



Hidden Histories of Chevy Chase: The Rollingwood Burial Ground for Enslaved People

Sunday, November 5, 2023, at 3:30 p.m. at the Lawton Community Center

The Chevy Chase Historical Society is excited to announce a new lecture series covering fascinating but lesser known subjects, the Hidden Histories of Chevy Chase. The new series will begin with our Fall 2023 lecture by Renata Lisowski, Director of the CCHS Archive and Research Center, about the Rollingwood Burial Ground for Enslaved People (also known as the Anderson-Watkins Slave Cemetery). The lecture will be held on Sunday, November 5, at 3:30 p.m., at the Lawton Community Center, 4301 Willow Lane, in the Town of Chevy Chase. The program is free and open to the public.

If one drove north on Brookville Road towards East-West Highway, they may never guess that they were in the vicinity of a burial ground for people who had been enslaved in the area that we now call Chevy Chase. Indeed, when resident Rachel Peric visited the CCHS Archive and Research Center to research the history of her

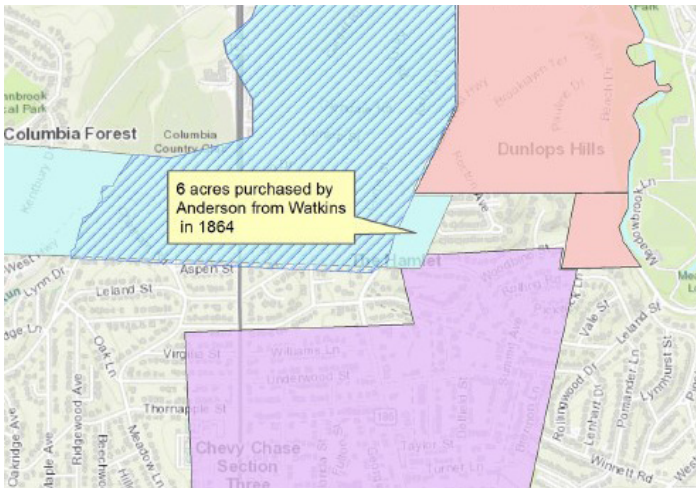


Brookville Road looking north, 1896, about half a mile south of the burial ground location. Photo: Montgomery History

Rollingwood home, she did not expect to discover that her house was near any burial ground at all. Since this discovery, CCHS has undertaken extensive research to learn more about this little-known place and how it fits into the long and varied history of our local area.

In this lecture, Lisowski will address the history of enslavement in Montgomery County, trace the series of land sales which resulted in the disappearance of the burial ground from the landscape, and discuss the process of determining who may have been buried at the Rollingwood Burial Ground. She will share historic photographs, maps, deeds, and wills, which together paint a picture of what life was like along Brookville Road before it became the suburban community we recognize today.

The program will be followed by a reception at which light refreshments will be served. No reservations are necessary. For more information, please contact CCHS at 301-656-6141 or info@chevychasehistory.org.



Map showing the location of Rollingwood Burial Ground in relation to the Watkins, Anderson, and Dunlop family estates.
Photo: Montgomery County Burial Sites Inventory



Officers

President.....Susan Bollendorf
 Vice-President.....Carolyn Greis
 Second Vice-President.....John Higgins
 Recording Secretary.....Natasha Saifee
 Corresponding Secretary.....Helene Sacks
 Treasurer.....Karoline Shannon

Directors-at-Large

Dima Fayyad Alison Mandell
 Kelly Basheer Garrett Gail Sansbury
 Debbie Glynn Mary Sheehan
 Jessica Johnson Kirsten Williams
 Angela Lancaster

Directors Emeritus

Eleanor Ford (deceased)
 Mary Anne Tuohey

Committees

Communications	Lectures and Tours
Development	Membership
Finance	Nominations
Gala	Oral Histories
Governance	Technology

Archive and Research Center

Renata Lisowski, Director

8401 Connecticut Avenue
 Suite 1010
 Chevy Chase, MD 20815
 Tel: 301.656.6141

www.chevychasehistory.org
info@chevychasehistory.org

www.facebook.com/chevychasehistory

Open 10 a.m. to 12 noon, and 1 to 3 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.

Chevy Chase Historical Society is supported in part by funding from the Montgomery County Government and the Arts & Humanities Council of Montgomery County.

Recent Acquisitions

“Recent Acquisitions” is a regular feature in the Newsletter, describing documents and other items acquired for the CCHS Archive and Research Center

Chevy Chase resident Laura Cohen Apelbaum donated items related to the first “Walking House Tour ‘thru’ Chevy Chase Village,” which took place on April 20, 1974. The items belonged to Faye Cohen, Apelbaum’s mother, who organized the tour for the Citizens’ Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH).

The donation includes a set of charming badges, pictured here, which identified individuals who provided information about the houses on the tour. Additionally, the collection includes tickets, flyers advertising the tour, and handouts with detailed descriptions of the seven Chevy Chase Village homes on the tour. The ticket price was \$7.00, and tea was served at the Chevy Chase Village Hall following the tour.

The tour was a fundraiser for CCCFH, a community group formed in 1971. The CCCFH, which has expanded significantly since 1971, remains active today as a coalition of local organizations representing neighborhoods in and around Friendship Heights. Its primary focus is on land planning in the area.

According to the flyer advertising the tour, “Each [home] was selected for its distinctive and unique quality...A few of the outstanding features which may be seen are homes completely redesigned by the outstanding architects Winthrop Faulkner and Hugh Newell Jacobsen. In contrast are Victorian homes kept exactly as they were at the turn of the century.” There was special mention of art collections in various homes and a home with a “unique and outstanding doll house collection.”

CCHS thanks Laura Cohen Apelbaum for her donation. Do you have papers or photographs relating to Chevy Chase? Your donation of items can help CCHS preserve and share the history of Chevy Chase for future generations.



A History-Go-Round Tour of Chevy Chase Lake

Have you wondered why there's no LAKE to be seen along Chevy Chase Lake Drive?

Have you heard rumors that there was once an amusement park nearby?

Join us on Saturday, October 28, or December 9, to learn the history of Chevy Chase Lake!

In the early 1890s, the Chevy Chase Land Company built a new trolley system, called the Rock Creek Railway, to carry residents of the new suburb to and from their jobs in downtown Washington. Coquelin Run, a tributary that flows to Rock Creek, was dammed in 1892 to create a lake to generate electricity for both the trolley line and the new homes along the extension of Connecticut Avenue. The lake was located east of Connecticut, and just south of Chevy Chase Lake Drive.

Although the streetcars ran seven days a week, ridership declined on the weekends. To attract more riders—and prospective home buyers—in 1894 the Land Company developed the Chevy Chase Lake Amusement Park on the banks of the lake. The Amusement Park, which was open from late spring through early fall, had a variety of attractions: picnic areas, boating, a bandstand, dance pavilion, merry-go-round, and more. In the 1920s, it became a popular venue for big band groups; performers like Kate Smith and Cab Calloway were headliners.

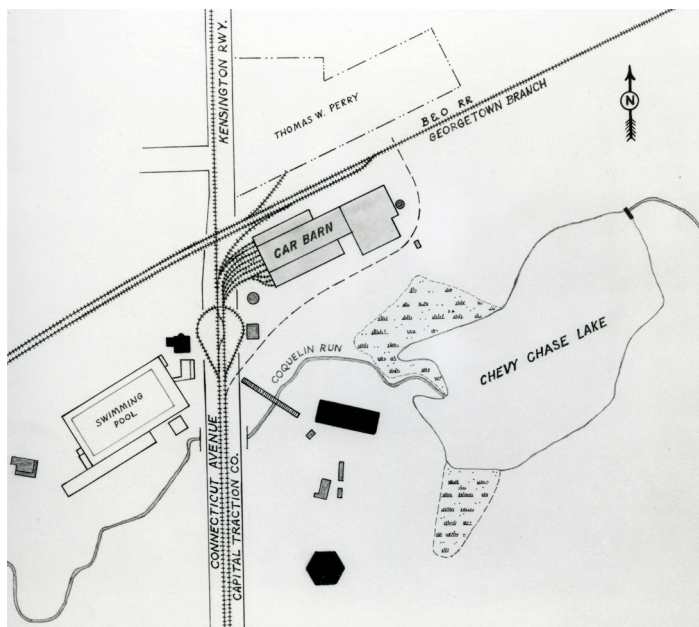
However, like other trolley parks such as Bethesda Park and Glen Echo Park, Chevy Chase Lake did not allow people of color to enter the park. In response, African American entrepreneurs developed their own amusement parks, such as Suburban Gardens in DC. By the



Rowing a boat at Chevy Chase Lake Amusement Park.

end of the 1930s, Chevy Chase Lake was no longer a key venue, and the Amusement Park was closed.

History-Go-Round participants will explore all this and more with tour leader Gail Sansbury, former Director of the CCHS Archive and Research Center. She holds a B.A. and M.A. in American History and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Urban Planning. The tour will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude no later than 11:30 a.m. Participants will meet in the lobby of 8401 Connecticut Avenue, where we will share more information about the Lake. Then we will walk outside, comparing the current landscape in the vicinity with various historic photos.



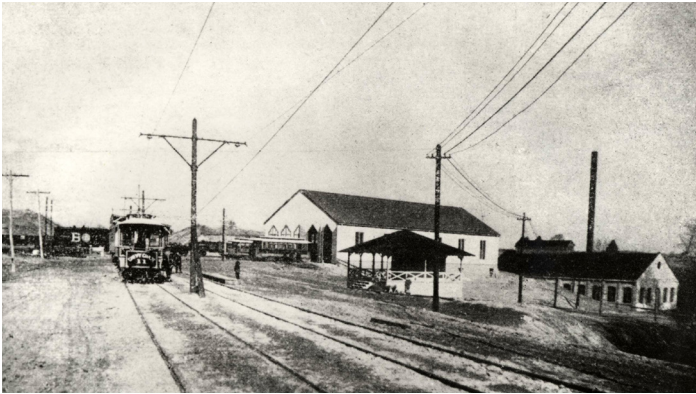
A composite image of Chevy Chase Lake from 1894 to 1937.

Before this Newsletter was printed, an announcement of the October 28 tour was posted on local listservs. That tour sold out promptly. We are pleased to offer a second tour on December 9.

The price for the tour is \$10 for CCHS members, \$15 for non-members, and free for children. Space is limited and reservations must be made in advance on our website at www.chevychasehistory.org.

Directions to the meeting point for the tour will be provided to all registrants. Free parking is available in the rear of 8401 Connecticut Avenue. For additional information, please email Chevy Chase Historical Society at info@chevychasehistory.org or call the office at 301-656-6141.

The Chevy Chase Lake Area: Then and Now



Chevy Chase Lake Car Barn in 1892.



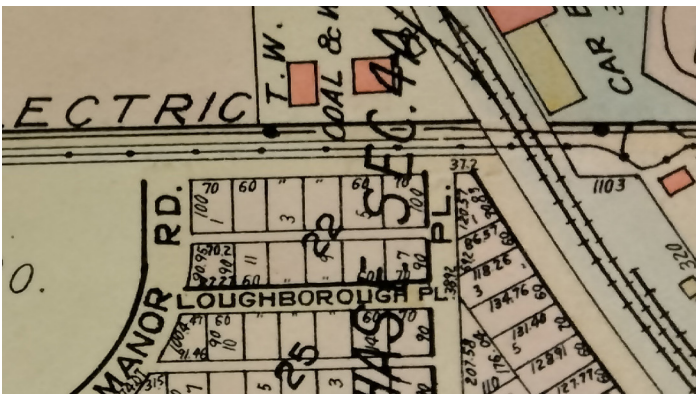
8401 Connecticut Avenue in October 2023.

As development of the Chevy Chase area spread north on Connecticut Avenue in the 20th century, new commercial properties were developed around Chevy Chase Lake in order to meet the needs of the community. By 1931, as shown in the map below, on the east side of Connecticut Avenue just north of the Car Barn was T.W. Perry's coal and lumber yard, but the west side of the street was still undeveloped.

Though streetcar serviced ended in 1935, development around Chevy Chase Lake continued, and new commercial structures on the west side of the street were occupied by new businesses supplying a variety of services

to local residents. Among these were McIntire's Hardware Store and Lowe's Florist, pictured below. In 1967, a new building was erected to the south known as Chevy Chase Lake Centers, which was the location of a Truist Bank branch until 2022. The two photos below show the same building as it existed in the 1950s and as it exists today.

As some will remember, in 1970 the B.F. Saul Building was built on the east side of the street, on the same footprint as the old Car Barn. Located at 8401 Connecticut Avenue, pictured above, this building is the current home of the CCHS Archive and Research Center.



1931 map of the commercial block showing no buildings.



1959 map of the commercial block.

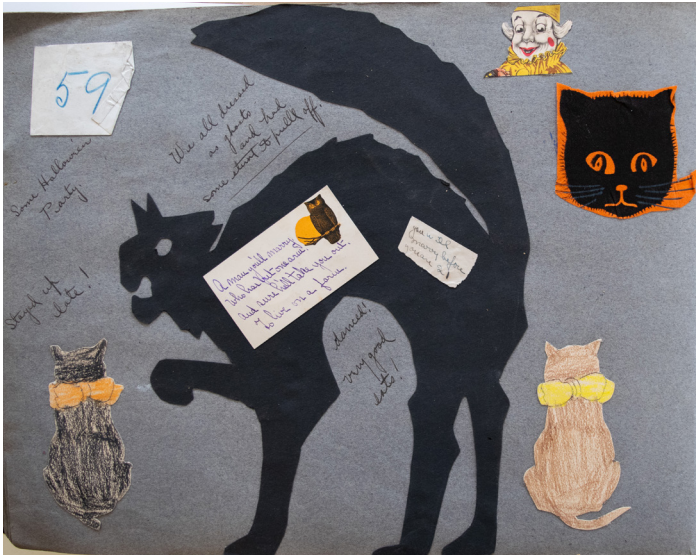


The commercial block circa 1954.



The commercial block in September 2023.

A Century of Halloween High Jinks in Chevy Chase



A Halloween collage in the Alice Rockwell scrapbook.

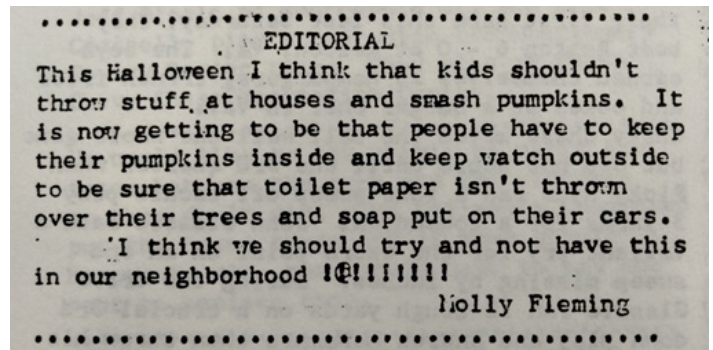
As the weather cools and autumn sets in, our neighborhoods become dotted with festive displays for the upcoming Halloween holiday. In that same spirit, CCHS has dug into its archive to uncover Halloween tricks and treats of days gone by. The history of Halloween goes back thousands of years, but the American way of celebrating started taking shape in the late 19th century. By the 1920s, Halloween was a popular community-centered holiday marked by parties, parades, and pranks.

In 1917, the Chevy Chase Seminary on Connecticut Avenue held a Halloween party, and student Alice Rockwell commemorated it with a page in her scrapbook featuring an array of paper cut-outs and notes describing the event. She wrote about her experience in an exclamatory fashion: “Some Halloween Party. Stayed up late! Danced! Very good eats! We all dressed as ghosts and had some stunt to pull off.” The Halloween collage, and the rest of the scrapbook, can now be viewed in its entirety in a video on our website and YouTube channel.

We do not know what the stunt that young Ms. Rockwell pulled off was, but within the CCHS Oral History collection we do have the story of an over-the-top prank carried out by Melville Moffitt (1917-2013) who lived most of his life in Chevy Chase. In 1985, Mr. Moffitt gave an oral history interview, one of the first of 145 oral histories collected by CCHS to date. Every oral history in our collection offers amazing insights into the lives of Chevy Chasers, and Mr. Moffitt’s is no exception. In his, he recounts a Halloween story involving the belfry of the Methodist Church on Connecticut Avenue:

“Halloween night Jack Willis and Lyle Lipscomb and Henry Adkinson, who lived on Raymond Street, and I, and a couple of other kids, went down and we kidnaped one of Mr. Callahan’s cows and we walked up the stairway there in the back of the belfry with this cow. Halloween morning the old cow was leaning out over the countryside going moo. (laughter) What we didn’t know was you could get a cow to walk upstairs, but you can’t get it to walk downstairs. It took the fire department, the rescue squad, and the Humane Society and lots of well-intentioned people to get that poor cow down out of there. I didn’t hurt anything. It was a prank to end all pranks!”

Not all residents were quite as amused with such Halloween high jinks. In the October 28, 1972, edition of the Shepherd Street News, a paper published by neighborhood children, a letter to the editor by resident Molly Flemming speaks to her distaste for disorderly conduct:



The Shepherd Street News and The Thornapple Street News are treasure troves of tidbits relating to the daily life of children growing up in Chevy Chase, and they give us a glimpse into how the neighborhood kids celebrated Halloween. The October 29, 1932, edition of The Thornapple Street News features a drawing of a hooting owl with the text: “The big event Monday is Hallowe’en, the time for young people to play at being witches, ghosts, and fairies.” In the 1970’s, The Shepherd Street News ran a variety of stories about Halloween festivities, including notices for a Halloween Parade on Turner Lane, advertisements for costumes and candy on sale at the Brookville Pharmacy, and reports on attendance at neighborhood Halloween parties and the costumes that were worn.

CCHS wishes all of our neighbors a safe and spooky Halloween, but please do refrain from walking any cows up the church belfry!



CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

8401 Connecticut Avenue
Suite 1010
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

NON PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CHEVY CHASE, MD
PERMIT NO. 5513

Address Correction Requested

Join CCHS for 2024!

If you have not joined CCHS or renewed your membership for 2024, please do so today. We very much want and need your support. It's because of you that we are able to operate the Archive and Research Center that houses our collection, library, and office. Your support enables us to collect and preserve historical documents, photographs, and maps, to take and transcribe oral histories, and to research house histories. We share the stories of our local history through twice-yearly, free public lectures on topics of historical interest, and through online exhibits on our website, chevychasehistory.org. Your dues also help us publish this Newsletter. Can we count on your help and support?

I want to be a supporter!

Name

Street City State Zip

Email

2024 Annual Membership Dues

(Make checks payable to CCHS)

- Friend \$40 Patron \$125 Benefactor \$250
- Additional Contribution _____
- Contact me about volunteering at the Archive and Research Center or helping with a program

Mail this to:
CCHS, 8401 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1010
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Or join online at
chevychasehistory.org/chevychase/join