



## CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2002

# Fall Program, *Highlights of the Collection*, Will Introduce the Society's New Archival Center

Join the Chevy Chase Historical Society for a special evening reception and program on Wednesday, November 20. The program, presented by the Board of Directors, will feature highlights of the society's archival collection and tours of its new Archival Center at the Chevy Chase Community Library.

CCHS is a 22 year old organization, which has the most extensive collection of documents relating to the history of Chevy Chase, one of the first planned suburbs in the United States. The first four Chevy Chase houses were built in 1892 after the Chevy Chase Land Company completed a trolley line out Connecticut Avenue to Chevy Chase Lake (which was adjacent to where T.W. Perry Hardware is now located).

In the past, the society's archives have been stored in the homes of up to eight CCHS members and were not easily accessible to the public. The collection includes more than 2,500 photographs of local families, houses, and other structures, 87 oral histories from long-term residents and others, 49 house histories, and 200 or more historical maps and other documents relating to the community. The standing files, which have been maintained by board member Joan Marsh, contain historical data on the area as well as records from the various municipalities of Chevy Chase. The society has

assumed responsibility for many of the records of the Village of Martin's Addition and Chevy Chase Section Three. Its shelves contain approximately 100 books on Chevy Chase and related topics such as architecture, and it owns both the "Klinge" and the "Deets and Maddox" early atlases. In archival document boxes CCHS stores artifacts (such as original house deeds), local newspapers, family papers, pamphlets, and other items of interest.

*Photos by Angela Lancaster*



**Chevy Chase Library at 8005 Connecticut Avenue, new location**

The more than 200 maps, dating back to 1815 and including original plans for the suburb of Chevy Chase, have been maintained by board member Carol Coffin. Board member Alice Kinter has researched the house histories.

The society itself has made the major contribution of the oral histories.

Initially, board members Mary Anne Tuohey and Marjorie Zapruder worked as a team on the histories. Mrs. Zapruder took the remaining histories "solo." She has done many hours of fine research to document the histories' accuracy. The most recent histories taken are those of Mr. and Mrs. Neal Potter. Mr. Potter, the former Montgomery County Executive, and his wife live on Brookville Road in the house where Mrs. Potter grew up.

Board members Eleanor Ford and Julie Thomas have been responsible for cataloguing the photographs. Some of these date from the 1890s. On an ongoing basis, CCHS provides a variety of educational programs to local communities and

serves historical researchers and writers publishing in various media. The society plans to offer archival storage to Chevy Chase municipalities and to have an active program with the library and the local schools.

We hope you will join us for this special evening. We are sure you will be delighted with the extent and contents of the archives, and the accessibility of the new Archival Center.

The library is located at 8005 Connecticut Avenue, in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with parking on the premises. The reception and program will be held on the lower level of the library, where the Archival Center is located, and will begin at 8:00 p.m. Light refreshments will be served.



## **Neighborhood Life Along Tiger Cat Lane Remembered by Cuba Tracewell**

*The following account of life in the Village of Martin's Additions and particularly along Brookville Road near the shopping center, in the 1930s and 40s, is excerpted from the oral history, "An Interview with Cuba Tracewell," taken in 1985 for the CCHS Oral History Project by Mary Anne Tuohey and Marjorie Zapruder. Mrs. Tracewell's close family friend, Margaret Kranking, participated in giving the history.*

*Mrs. Tracewell was a native of Logansport, Indiana, who came to Washington as the bride of Charles E. Tracewell in 1917. (Mr. Tracewell's father, Robert J. Tracewell, was a Congressman from Indiana and later Comptroller of the Treasury.) Cuba and Charles Tracewell first met when she was 11 years old and he was a junior at Wabash College, who came with a friend to enjoy her mother's home cooked meals. He gave her a copy of the book *The Secret Garden*, and they corresponded during the years until their marriage.*

[When we moved to 123 Quincy Street in Chevy Chase in 1930, Charlie was a columnist for *The Evening Star*.] He wrote [a column entitled] "This and That" on the editorial page for 36 years. It was not a political column. He could write about anything he chose, cats, dogs, books, music, people, especially people. . . . He wrote about just little things on the street . . . life and everything. After we moved out here, [he got some of his material from the people who gathered for coffee



Photo courtesy of Julie Thomas

**Cuba Tracewell circa 1925**

at the Brookville Pharmacy. And] he got interested in birds, and he wrote a great deal about feeding the birds. [In his column, Brookville Road was "Tiger Cat Lane."]

[S]hortly after we moved in, Herb Corn down at the [Star] said that we ought to subscribe to the Thornapple Street News. It was a paper that the kids up on Thornapple Street put out with a lot of help from their mothers. It [had] an account of the hold-up at Brookville Pharmacy. . . . [T]his man . . . came in and ordered a soda and then pulled out a gun and demanded the money and the drugs. [T]he owner then was a Mr. Schwartz, and the story ended up with, "And then Mr. Schwartz drank a Coca Cola!"

The [Brookville Pharmacy] wasn't nearly as large as it is now. It had a row of booths opposite the soda fountain. [I have a wonderful painting by Alexander Clayton of the shopping center on Brookville Road. Mr. Clayton] was an artist and he lived in that white house across from the filling station. And the living room, which was a very long room along Brookville Road, was his studio. . . . So he did this painting one snowy day. . . . Charlie looked him up in old copies of the *Star* and he seems to have been a boy genius. He had a lot of publicity for his art work. And he is a very successful portrait painter.

[In the foreground of the painting is the gas station, and then there is a green tin building.] I don't know what was in there . . . [b]icycles or something like that. And then the DGS [District Grocery Store], the pink building, and



next to that the drug store. And then there was a little tailor shop and then the Safeway on the corner. And, of course, across the street, Brooke Farm. When we first moved here, Brooke Farm was a school for young boys. And they had an old street car parked in the back yard, along Taylor Street, for the boys to play in.

[A] lot of people didn't like the DGS. I don't know why. I forget when [it] was sold. This man, who used to be a butcher in the Safeway, bought it. I think that was Mr. Mull, and he had a son Paul who worked in the store and they were very well liked. The business began to boom then. And another butcher who used to be at the Safeway, Mr. Dove, worked in there, too. . . . [Before that, during World War II], customers knew when the meat truck was due, and we used to congregate there in the Safeway, just dozens of us. Made more friends that way! And I know this butcher from the DGS used to come stand in the door and sneer at us. [The DGS employees] were not very popular with the Safeway customers.

People would go to the drug store every morning [after the children were off to school] and drink coffee. Charlie used to call it "my club." [There were many "regulars," and much camaraderie and conversation.] Some man who didn't live around here said to me one morning, "It just does me good to come in here and drink coffee with all these people. It's so friendly." Doc and Hattie Shapiro ran the counter for quite a while. . . . Their son Joe ran it after Doc [and Hattie died.] Hattie would hand deliver prescriptions if you were really sick . . . they lived across the street from the drug store and [Doc] would get up in the middle of the night, if people had an emergency . . .

One funny thing happened. I was up there just before Christmas and [Hattie] was at the counter drinking coffee with all of us and opening her mail, and she opened a Christmas card, and she said, "This is the worst Christmas card I ever saw in my life!" I said, "I agree with you, it is." And then she looked at it and she said, "Oh, my God, it is yours!" I think Charlie wrote that up.

I have [another] cute story about the drugstore . . . . I have a friend who grew up near Pinehurst Circle and he had a pony. And one day he rode the pony up Brookville Road, when he was a little boy, and into the drugstore. And the he grew up and married and moved to Delfield Street, and he went in and said to [Doc], "Do you remember me?" And he said, "Yes, I do. You're the SOB who rode your pony into the drugstore!"

And one day when I was going up Brookville Road, I heard the oddest noise and I thought, "What sort of parent would get a child a toy with a noise like that?" Then I saw this lamb standing in the middle of the road. I managed to get it over to the sidewalk, where it followed me into the drugstore and went directly over to the food counter! To say it caused a sensation is putting it mildly. Hattie said it belonged to the children next door to her, who had got it for an Easter gift. It had [grown] large enough to jump out of its pen. I carried it across the street and put it in its pen, and I have never liked to eat lamb since. . . .

When we moved here, the paving [on Brookville Road] stopped about 100 feet past here, and there was practically no traffic. After living on S Street [N.W.] where a bus went by every twelve minutes and there was a lot of traffic, when we would hear a car, we'd run out and look! Then they paved the rest of it, and you

*(Continued on page 6)*



Same commercial area of Brookville Road today

Photos by Angela Lancaster



# CCHS Celebrates Opening of New Archival

CCHS celebrated the opening of its new Archival Center at the Chevy Chase Community Library on the evening of Tuesday, October 15. The opening was the culmination of years of planning between Montgomery County and the society to form a public-private partnership.

The society initially raised and donated \$100,000 to establish the Archival Center in a previously unfinished lower level space in the library. The major sponsors of the effort are the Chevy Chase Land Company, Chevy Chase Bank, and the Chevy Chase municipalities. CCHS is in the midst of a capital campaign, "Cherish Our Past, Champion Our Future," to endow the center. It already has raised an additional \$147,613.66.

Angela Lancaster, President of CCHS, presided over the opening ceremony and ribbon cutting. Representing the library in the ribbon cutting were Harriet Henderson, Director, Montgomery County Department of Libraries; Barbara Norland, Public Services Administration, Montgomery County Department of Libraries; and Kathy Meisner, Head Librarian at the library. Ms. Lancaster, and Fran Schorr, immediate Past President of CCHS and the society's negotiation and construction representative on the project, represented CCHS.

Others in attendance were the public and private officials who helped CCHS establish the Archival Center, and the many people who have contributed by donating services to the administration of the society or to our educational programs by being guest lecturers, or donating documents, photographs, or objects to the archives. Those who have made financial donations to the endowment of the Archival Center also were invited.



CCHS President, Angela Lancaster, sets the stage



Cutting the ribbon: Fran Schorr, Mark Cowherd, Barbara Norland, Angela Lancaster, and Harriette Henderson



Smiling for the camera: H. Henderson, Carol Coffin, Kathie Meisner, Councilman Howard D.



History buffs love to eat.



# Center at Chevy Chase Community Library



Norland, Kathie Meizner,



Barbara Norland and Paulette Dickerson,  
Chair, Library Advisory Committee

## *Cherish Our Past, Champion Our Future*

CCHS is pleased to announce that its fund raising efforts are continuing apace. As of the end of September, we have raised \$247,613.66 toward our goal of \$350,000! The fund chairs, Fran Schorr and Carol Coffin, have been busy asking individuals, townships, businesses, and foundations to donate to our efforts to establish the CCHS Archival Center on the lower level of the Chevy Chase Community Library.

We are turning to the society's general membership for your support. Join many of your friends and neighbors, and help CCHS:

- \_ Build a web page and catalogue the society's collections into a data base
- \_ Hire part time staff so that the Archival Center can be open longer hours
- \_ Collect more than 30 planned oral histories to add to the existing 78
- \_ Expand house history research
- \_ Build a reserve fund
- \_ Restore antique maps and supplement historic photographs

**Help put us over the top!  
Only \$102,000 more to go.**

**You can make it happen!**



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Supporters from the Chevy Chase Land Company: Sharon Farr,  
James Johnston, Katie Farr, Bran Johnston and David Smith



Arriving at the Center: Councilman Blair Ewing, Neal Potter, Marian Potter



Photo courtesy of Margaret Kranking

**The Star's "Templeton Jones" in contemplation**

Charles E. Tracewell was the alter ego of Templeton "Temp" Jones, the lovable character he created whose observations on the multitude of everyday things others accepted as routine comprised his popular column in *The Evening Star*. The man called "the gentle critic, the puckish savant of the newsroom" signed his name to 11, 278 "This and That" columns. The following column begins with an exchange between Anne Marie, the daughter of family friend Margaret Kranking (who participated in the taking of Cuba Tracewell's oral history) and her playmate Ruth.

## THIS AND THAT

### BY CHARLES E. TRACEWELL

"My daddy," said Ruth, "has killed dozens of snakes."  
 "My daddy," said Anne Marie, "has killed hundres of ants."

So another of childhood's battles ended in a draw. The battle of the insects, however, is not so easily resolved in real life.

Despite humanity's recently augmented armamentarium of sprays and other death-dealing things, the insect world goes right ahead increasing. The ancient injunction to multiply must have been heard by the insects first.

"How can you tell termites from flying ants?" somebody asked.

"You can't," said the other. "Only the expert can."

And, if the truth were known, maybe at times he can't either. There are millions of species of insects, with more being discovered all the time.

This is one of humanity's last frontiers, along with outer space. In each of the species of insects there are countless numbers. The only thing that saves humanity in this eternal battle is that most of them are so small.

If you like insects, really admire them, you have won a point already. Then you will not shrink away at the gorgeously colored woody catepillar, but admire it.

There is one way to meet life head on—and like it. Otherwise, there are so many inimical things in life, so many terrible looking creatures, that a sensitive soul has all he can do to get through the day.

Living and liking are not synonymous, but the closer we can get them, the better off we are.

Insects come a dime a dozen, as the saying has it, especially in summer time, when the torrid conditions of the great bowl of life in the Mediterranean are duplicated almost everywhere.

"What is so rare as a day in June?" the poet asked, but he might as well have said July or August. Then come the perfect insect days.

They have been waiting all winter and some of them all spring, in many odd forms and ways of life. Some in the ground, others in cocoons and still others in grandma's attic.

know, in 24 hours there was just more traffic . . . how did [people] find out so quickly that it was a good road?

[Charlie] used to go over to Connecticut Avenue and get the bus and I think that he had to transfer at the Circle. Then sometimes later on, when he came home, he would transfer to the Western Avenue bus. . . . [H]e'd come trudging up here. He was crazy about home. I'd be working out in the yard and I would see he was coming along, and when he turned the corner, home was in sight. He couldn't walk fast enough! . . .

[Charlie and I] walked along "Tiger Cat Lane" many times and always loved it. One of my fondest memories is of walking down the road on a gorgeous October day. Whomever was ahead of us was smoking a pipe, and it was the most heavenly pipe smell I'd ever experienced! Many little things like that stick in one's memory.

I went to the reception for the incorporation of Martin's Addition on Sunday. . . . It was a lovely party. . . . [Wallace Janssen, from Raymond Street, had] researched some old records and said that Martin's Addition got together and paid 20 dollars to get one row of planking laid over to Connecticut so they wouldn't have to walk through the mud. You know, when you talk about traffic and how things have changed, it just brought it all back, that Brookville Road was a mud road.

*Majorie Zapruder's notation of March 23, 1987: Everything Mrs. Tracewell said was said with such charm and humor that we found we were laughing at the end of each paragraph. The laughter is not noted in the transcript, but if it were, it still would not fully indicate the delightful way in which Mrs. Tracewell told her memories to us.*



# CCHS Honors Two Members Instrumental in Society's Success

At the October 15 celebration of the opening of CCHS' new Archival Center, the society showed its appreciation of the special contributions that the Board of Directors members Mary Anne Tuohey and Fran Schorr have made to the organization. President Angela Lancaster presented awards to Mrs. Tuohey and Mrs. Schorr in public recognition of their invaluable efforts.



Mrs. Tuohey was given a plaque memorializing her founding of the CCHS in 1981. Holder of a degree in American Studies, she parlayed her interest in and knowledge of the history of Chevy Chase into the beginning of the society.

Other interested residents of Chevy Chase joined in the effort, and the society began to receive substantial donations of papers, personal

photographs, and other historical material from the community. These included the significant donation of a collection of papers from the Chevy Chase Land Company relating to the founding of Chevy Chase in the 1890s as one of the first planned suburbs in the United States

Mrs. Tuohey has been a mainstay of the society during its 22 year span. She has been, and remains, involved in fostering all aspects of the society's progress.

Mrs. Schorr was presented with a (pristine) shovel as a symbol of her five years of exceptional effort to make the CCHS Archival Center a reality. Mrs. Schorr has been a member of the CCHS Board of Directors for a number of years. She served as president from spring 1997 to spring 2001, years during which the society successfully negotiated with the Chevy Chase Community Library and Montgomery County to reach a public-private partnership agreement regarding



**Mrs. Schorr is given a new shovel so she can "keep on diggin'" in our local history**

location of the Archival Center on the lower level of the library. Mrs. Schorr acted as the society's negotiation representative, and, during the past year, has been the society's construction representative. An interior designer, she oversaw the functional and attractive design and the construction of the center.

We are proud of and indebted to Mrs. Tuohey and Mrs. Schorr for all that they have accomplished on behalf of the preservation of the history of Chevy Chase.

## *CCHS Board of Directors*

Angela Lancaster, President

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Carol Coffin  
Alice Kinter  
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Patti Rosenfeld

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Eleanor Ford

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Ann Toch  
Marjorie Zapruder

## *Newsletter*

Wendy Adams, Editor  
John Tuohey, Layout and Production

*CCHS wishes to acknowledge the generous contributions of the following people and organizations.*

**Leadership Gifts**

Chevy Chase Bank  
Chevy Chase Land Company  
Town of Chevy Chase  
Eleanor and George Ford

Ann Mehringer and Terry Beatty  
Chevy Chase Village  
Carol and Rip Coffin  
Mary Anne and John Tuohey

**Major Gifts**

Section V of Chevy Chase  
Katharine and Sharon Farr  
Catherine Cotter and John Finneran  
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Alice and George Kinter  
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Sue and Alaster MacDonald  
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