other shopping at] Woodward and Lothrop's and Garfinckel's and Parker Bridget, which was an old store, a Washington store, which was a good store in those days. [She went on the streetcar]; [s]he wouldn't go any other way. . .

"[O]f course, later on, they had a bus that was a very swanky bus that cost twenty-five cents, that ran from the Circle . . . and had very comfortable chairs in it, and it had a smoking end of it, and all that kind of business. The streetcar cost about ten cents."

Northrop as a Woodberry Forest student in 1930



"At the Circle there was a turnaround, I mean, trolley tracks around there. But the trolley tracks also continued on out to the Lake. And at the Lake they had a dance hall. They had great orchestras out there. . . . [P]eople would row and that kind of thing. It was a great place, really. In those days, a lot of people would skate out there in the winter, and big bands would play there . . . I've forgotten when they abandoned it. I don't think it was drained out until the thirties. . .

"The [Chevy Chase] Land Company left here, and came back in the Depression. . . The Land Company is a fabulous company of people. The Newlands and the Farris and all those people. They bought land around big capitals like Paris, London, Berlin, and also they owned practically all of Reno. They own[ed] the Palace Hotel out in San Francisco, which was just sold. I remember seeing a check for it. It was ten million, I think. . . . Anyhow, they owned all this land. And one of the women married Lord Hesketh. Lord Hesketh came over here. I met him one time, and his wife. He was a young guy. He smoked a big cigar. And Hesketh Street's named after him. Newlands Street is named after Senator Newlands, of course. Lenox Street is named for the Earl of Lenox, or whatever it was, and Kirke, the same thing. All English families. Of course, they owned all the land from the Shoreham all the way out beyond the Lake. And they still own land beyond the Lake . . . [b]ut from the lake, they built a trolley, and the trolley was taken over by what ultimately became the Capital Transit, which ultimately was bought by the Washington Metropolitan what's-its-name."

CCHS' Oral History Project has collected 78 oral histories thus far. These represent part of what the society believes to be the most comprehensive record in the country of the founding and development of Chevy Chase. Support for the project through the society's capital campaign is essential to expansion of the collection, which does not yet include the oral histories of many important residents of the area, and to obtaining professional assistance in conducting and recording interviews as well as in transcribing them.

*CCHS wishes to acknowledge the generous contributions
of the following people and organizations, as of April 21, 2002.*

Leadership Gifts

Chevy Chase Bank
Chevy Chase Land Company
Eleanor and George Ford

Ann Mehringer and Terry Beatty
Town of Chevy Chase
Mary Anne and John Tuohey

Major Gifts

Carol and Rip Coffin
Catherine Cotter and John Finneran
Alice and George Kinter
Angela Lancaster and Chuck Muckenfuss
Sue and Alaster MacDonald

Joan and Dick Marsh
Judy and Jim Robinson
Patti and Ron Rosenfeld
Mary Sheehan and Tony Mara
Meg and Bob Tillman

Julie and Ollie Thomas

