

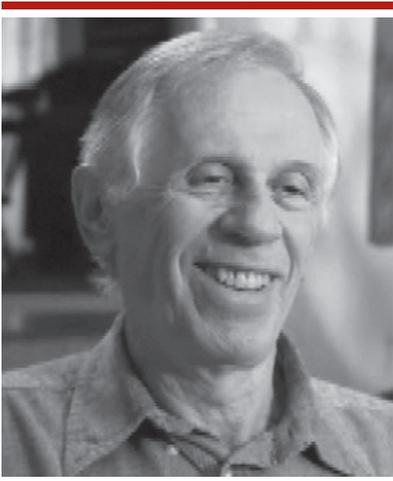


## CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2012

### Fall Lecture by *Burning of Washington* Author Begins CCHS' Observance of War of 1812 Bicentennial



**A** Veterans Day talk by Anthony S. Pitch, author of the award winning book, *The Burning of Washington: The British Invasion of 1814*, will kick off a year of Chevy Chase Historical Society programs marking the bicentennial of the War of 1812, "America's Second War of Independence." Pitch will bring the war to life with

vivid stories based on five years of research in his lecture, "Dramatic Events in Maryland and Washington During the War of 1812," on Sunday November 11 at 4:00 p.m. at the Jane E. Lawton Community Center, 4301 Willow Lane, in the Town of Chevy Chase. CCHS members and the general public are invited to the free event.

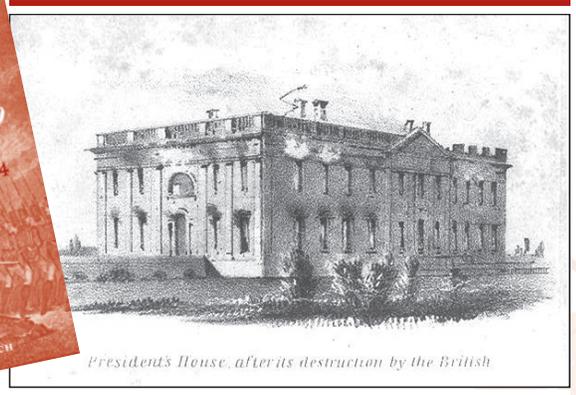
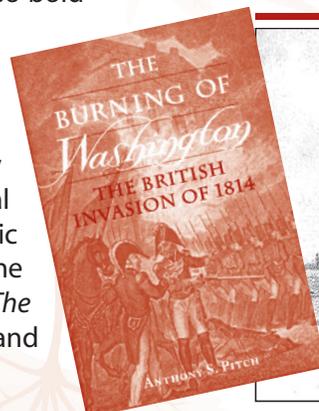
The author explains in the preface to his book that, living in Potomac, Maryland just 20 miles north of the White House, he often has wondered what it was like to witness the burning of Washington by the British in 1814. "Seizing the nation's capital and burning the president's house, the Capitol, and most of the public buildings seemed so bold and wanton, but also savage and unforgivable," Pitch wrote.

And Pitch's book has the immediacy of an eyewitness account. It was a selection of the History Book Club, winner of the Arline Custer Memorial Prize for best book of 2001 from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, and recipient of the Maryland Historical Society's annual book award. *The Burning of Washington* will be available for sale and signing by the author at the program.

Pitch will describe the role of Baltimore, where a mob got out of control and tortured some illustrious patriots opposed to the war; the Battle of Bladensburg, where the defeat of 5,000 American militia cleared the path for British troops to torch the White House and Capitol; the capitulation of Fort Warburton (now Fort Washington); and the heroic defense of Fort McHenry and the birth of the national anthem. Pitch will place these events in a larger context, describing the causes and importance of the war, the destruction in Washington, DC that enabled horrified residents "to read by the unnatural light of a city in flames," and the scene that inspired Francis Scott Key to write "The Star Spangled Banner" when Fort McHenry did not yield to British bombardment.

Pitch has served as a journalist in England, Africa, and Israel, Associated Press Broadcast Editor in Philadelphia, and a senior writer in the books division of *U.S. News & World Report* in Washington, DC. He has been featured in PBS and History Channel documentaries on the War of 1812.

A CCHS History-Go-Round field trip to Baltimore on Wednesday, November 14, will offer further insights into the War of 1812, with visits to the Maryland Historical Society's new exhibit center and Fort McHenry. Details of the outing are on page three.



*Celebrating One of America's First Streetcar Suburbs*

## Recent Acquisitions

*"Recent Acquisitions" is a regular feature in the newsletter, describing documents and other items acquired for the society's Archive and Research Center.*

Julie Rude Thomas recently made two donations in memory of Susan Elwell, to honor her membership on the society's Board of Directors, and the excellence of her other service to CCHS:

1. A Chevy Chase College postcard, postmarked April 16, 1908, sent to Mr. and Mrs. A. Waller, Henderson, Kentucky, and signed by M.F. Barker and S.N. Barker. The front of the postcard is a view of the school. On the other side, in the message section, "Easter Greetings" is printed in fancy yellow script. Mr. and Mrs. Barker were the first principals of the school, from its inception in 1903 until 1917. They used postcards to communicate with the parents of prospective and current students. This will be the second postcard in the CCHS collection to have been sent by the Barkers.
2. A display advertisement for the school, c. 1915, perhaps published in Harper's Magazine. Although the exact date of publication is not known, this ad was placed by Mrs. and Mrs. Barker. One column wide, the ad is much longer than any others – almost seven and one-half inches. The headline reads: "Developing the Woman of To-morrow at Chevy Chase." The text makes claims about the school, and its ability to provide young women with the appropriate education for "modern life." The ad is unusual in its length and content, and

complements other promotional documents for the private school that are contained in CCHS' collection.

### CHEVY CHASE SEMINARY WASHINGTON, D. C.



☞ A home school for young ladies. College preparatory, special and finishing courses. Golf and other outdoor sports. Campus of eleven acres. Healthful location. Beautiful Chevy Chase, suburb of Washington.

For catalogue, portfolio of views, circular of special information, write to Mr. and Mrs. S. N. Barker, Principals, Lock Drawer 841, Washington, D. C.

**An ad for Chevy Chase Seminary,  
alternately named Chevy Chase College**



### CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 15145  
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20825

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CCHS Archive and Research Center  
Gail Sansbury, Ph.D., Director  
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Chevy Chase Community Library  
8005 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Tel: 301-656-6141 • Fax: 301-656-5114  
[www.chevyCHASEhistory.org](http://www.chevyCHASEhistory.org)  
E-mail: [info@chevyCHASEhistory.org](mailto:info@chevyCHASEhistory.org)  
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Open 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.  
on Tuesday and by appointment.

The Chevy Chase Historical Society collects, records, interprets and shares materials relating to the history of Chevy Chase, Maryland, one of America's first streetcar suburbs. The organization provides resources for historical research and sponsors a variety of programs and activities to foster knowledge and appreciation of the community's history.

## History-Go-Round Field Trip To Baltimore on November 14 Will Further Explore War of 1812



**“Destination Fort McHenry” awaits!**

Three days after historian Anthony Pitch delivers the society’s Fall Lecture on November 11, CCHS will continue examining the War of 1812 with a History-Go-Round field trip to Baltimore. A bus for 32 pre-paid participants will depart from the Jane E. Lawton Community Center, 4301 Willow Lane, in the Town of Chevy Chase promptly at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday November 14 and return by 3:30 p.m.

The first stop in Baltimore will be the Maryland Historical Society’s exhibit, “In Full Glory Reflected: Maryland During the War of 1812.” After lunch together, participants will tour the new Visitors Center at Fort McHenry, where Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the lyrics to “The Star Spangled Banner” while he was being held on a British ship whose bombs bursting in air failed to convince Fort McHenry to surrender. Park rangers will be available to answer questions as participants walk through Fort McHenry itself.

Reservations and payment in advance by November 7 are required for the outing. A fee of \$60 covers bus transportation, a box lunch, and all admission costs. Holders of U.S. National Park Service Golden Eagle Passports, America the Beautiful Passes, or similar passes will pay only \$53 for the outing and will be required to present their pass on November 14.

To make a reservation for the field trip, call Mary Anne Tuohy at (301) 656-1779.

## CCHS Presents Two New Online Historical Exhibits

### Introduction

For six months the CCHS Archive and Research Center staff, interns, and volunteers have worked on two exceptional new exhibits -- “Chevy Chase School and Junior College,” and “Chevy Chase Lake Amusement Park” -- that now are displayed on the society’s website. Funding to create the exhibits was provided by the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County.

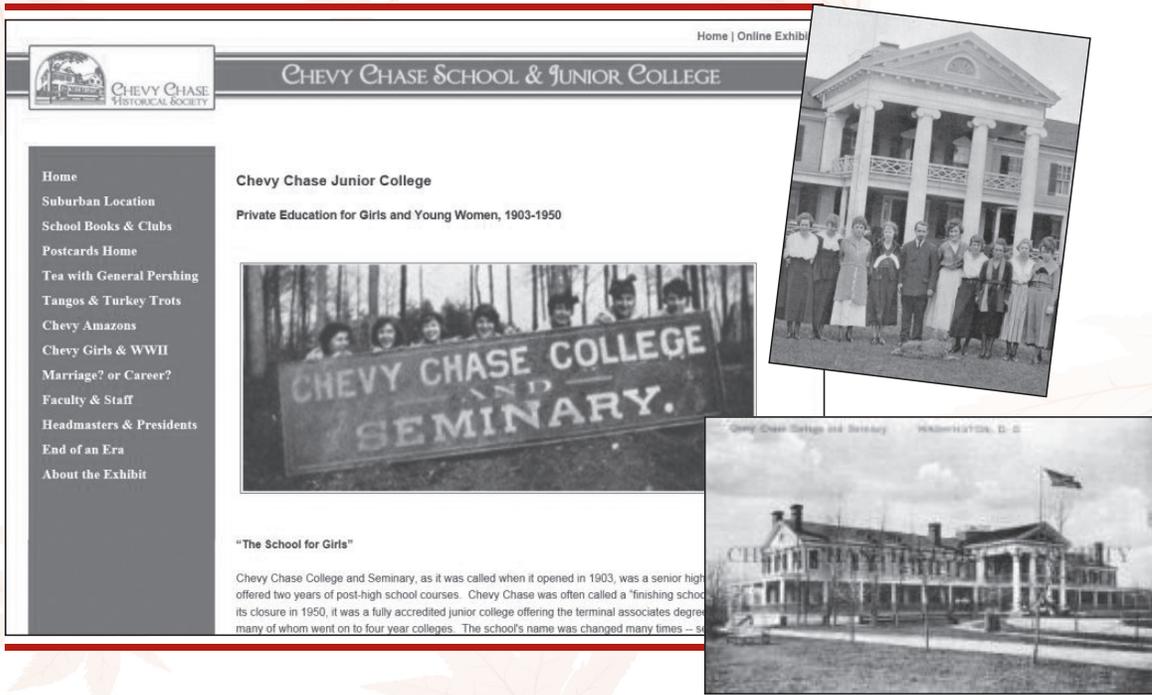
Both the Chevy Chase college or seminary for young women (1903-1950) and the amusement park at Chevy Chase Lake (1894-1936) were familiar local institutions in the first half of the twentieth century. We are fortunate to have many items in our archive regarding the school and the park. The online exhibits enable CCHS to present these photographs, documents, oral histories, and more together in one place, and to make them easier to interpret by providing historical context.



**A sample of new exhibit material debuts “off-line”  
at Happy Birthday Montgomery County**

You can view the new exhibits on your computer screen by going to our website, [www.chevychasehistory.org](http://www.chevychasehistory.org), and clicking on “Online Exhibits.” The new exhibits are listed with our previously created exhibits on “The Schools of Section Four,” and “Minnie Brooke: A Postcard View of History,” and “Slideshow of Minnie E. Brooke’s Historic Postcards.”

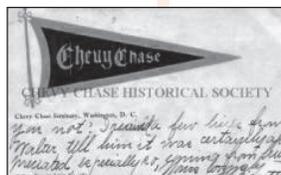
**Read all about it!** 



**Chevy Chase School and Junior College** was a private school for girls and young women that opened in 1903 in the former Chevy Chase Inn and operated until 1950. Located on Connecticut Avenue, in what today is a conference center for the 4-H Foundation, it was often called a “finishing school” in its early years, and was named “seminary” and “college” at different times. By the time it closed, though, it was a fully accredited junior college. Thanks to the generous donations of Julie Rude Thomas, CCHS has a large collection of the school’s yearbooks, catalogs, brochures, scrapbooks, dance cards, and even a number of postcards sent by students in the early 1900s. The school always promoted its beautiful suburban location, and several students, in their handwritten messages on postcards, proclaimed to their family and friends that their school was “dandy!”

The new online exhibit explores the changes at the school over the years – in the curriculum, in social activities and events, and in the different ways students participated in the war effort during World War II. For example, in the early years, physical education at the school was limited to “rhythmic dancing,” but by the 1940s Chevy girls competed in team sports like field hockey and basketball. Each year, the drama club presented a play, and Chevy Chase neighbors, such as George Winchester Stone, Jr., have remembered attending these performances that were open to the public. Throughout the years, Chevy girls went on excursions to the White House, the Library of Congress, and the Capitol. On a trip to Mt. Vernon just after World War I, a group of girls met General Pershing, and were lucky enough to receive an invitation to tea – for all the girls at the school -- at his home in Chevy Chase, DC.

“It’s really wonderful to see the whole collection being used,” Julie Thomas tells us. She had lots of fun as she collected this material, meeting and talking to former students and learning about the history of the school. You can have fun, too, when you view the exhibit. We hope you think it’s “dandy!”





## Chevy Chase Lake Amusement Park

offered diversions for all ages. It was at the terminus – the “end of the line” – for the Rock Creek Railway, and later the Capital Traction Company, streetcars that ran along Connecticut Avenue. The actual lake was a reservoir built to provide water for the power plant that produced electricity for the streetcars.

Created by damming Coquelin Run, a tributary to Rock Creek that ran under Connecticut Avenue, the small lake was surrounded by trees, and later by more carefully tended landscaping. The Chevy



Chase Land Company created an amusement park at the lake to lure potential buyers to the company’s new “street car suburb.” By presenting concerts each evening in the summer months, the park helped to increase ridership on the streetcars in the evenings and on the weekend.

Concerts were always a feature at Chevy Chase Lake, but the park management offered plenty of other attractions: tightrope walkers, high divers, vaudeville song and dance performers, dance pavilions, a bowling alley, a shooting gallery, pony rides, a merry-go-round, and boating on the lake. The park also had a small outdoor movie theater. In the early years, Prof. Donch’s Band played light classical music for listening as well as popular tunes for dancing. In the 1900s, a section of

the U.S. Marine Band played similar music. In the 1920s and 30s, the dance music became jazzier under the direction of Meyer Davis. Two of his orchestras played every night in the summer, and often featured vocalists and vaudeville performers. One of the most famous of these was Kate Smith, many years before she gained national fame.

Check out the new online exhibit, and learn about the scandalous dance craze of the nineteen-teens, when the park management banned the turkey trot. Read the publicity notices in the local papers that featured the “cool breezes” of the suburban resort, the easy car ride from the city, and special events on summer holidays.

Chevy Chase Lake began to decline as a venue for dance music and popular events after the streetcars stopped running in 1935. It sputtered along for another year or so and then closed. Its patrons were finding amusement elsewhere, in fancy movie theaters and in places they could easily reach by automobile. Chevy Chase Lake amusement park has been “closed” for more than 75 years, but lives on in the memories of those who frequented it, and in photographs, news clips, and advertisements – even in sheet music played by the Marine Band -- all available for viewing on our website.



# MYSTERY!

"Mystery!" is a regular feature in the Newsletter. We invite all sleuths to help CCHS solve "mysteries" contained in the society's archive.



Can you help solve a mystery about some students at the Chevy Chase college or seminary? In the Roaring Twenties a group of nine girls identified only as "baby seniors" posed on the front steps of the college for the picture shown above, from the 1921-22 *Chevy Chase Spectator*. Do you know the names of any of the young ladies in the photograph? Write to us at our email address, [chevychasehistory@msn.com](mailto:chevychasehistory@msn.com), or call us at (301) 656-6141. Those who help us to solve this mystery win "Chevy Chase Historical Society" bumper stickers!

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P.O. Box 15145  
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20825

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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