



Chevy Chase Historical Society

Newsletter

Winter 2007

Spring Gala at “Boxwood” Will Mark A Chevy Chase Village, Section 3 Anniverary

Photo courtesy of George Kinter



3815 Bradley Lane

The Chevy Chase Historical Society is pleased to announce that it will hold its annual Spring Gala on Sunday, April 30, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. This year's Spring Gala will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Chevy Chase Land Company's 1907 launch of sales in Section 3 of The Village of Chevy Chase. Ambassador and Mrs. Peter Terpeluk, Jr. generously have agreed to host the champagne supper at their gracious, historic home, “Boxwood,” at 3815 Bradley Lane in Section 3.

Boxwood is a landmark residence in Section 3, and is historically significant for both its architecture and the distinguished owners who have sustained and enhanced the property for more than 100 years. The home was built in 1906 by Virginia McGuire Taylor, the widow of Spanish-American War hero Henry Clay Taylor. The residence is architecturally significant as an outstanding example of estate architecture from the post-Victorian era.

Although the architect of the original structure is unknown, additions are associated with noted Washington architects George N. Ray and Philip Julien. The Terpeluks' elegant decoration of their distinguished home's spacious interior features superb antique furnishings.

As in past years, the champagne supper will be catered by Restaurant La Ferme, a neighborhood favorite located on Brookville Road. Live music will be provided for the enjoyment of the guests.

Attendance at the Spring Gala is by invitation only. CCHS will mail invitations to its members and those on its mailing list in March. The society recommends prompt response in order to ensure reservations for this always popular event. Priority will be given to members. Please direct questions concerning reservations to Helen Secrest, Corresponding Secretary, at (301) 652-4878.

Chevy Chase Historical Society
Newsletter



Chevy Chase Historical Society
Post Office Box 15145
Chevy Chase, MD 20825-5145

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CCHS Archive and Research Center
Evelyn Gerson, Director
Chevy Chase Community Library
8005 Connecticut Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
Tel: 301-656-6141
Fax: 301-656-5114
E-mail: chevychasehistory@msn.com
Open 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.
on Tuesdays and by appointment.

The Chevy Chase Historical Society is a nonprofit organization founded in 1981 to discover, record, and preserve the history of the Maryland and Washington neighborhoods known as Chevy Chase.

Recent Acquisitions

“Recent Acquisitions” is a regular feature in the newsletter, describing documents and other items that are acquired for the society’s Archive and Research Center.

Donations

1. *Small Town in a Big City*, a book by Peggy Fleming and Joanne Zich describing the shopkeepers and the business community of Chevy Chase, DC. Donated by Wendy Adams.
2. The Bethesda-Chevy High School yearbook, *The Pine Tree*, for the years 1947, 1948, and 1949; the yearbook for Leland Junior High School, *The Pine Log*, for the years 1945 and 1946; copies of the Town of Chevy Chase newsletter, dating from 1943; copies of *The Thornapple Street News*, dating from the 1930s; correspondence from William Offutt relating to the history of Chevy Chase. Donated by Donald Chapman

Purchases

1. A milk crate from the Chevy Chase Dairy.
2. *Legends Every Child Should Know*, edited by Mable Hamilton Wright (1912), and containing “The Ballad of Chevy Chase.”
3. *Stories of the Scottish Border*, by Mr. and Mrs. William Pratt (1910), containing two versions of the Battle of Chevy Chase, one from the Scottish point of view and one from the English.
4. *Hunting in the United States and Canada*, by A. Higginson and Henry Julian Ingersoll Chamberlain (1928), a history of foxhunting in North America.
5. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School yearbook, *The Pine Tree*, for the year 1954.
6. A book commemorating the 30th reunion of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School class of 1958.
7. A catalog from the Corcoran Gallery of Art, that belonged to Gladys Smith, who was a resident of Martin’s Additions.

New Film Programs and New Website Make Society's Treasures More Accessible

CCHS Offers Local Groups Two Presentations Based on Documentary Film

The society has developed two presentations around its new documentary film, "Chevy Chase, Maryland: A Streetcar to Home," that CCHS members can bring to local groups and organizations. Each program is one hour long and includes the screening of the 32 minute film, a free standing exhibit from the society's archive, hands on materials, and group discussion led by knowledgeable CCHS representatives.

Program #1 "The Making of A Documentary"

CCHS speakers share behind-the-scenes tales of what it took to create the film *The Washington Post* has called "a charming documentary." They describe difficulties encountered during production and suggest special features to look for in the film.

Program #2 "Sharing Community Memories"

After learning about Chevy Chase's colorful history from the film, the audience shares stories and memories from the communities in which they've lived. Artifacts and memorabilia from the CCHS archive spark the discussion.

To request one of these free programs for your organization or group, call CCHS documentary outreach coordinator Shelly Brunner at (301) 907-8072.

CCHS Launches Website "www.chevychasehistory.org"



Who says an historical society can't be modern? Last fall, CCHS launched its new website, and the response has been dramatic! People from all over the country are reaching out to the society with research queries, stories about growing up in Chevy Chase, and scanned images of the community in its early stages.

The website's construction is ongoing, but one already can view online exhibits, read current and past newsletters, listen to and read oral histories, and learn about events. Membership renewals, contributions, and DVD purchases also can be made conveniently and securely online. This year the society plans to make its Archive and Research Center even more accessible by putting the database of its archive online so that researchers can view the collections 24 hours a day. Visit CCHS online frequently for new and exciting information!



Marion Esch Potter, shown at right in 1920 on Brookville Road, is among long time residents interviewed about early Chevy Chase in the society's documentary film



You Can Go Home Again

A Chevy Chase Family Reunion

Many years have passed since the early 1890s, when the first homes began to rise and welcome their occupants in the early streetcar suburb of Chevy Chase—years that have seen the rise of several generations of “Chevy Chase families.” While many members now live elsewhere, some still reside in the community, a handful in the houses where they were born.

Can Chevy Chase families and their descendants “go home again,” reunite at their family homes to recall and celebrate their family lives? As the following account of the reunion of the notable Imirie family illustrates, the answer is affirmative. True, bittersweet notes may weave themselves into the themes of fond remembrance and of passing on family history to young people. In this respect, though, family reunions simply distill the larger experience of life lived fully because of, not despite, the passage of time. CCHS and the Imiries offer the story of one Chevy Chase family’s reunion as encouragement to other families to organize similarly rewarding events.

**Imirie family
assembled on steps
of 125 Bradley Lane
at Christmas 1928**



Every family reunion begins with a glance backward, which becomes a steady gaze, through one or more generations of family life. According to Millie and Elizabeth (“Betty” Pilson) Imirie, who generously have shared the Imirie family reunion story with CCHS, in their family it was their cousin John Imirie Rowe (“Imirie”) who first envisioned a family visit to “the old homestead” and became the moving force to bring it about.

Imirie is the namesake of the patriarch of the Imirie family in America, John Imirie of Lockmohan, Scotland, who immigrated to the District of Columbia in 1849. That industrious forebear proceeded to marry his sweetheart Ellen; sire eight children; work as a stonemason on such eminent structures as the U.S. Patent Office, the Smithsonian Institution, and the U.S. Capitol; and ultimately open a grocery store at 184 Sixth Street, SW, in Washington, D.C.,

The youngest of John and Ellen Imirie’s children, John Imirie, Jr., a patent attorney in D.C., began the family’s Chevy Chase legacy with the 1912 purchase of 125 Bradley Lane (now 4209), to which he moved with his wife Mary (nee Boswell) and their seven

1. The Imirie family thinks that in the mid-to-late 1800s John Imirie became acquainted with a contemporary, Ottmar Sonnemann, who also had immigrated to the U.S. in 1849 (from Germany). Mr. Sonnemann had trained as a civil engineer, and worked on the Capitol dome, the Library of Congress, and the Pension Building. In 1856, he moved to the Chevy Chase area and began building early homes along Brookville Road.

2. John Imirie, Jr. also built seven bungalows for rental, on property he purchased along the East-West Highway corridor.

3. The accomplishments of the Imirie grandchildren and great-children also are impressive. Grandson John Lewis Imirie was well known for his formidable civic record, which included founding the Bethesda Fire Department and the first rescue squad, and serving as an active Rotarian and President of the Bethesda Chamber of Commerce. Great-grandson Joseph Scott Imirie served as Secretary of the U.S. Air Force under President Kennedy. Great-grandson George Wady, Jr. became a nuclear scientist who worked with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission and was present at the special testing at Bikini. Like his father Wade, he is also a seasoned master beekeeper. Great-grandson Richard Snowden Contee (“Dick”) helped to found and later published The Washingtonian magazine. His sister, great-granddaughter Mary Ann Contee Burlison, became a respiratory therapist.

children. 125 Bradley was one of only three houses on the lane, in the newly platted Section Four of Chevy Chase Village, previously owned by the Chevy Chase Club. The large backyard ran through to Rosemary Street. In 1950, John, Jr. sold the back part of the property, on which a house facing Rosemary Street was built.²

John, Jr. and Mary Imirie's sons became involved in local business and professional services. George Wady ("Wade") and John Frederick ("Fred") together founded Imirie Brothers, an automotive service and parts garage, which they located in 1918 at the corner of Bethesda and Wisconsin Avenues, now the site of Starbuck's Coffee. Wade operated the store for 40 years. Fred pursued other endeavors, and in 1926 built the first Bethesda firehouse on Old Georgetown Road. The same year, Wade was appointed Bethesda's first fire chief. By the early 1930s, son Scott F. Imirie and his brother-in-law James Milton Rowe (husband of John, Jr. and Mary's daughter Mary Imirie Rowe), owned and operated Imirie Rowe Chevrolet on Wisconsin Avenue. Son Donald followed in his father's footsteps as a patent attorney. Son Paul became a builder who constructed a number of homes on East-West Highway and Montgomery Avenue. He also was an organizer of the Lions Club of Bethesda and its first president.³



**John Imirie, Jr. with sisters
Margaret Imirie Taylor (L) and Mary Imirie (R)**

Imirie Rowe is one of John, Jr. and Mary Imirie's 12 grandchildren. Millie is a grandniece of theirs, the daughter of John, Jr.'s brother Peter. Betty married grandson Scott F. Imirie, Jr. She relates that some of the grandchildren—especially Imirie, who lived at 125 Bradley Lane from the age of eight—still speak nostalgically of walking between the house and Chevy Chase Elementary School, Leland Junior High School, and Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School.

Some of the family members continue to reside in Chevy Chase, as do Betty and Scott, Jr. in their 1906 house on Williams Lane. Others are far flung. So, just how did their reunion come about?

According to Betty, Dr. Harvey Resnik, the current owner of the Bradley Lane house, became interested in learning about the previous residents, and got in touch with the family. Imirie asked Betty about the possibility of going back to reacquaint himself with the family home. He and Betty then approached other family members. Rather than organize a full scale reunion, they decided it would be appropriate to limit the size of the group so as not to impose on the good will of Dr. Resnik.

Eight family members attended the April 23, 2005 occasion. They took a number of photographs to record the reunion.⁴ Dr. Resnik was a most welcoming and attentive host, who led them on a tour of the house and joined in the gathering. Betty and Millie describe it as "happy" and "low key." The only disappointment fell to Imirie, whose bedroom had been converted to house air conditioning equipment. Other than that, to the family the house seemed almost unchanged. "It seemed as if grandmother Boswell (Mary Boswell Imirie, wife of John, Jr.) would walk down the staircase," recalls Imirie with a fond smile.



**Reunion: Dick Contee, Scott F. Imirie, Jr., Mary Ann Contee Burleson,
Betty Imirie, Mary Rowe, Phyllis Contee, Millie Imirie, John Imirie Rowe,
and Dr. Harvey Resnik**

⁴ The Imiries have most generously lent family photographs to CCHS, including pictures of their reunion. The society has copied these images for inclusion in the photographic collection of its archive.

Announcing

Chevy Chase History-Go-Round *History Inside and Outside the Neighborhood*

CCHS is pleased to announce a new series of occasional, informal programs for Chevy Chase residents who love history. The series offers neighbors with similar interests guided visits to historic sites, roundtables led by distinguished speakers, and further exploration of history both inside and outside the neighborhood. The kick-off Chevy Chase History-Go-Round event will be:

*Clean Drinking Manor:
The First Chevy Chase Estate*
Saturday, March 24, 2007
2:00 to 4:30 p.m.

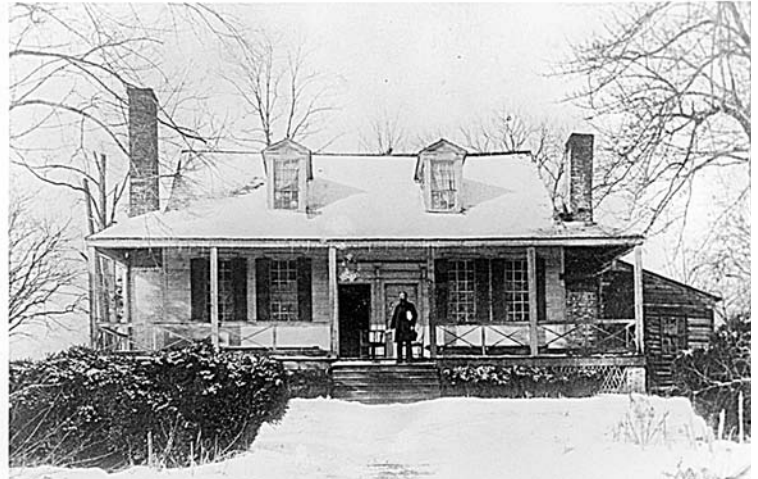
“Brookville Road, before Connecticut Avenue, (was) the main thoroughfare . . . (for) George Washington when he went to Philadelphia . . . It went right past Clean Drinking Manor, where he frequently stopped.”

*From Edith Claude Jarvis' oral
history, 1987, CCHS Archive*

Did George Washington enjoy the hospitality at Clean Drinking Manor? Did other famous political figures such as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and John C. Calhoun also visit? Find out when Steve Dryden, an authority on the history of Clean Drinking, leads an early spring stroll to explore the location of the former manor house on Jones Mill Road.

Clean Drinking Manor was built in the 1750s on a patent of 1,400 acres given in 1680 to Major William Dent. It was one of the original land grants that formed the foundation of today's Chevy Chase.

Steve Dryden, a resident of Bethesda, is the former media director of the Audubon Naturalist Society at Woodend and currently is a writer and consultant on environmental and historic preservation issues. In May 2006, he wrote about Clean Drinking Manor in the Montgomery



Clean Drinking Manor

County Historical Society's quarterly publication, *The Montgomery County Story*.

Informal refreshments and a photographic exhibit of Clean Drinking Manor at a nearby home will follow the walk. There is no fee for the program, but reservations are required. To reserve your place and to receive directions to the walk's starting point, **or to be included on the contact list for future programs**, email

chevychasehistorygoround@googlegroups.com
or telephone Susan Elwell at (301) 657-1874, no later than Monday, March 19.

SAVE THE DATE!

**Lecture at the CCHS Spring Program,
“Where We Live, Where We Work:
the Olmsted Influence in America”**

**Delivered by Matthew Evans
Senior Landscape Architect
and Horticulturist of the US Capitol
Office of the Architect of the Capitol**

**Wednesday, May 16, at 8:00 p.m.
Chevy Chase Village Hall**

William Sharon Farr, Jr.

(1937 — 2007)

William Sharon Farr, Jr., artist, illustrator, graphic designer, and lifetime friend and supporter of the Chevy Chase Historical Society, died Sunday, January 21, 2007 at Sibley Hospital of a heart attack. Mr. Farr was a fourth generation Washingtonian. He was the great-grandson of the founder of Chevy Chase, Senator Francis G. Newlands of Nevada, and the grandson of Senator William Sharon of Nevada who pioneered the development of the Comstock Lode in Nevada.

Born in Portsmouth, New Hampshire in 1937 while his parents, William Sharon Farr and Janet Sharon Johnston, were on vacation, Mr. Farr attended several Washington area independent schools as a youth, including Sidwell Friends School, The Potomac School, St. Albans School, and Woodberry Forest School near Charlottesville. After high school, he studied at the San Francisco Art Institute and apprenticed with San Francisco artist Antonio Sotomayor. During the early 1960s, he served in the U.S. Army at Fort Riley, Kansas as an illustrator for a psychological warfare unit, designing anti-American propaganda and enemy uniforms to make military war game exercises more realistic.

After his military service, Mr. Farr returned to Washington. He worked as a freelance illustrator for *The Washington Post* and *The Evening Star* newspapers. He was also a contributor to *Washington Monthly* magazine. In 1965, he became a partner in the R. Joseph Harrill and Farr Advertising agency, which specializes in real estate. He served on the founding Board of Directors of Chevy Chase Bank & Trust Company, and as a director and Vice President of the Chevy Chase Land Company. He also

served on the boards of Citizens Bank of Maryland and the Sharlands Company of San Francisco.

In his retirement, Mr. Farr continued to work as an artist, exploring and using a variety of media. Known for his whimsical touches, he delighted others with his watercolors, pastel drawings, and intricate woodcarvings, often referred to as "faux folk art." His fanciful artwork, most notably his illustrations, celebrated his sharp wit and humor. He was often commissioned by local area businesses and by individuals to create one of a kind pieces. Most of all, however, he produced art for his friends and himself, for the pure enjoyment of it.

Throughout his life, Mr. Farr honored CCHS with immeasurable gifts of his time, artistry, and support. His thoughtful and artistic hand can be seen in the many designs he created for the society, including its logo, membership brochures, and marketing materials. He also provided the architectural drawings for the CCHS walking tour of 100 year old houses and for the Town of Chevy Chase History Tour. He contributed invaluable material, including historical documents and photographs, regarding the founders of Chevy Chase as gifts to the society's Archive and Research Center. And, as CCHS lifetime supporters, he and his wife, Katherine Kearns Farr, rarely missed a society meeting, lecture, or gala.

CCHS would like to acknowledge and thank all who have honored William Sharon Farr, Jr. with gifts to the society in honor of him. We are extremely grateful for these donations, and to the family of Mr. Farr for designating CCHS as a recipient. This generosity represents a wonderful tribute to a man who gave so much to the society during his life.

MYSTERY!

"Mystery!" is a regular feature of the newsletter. We invite all sleuths to help CCHS identify the subjects of "mystery" photographs contained in the society's photographic collection.



Unfortunately, no one yet has been able to identify the children, dog, or homes shown in the fall issue's *Mystery!*

This issue's mystery photo is a beautiful winter scene of a man shoveling snow off a porch roof, circa the 1920s. Is this Oliver Street in Chevy Chase, DC? Or, perhaps, Shepherd Street or Delaware Street in Chevy Chase, MD? These clues are penciled on the back of the photo, but CCHS requests your help in locating the true address. Send your answer to the CCHS website, www.chevychasehistory.org, or call (301) 656-6141. The first to solve the mystery wins a package of CCHS postcards!



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