



“Indigenous DC: Native Peoples and the Nation’s Capital”

Spring Lecture: Sunday, March 2, 2025, 3:00 PM, Chevy Chase Village Hall



Cowboy and Indian Alliance, Chip Somodevilla, 2014.

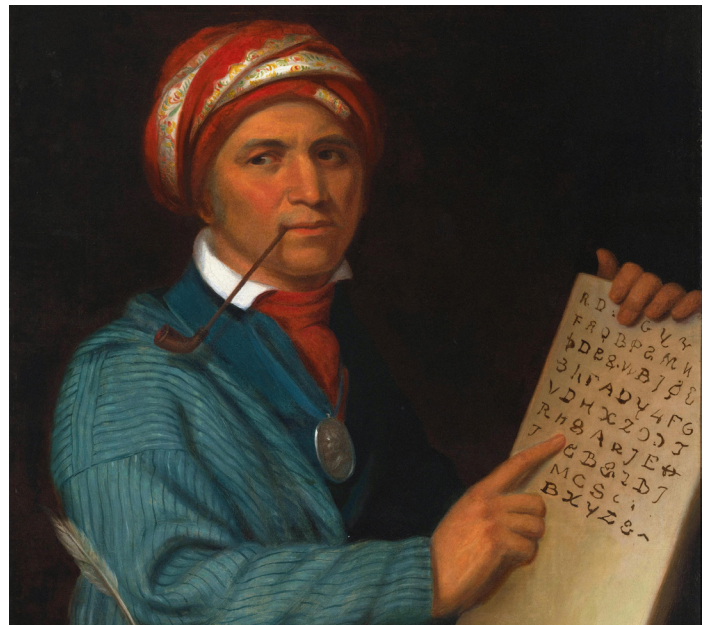
Washington, D.C. has long served as the political center of the United States and, with this, as a staunch symbol of American power. However, the significance of the nation’s capital stretches far beyond the realm of government. As a dynamic nexus of history, politics, and culture, the city has evolved into the beating heart of the nation, shaping its identity and reflecting the diverse forces that have driven America forward. Yet, even still, the story of Washington, D.C., remains incomplete as many of the contributions and histories of Indigenous peoples have been erased from the dominant narrative of the capital.

Dr. Elizabeth Rule, a Chickasaw scholar and activist, seeks to correct the historical erasure of Native peoples in Washington, D.C., while addressing the myth of their invisibility. In her groundbreaking book *Indigenous DC: Native Peoples and the Nation’s Capital* (2023), Rule explores the often-hidden histories of Native communities in the city, challenging the traditional narrative that largely ignores or distorts their presence. For Rule, D.C. is not just the heart of American power, but also the political capital of Indian Country—a place where Native

communities have resisted, thrived, and persevered despite centuries of displacement and oppression. Rule’s work is not just a historical analysis; it is a call to action.

Dr. Elizabeth Rule is an assistant professor of Critical Race, Gender, and Culture Studies at American University, as well as the creator of the Guide to Indigenous Lands Project. Based in Washington, D.C., Rule is deeply committed to advancing Indigenous rights and representation. In 2023, Rule was appointed by New York Governor Kathy Hochul to the New York State Indigenous Commission, where she continues to apply her expertise in advocating for Indigenous communities.

A reception will follow the lecture with light refreshments served. Copies of *Indigenous DC: Native Peoples and the Nation’s Capital* will be available for purchase. No reservation is necessary. For questions, please contact the CCHS at (301) 656-6141 or info@chevyCHASE-history.org.



Portrait of Sequoyah, Henry Inman, c. 1830.



Officers

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

Directors-at-Large

Dima Fayyad	Olga Joos
Kelly Basheer Garrett	Alison Mandell
Debbie Glynn	Gail Sansbury
Katie Howard	Mary Sheehan
Jessica Johnson	Kirsten Williams

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

Samantha Burnett, 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.



The Chevy Chase School, c.1929.

Mary Eliza Dale, a member of the Chevy Chase School's Class of 1929, once reflected in a 1994 oral history interview that despite experiencing numerous bouts of homesickness, the year she spent at the Chevy Chase School was "full of enough friendship and happiness to last a lifetime." Conducted as part of the Chevy Chase Historical Society's ongoing effort to preserve the stories of local residents, Dale's interview provides listeners with an invaluable vivid perspective on education and early womanhood in Chevy Chase during the 1920s.

The Chaser: Chevy Chase School Annual (1929), further enriches our understanding of both Mary Dale's personal journey as well as the broader history of the Chevy Chase community in the early twentieth century. Generously donated by Mary Dale's daughter, Jeanne Moore, this rare yearbook features the Chevy Chase School's senior class of 1929. Among the many snapshots of school events, home addresses, and personal well-wishes written to Dale from her fellow classmates, *The Chaser* even includes a list of class superlatives with Mary Dale highlighted as "Most Sincere." We are deeply grateful to Jeanne Moore for this thoughtful donation which brings her mother's story and the history of Chevy Chase to life in a new and meaningful way.



The Chaser: Chevy Chase School Annual (1929), Mary Eliza Dale.

The CCHS Welcomes New Director of the Archive & Research Center

On November 11, 2024, the Chevy Chase Historical Society appointed Samantha Burnett as the new Director of the Archive and Research Center. A dedicated historian with a passion for local history, Samantha brings a wealth of expertise and a deep commitment to the preservation and interpretation of the past to our organization.

Originally from New York, Samantha obtained her BA in History with Honors from Loyola University Maryland. Upon her graduation from Loyola University Maryland, Samantha was awarded the Whiteford History Medal, an accolade presented to a student who demonstrates outstanding contributions to the field of history during their time attending the University. Later, Samantha earned her Master's degree in History with a concentration in Public History from American University. Here, Samantha completed her graduate thesis, *"Beauty and Usefulness:" The American Eugenics Movement and Forced Labor in Maryland's Rosewood State Training School, 1910-1930*—a reflection of her passion for highlighting the histories of marginalized communities.



New Director, Samantha Burnett

While residing in Washington, D.C., Samantha assisted in the curation of a number of exhibits for institutions like the National Museum of American History and the National Guard Memorial Museum. Most recently, Samantha served as a Research Historian for the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as the Director of Programs for the Disability History Association.

Join CCHS for 2025!

If you have not joined CCHS or renewed your membership for 2025, 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 _____

2025 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 Conneticut Avenue, Suite 1010
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Or join online at

chevychasehistory.org/chevychase/join

“Hidden Alleyways of Washington, D.C.”



Kim Prothro Williams delivering her lecture at the Jane E. Lawton Community Recreation Center.

As part of a continuing lecture series on Hidden Histories, the Chevy Chase Historical Society hosted architectural historian Kim Prothro Williams for an engaging presentation based on her 2023 book, *Hidden Alleyways of Washington, D.C.: A History* published by Georgetown University Press. The free illustrated talk took place Sunday, January 26, before a large crowd at the Jane E. Lawton Community Recreation Center. Ms. Williams, a Historic Preservation Specialist and the National Register Coordinator for the D.C. Historic Preservation Office, is an expert on local history, neighborhood development, and urban planning and a longtime friend of CCHS. She has written numerous books including *The Lost Farms and Estates of Washington, D.C.*, and she is a co-author of *Chevy Chase, A Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital*.

The City of Washington, or the Federal City, which was smaller than what we currently call Washington, D.C., was planned primarily by Pierre L'Enfant. Blocks, or city squares as they then were called, and the corresponding housing lots were very large. Williams noted that in 1791, George Washington himself described “passages into squares” indicating alleyways. These large lots supported houses, stables, and various outbuildings, but after the Emancipation Proclamation, as many as 40,000 freed African Americans settled in the District of Columbia and quickly built very simple dwellings of mostly found materials. These homes, described in the press as “mean,” were without heat and water, and a single out-house usually served an entire alley of dwellings. Social reformers stepped in with various building regulations, which were rarely enforced, and in 1892, a moratorium on the building of alley dwellings was put into place. By

this time, of the roughly 18,000 people living in alleyway dwellings, 93 percent were poor and of African American decent.

As Washington, D.C., rapidly expanded in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the city's alleyways also became a site of resilience and community for African Americans, despite their often-hazardous living conditions. Excluded from other housing opportunities, African Americans found alley dwellings to be vital spaces where their communities could flourish. According to Williams, the alleyways although seen as a symbol of poverty and squalor by many white Washingtonians, were, in fact,



Kim Prothro Williams signing copies of *Hidden Alleyways* (2023).

home to a variety of vibrant communities who worked to build tight-knit social networks, supporting one another and creating a sense of belonging in a city that frequently marginalized them. Of course, as Williams highlighted, the alleyways were not without their own champions. Specifically, local activists and reformers who persistently fought for better living conditions for alley residents did exist. While progress was slow, these advocacy efforts contributed to the eventual transformation of many alleyways into more permanent, structured housing as the city continued to grow and develop.



Family pose for FSA photographer Ed Rosskam outside their alley dwellings, 1941 (Library of Congress).

Ultimately, Williams's *Hidden Alleyways* underscores the need for a broader understanding of urban history, one that recognizes the significance of spaces vital to the city's development and the lives of its most marginalized communities. Over time, many of these alleyways were transformed into vibrant, diverse neighborhoods,

integral to understanding Washington, D.C.'s, cultural and architectural evolution. The story of these alleyways—from their humble beginnings to their eventual revitalization—mirrors the larger narrative of Washington's growth, reflecting the city's transition from a modest capital to a dynamic modern metropolis. In preserving these spaces, we honor the lived experiences of those, particularly African Americans, who, despite facing social and economic hardships, created thriving communities that shaped the city's history.



Engaged audience members at the *Hidden Alleyways* lecture.

SSL Volunteer Opportunities at CCHS

The Chevy Chase Historical Society is proud to be SSL (Student Service Learning) certified, offering high school students the opportunity to volunteer at our Archive and Research Center. Students can gain valuable hands-on experience while contributing to the preservation of local history. Whether assisting with archival projects, helping with research, or supporting events, this is a great way for high schoolers to engage with their community and earn SSL hours. Volunteers will have the chance to develop new skills, work closely with historical materials, and gain a deeper understanding of our local heritage. We welcome passionate volunteers eager to learn, grow, and make a meaningful impact!

For more information, please email info@chevychasehistory.org or call (301) 656 - 6141.



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

SAVE THE DATE!
CCHS 2025 Spring Gala

Plan to join your friends and neighbors for our celebrated annual champagne supper. We are thrilled to gather in a premier home in Chevy Chase in support of CCHS and its mission.

SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2025
5:00 - 8:00 pm

Invitations will be sent to current CCHS members.

For more information, contact CCHS at
info@chevychasehistory.org or call (301) 656 - 6141.