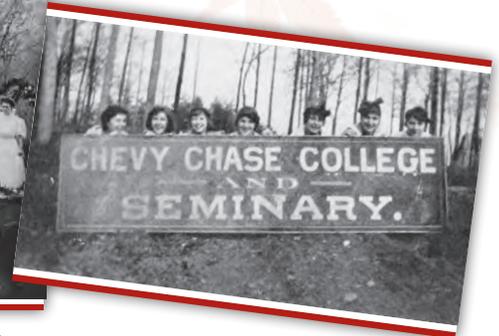




The Proper "Finishing" of Young Women: Local Seminary Schools at the Turn of the 19th Century Is Fall Program Topic



*Mount Vernon Seminary riding class,
May Day at National Park Seminary, and Chevy Chase Seminary students*

Vintage photographs recalling the heyday of "seminary schools" for girls in our area will enliven the Chevy Chase Historical Society's Fall Program on Sunday, November 24, at 4:00 p.m. at the Chevy Chase Village Hall, 5906 Connecticut Avenue. The public is invited to attend this free event.

Three panelists will describe Mount Vernon Seminary, National Park Seminary, and Chevy Chase Seminary -- part of a remarkable development in the education of young women that swept the nation from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s. Secular female seminaries were created across the country that were larger and offered more professional faculties and more rigorous curricula than traditional boarding schools.

Located in Washington, D.C. and in nearby Maryland, the three local seminaries featured in our program offered high school and collegiate courses to the daughters of the area's elite and increasingly of its middle class. The daughters of members of Congress, government administrators, diplomats, and business leaders were enrolled as day or boarding students.

Mount Vernon Seminary was founded in Washington by Elizabeth J. Somers in 1868. Mrs. Somers' curriculum took advantage of all that the nation's capital had to offer. In 1894, National Park Seminary was founded in Maryland. Its very name identified its location and relationship with the capital, and its international perspective was reflected in its notable sorority houses, each built in a different international style. Chevy Chase became home to the Chevy Chase Seminary, founded in 1903 by Dr. Samuel Barker. Providing the best of both urban and suburban worlds, Chevy Chase Seminary promoted its ideal location as a distinguishing asset to its students.

(Continued) ▶

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**CHEVY CHASE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

P.O. Box 15145
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20825

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Open 10 a.m. to 2 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.

Reflecting larger debates about the role of women in American society and the value of academic study for women, these seminaries “finished” students for their roles as wives and mothers, but also provided the foundation for the completion of college degrees and future professional work. Our program will examine the important role of the three schools, their similarities and differences, and related historic developments in women’s education.

The story of Mount Vernon Seminary will be told by Nina Mikhalevsky, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Mary Washington, who holds a Ph.D in philosophy from Georgetown University. Dr. Mikhalevsky’s several areas of expertise include the history of women’s education. Her book *Dear Daughters: A History of Mount Vernon Seminary and College* traces the founding and development of that school.

The story of National Park Seminary will be presented by Mr. Frank Riley, a member of the Board of Directors of Save Our Seminary (“SOS”), who received his J.D. from University of Virginia School of Law. Mr. Riley is active on SOS’s education, archive, and sculpture committees, is an avid student of the history of the school, and guides tours of the historic campus.

The story of Chevy Chase Seminary will be explored by Gail Sansbury, Director of the CCHS Archive and Research Center, who has an M.A. and Ph.D. in Urban Planning from UCLA, and an M.A. in American History from the University of Rhode Island. Before moving to Washington Dr. Sansbury taught for many years in the American Studies Program at San Jose State University and the Women and Gender Studies Program at San Francisco State University.

CCHS will host a related tour of the recently restored National Park Seminary on Saturday, December 7. Details are provided on page 3.

**JOIN CCHS OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2014,
AND HELP KEEP THE MEMORIES ALIVE!**

Name(s) _____

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Contact me about volunteering at the Archive and Research Center or helping with a program

Please mail your completed form and check to:
CCHS, P.O. Box 15145, Chevy Chase, MD 20825

History Go-Round Tour Of National Park Seminary, Inside and Out



**One of the seminary's unique sorority houses,
built in international styles**

To follow up on the CCHS Fall Program on local female seminary schools, CCHS will sponsor a History-Go-Round walking tour of National Park Seminary (NPS) on Saturday, December 7. The approximately 90 minute tour will be led by, among others, CCHS member Linda Lyons, a long time member of the board of Save Our Seminary, the group that saved the historic NPS campus and guided its conversion to a unique residential community.

After the tour, CCHS members Jim and Susan Catlette have graciously invited participants to their home, formerly the NPS chapel, to enjoy a box lunch and discussion about the newest phase in the life of the campus-turned-neighborhood. Participants also will have an opportunity to visit the interiors of neighboring homes, each a former NPS sorority house built in a distinctive international style. We are grateful to the Catlettes for their hospitality and for helping us to offer the unique opportunity to visit the interiors of these remarkable residences.

The tour will begin at 10:30 am. Directions to the meeting point at NPS will be provided to those who register. Participants must provide their own transportation, but CCHS will assist in forming carpools if requested. The cost for the tour only is \$5.00. The additional cost for the box lunch is \$13.00 per person. To make a reservation, please mail a check payable to CCHS to Mary Sheehan, 30 West Kirke Street, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. Please direct inquiries to Ms. Sheehan at (301) 652-5726.

Recent Acquisitions

"Recent Acquisitions" is a regular feature in the Newsletter, describing documents and other items acquired by the society's Archive and Research Center

- 1) *1910 to 2010: Observations and Memories of a Long Life*, a personal memoir by Mrs. Gertrude (Bobby) Lerch, written on the occasion of her 100th birthday. Mrs. Lerch gave CCHS a copy of this 96 page document after we recorded a CCHS Oral History interview with her this past summer. Thanks also to the assistance of granddaughter Barbara Lerch we now have this document containing stories and photographs to complement the oral history. We hope other CCHS members who have written family histories or personal memoirs will consider donating copies to CCHS
- 2) Two digital scans of studio "artist's proof" photogravure photographs of Janet Newlands Johnston (1878-1965) were donated to CCHS by Mrs. William Sharon Farr, Jr. They were taken by the photography studio Davis and Sanford in New York City, probably between 1895 and 1905. Janet Newlands Johnston was the second of the three daughters of Senator Francis G. Newlands, the founder of the Chevy Chase Land Company. She married Dr. William B. Johnston in 1903.



Janet Newlands Johnston

- 3) Mrs. Lois Todd donated a collection of seven items related to the District of Columbia Transit System. Her father George E. Warder (1900-1974) worked as a streetcar operator on the Connecticut Avenue line until he injured a leg, then as a dispatcher. His materials include photographs of him at work, call lists, a rule book, and programs for the Quarter Century Club dinner celebrating workers with 25 years of service. The 1962 program lists Mr. Warder as having worked for DCTS for 42 years, and he was still part of the active workforce.

CCHS Debuts New Website and Online Exhibits

The society proudly announces the updating of its website, at www.chevychasehistory.org. Improvement of our 2004 site was made possible by funding from the Montgomery County Arts and Humanities Commission and from many community donors.



Why is the update important? It allows us to keep you informed of the many events we sponsor each year, such as lectures on historical topics and the ever popular History-Go-Round tours of nearby historic sites. It also includes past CCHS Newsletters and links to the online store so that you can purchase our products and become a society member. In addition, it has information about the society, including the mission statement, leadership, location, and hours of operation.

Another important feature of our website is the "Search the Collection" section. No time to visit the lower level of the Chevy Chase Library and look up some fascinating information on your house, your neighborhood, or your history? Just log on and explore the more than 15,000 items in our archive, digitized for your perusal. You can find house histories, historical maps, oral histories, historical photographs, and interesting ephemera such as post cards and dance cards.

The primary reason for updating our website, though, is to bring you expanded online exhibits regarding historical

topics of interest. These exhibits provide virtual tours of some of the best of our archival collections, arranged in an understandable manner and augmented by original research to tell stories about our community. This fall we are rolling out three new exhibits: "Cummings Lane," "Young Reporters," and "Chevy Chase Reads."

Cummings Lane: From Farm Lane To Suburban Street, 1848-1947

When brothers James and Patrick Cummings bought 100 acres of farmland in 1848, a small farm lane led to their property from the Brookeville Road. Over the next century as suburban development of the area began, the lane became a street in the new subdivision of Harry Martin's Additions to Chevy Chase.

This exhibit explores the history of the Cummings family and farm, including Pleasant Grove, the house that Mrs. Mary Cummings built in 1893; Andrew J. "Cy" Cummings, her youngest son who went into politics but was better known as a sportsman; Harry M. Martin, the developer of Martin's Additions; and some of the early residents of the new suburb. By using archival photographs, maps, and oral histories to show the transformation of Cummings Lane into a suburban street, the exhibit illustrates the shift from the 19th century agricultural landscape to that of the post-World War II neighborhood.



George Winchester Stone, Jr. lived on Cummings Lane and described it in detail in his CCHS Oral History interview and in biographical sketches of friends and family members

Young Reporters: Chevy Chase Children's Newspapers in the 1930s and 1970s

Chevy Chase has a tradition of children's newspapers that began with *The Thornapple Street News* (1931-1936), and continued in the 1970s with *The Shepherd Street News* (1972-1974) and *The Leland Street Sunday News* (1973-ongoing as a blog).



The editors and writers learned the "tricks of the trade" as they gathered the news and produced and distributed their weekly newspapers. Although the three papers were produced decades apart and on different streets in Chevy Chase, they all reflect the joys of play, the adventurous and curious spirit of youth, and the support and encouragement of community. This exhibit, based on copies of newspapers in the CCHS archive, provides a glimpse into the history of Chevy Chase in the 1930s and 1970s through the eyes of children.

Chevy Chase Reads: Readers Build Community At the Turn of the 20th Century

The first residents of Chevy Chase shared a love of reading -- as a form of entertainment as well as learning -- and their interest gave rise to three organizations: the Chevy Chase Free Library Association (1896); the Chevy Chase Reading Class (1899); and the Literary Club of the Chevy Chase Association (1907). The Free Library Association, like those in other communities across the nation, raised

funds and collected books for a local library. The building constructed by the association on Connecticut Avenue now is the Chevy Chase Village Hall. The Chevy Chase Reading Class, a reading group for women, met weekly for more than 60 years, creating a social network of devoted readers across several generations. And the Literary Club, although relatively short lived, was a testament to the talents of residents, many of whom read original stories and poetry at the monthly meetings. It was reading that brought these citizens together and helped them build social ties within their new suburban community.



**Mrs. Helen Zimmerman Tucker,
a member of the Reading Class,
at her home on East Lenox Street**

We hope you will view and enjoy these new exhibits. They join several previously created exhibits: Minnie E. Brooke: A Postcard View of History; The Schools of Section Four (Town of Chevy Chase); Slideshow of Minnie E. Brooke's Historic Postcards; Chevy Chase Junior College; and Chevy Chase Lake Amusement Park. Do visit our updated site and delve into local history.

CCHS is a leader among small archives and historical societies in its ability to provide this information to you in the comfort of your home, or other location of your choice. Thanks to all who made the new website and exhibits possible, especially to Sandglass Systems, Inc. and to Andy Fraser who has seen us through the process.

The History Detective and the Hometown Hero

In observance of Veterans Day the following is an account of two Chevy Chase residents, both outstanding public servants, whose families once shared a neighborhood. One man "discovered" and worked with CCHS to track down the illustrious military and civilian record of the other.

The Detective's Story: "Discovering" Chevy Chase's Congressional Medal of Honor Winner

Dec. 19, 1947

Washington Evening Star



WASHINGTON NAVAL RESERVIST WINS MEDAL—President Truman has just presented the Congressional Medal of Honor to Arthur Murray Preston, 34, Washington attorney, for heroism in rescuing a downed Navy flyer in the Pacific during the war. (Story on Page B-1.)—AP Photo

Our history detective John E. Murtaugh learned to value military veterans as a boy growing up in Framingham, Massachusetts.

In winter 1775-76 Colonel Henry Knox's militiamen hauled 60 tons of artillery from Ft. Ticonderoga to the Siege of Boston; some died of smallpox in Framingham and were buried behind the pest house barn. When a 20th century developer wanted to build on the site John's father, John J. Murtaugh, an Army veteran wounded at the Battle of the Bulge -- and the recipient of two Purple Hearts and a Bronze Medal -- insisted that the bodies first be located and reburied with proper military honors. He also taught his six children which flags and markers to place on graves of veterans of different wars.

John E. has carried a sense of the importance of recognizing our veterans throughout his chemical engineering studies at University of Massachusetts, Amherst; marriage to his wife Eileen and their move with two children to Washington, D.C. in 1957; and his careers as a highly awarded Expert Primary Patent

Examiner at the U.S. Patent Office and as an expert witness. His favorite charity is Fisher House Foundation, that provides housing for families to be near hospitalized military members.

After the Murtaghs' 1967 move to Maple Street in the Town of Chevy Chase son Edward was tutored by a West Thornapple Street neighbor, Elizabeth (Betty) Preston, through The Lab School of Washington. The Murtaghs joked that the tutoring had paid for Betty's addition to the north side of her 1923 Dutch Colonial, yet they had not been inside the house. When Betty passed away in 2003 and an estate sale was held, John was curious. In his own words:

"On the stairway wall there was a framed news article and photograph with handwriting at the top. What caught my attention was the title, 'Murray Preston Wins Congressional Medal For Pacific Heroism.' The article, about Betty Preston's husband Murray, a Navy officer in World War II, was from the old Washington *Evening Star* and dated December 19, 1947.

"I obtained the Medal of Honor citation online. It describes what was considered a suicidal mission using PT [patrol torpedo] boats to rescue a downed Navy flier from a strongly defended enemy harbor. When I read it I felt a chill. President Truman commented at the award ceremony that '[Mr. Preston] is not only an extremely brave young man but a very lucky one.'

"To learn the number of Medals of Honor awarded to Chevy Chase residents, I worked with the CCHS Archive and Research Center. I visited the 'Home of Heroes' website that showed Mr. Preston as the only one. I also checked with the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. During my research, I noticed that at least eight other significant medals, mostly the Navy Cross, have been awarded to people associated with Chevy Chase. If you know of any such awards, please inform CCHS.

"I also read a number of online articles about Mr. Preston. Copies of that material, kept at the Center, document an active life as a community leader as well as a military one. In addition to other service, Mr. Preston was general chairman of the 1964 United Givers Fund Campaign; on the boards of the American Red Cross and the Episcopal Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital; on the executive board of the Boy Scouts of America; and chairman of the United Community Services Juvenile Delinquency Committee.

"My family in Massachusetts has a long history of reminding the public of those who have served our country. I feel it is time to recognize Mr. Preston, a Chevy Chase resident who can not only be called a hero in war but a hero in our community."

The Hero at War

Arthur Murray Preston's family agrees that it is time to recognize his military and community service. His daughter, retired history teacher Judy Stover of Bethesda, is organizing a trove of material regarding her father, with the support of siblings Peter Preston of Chevy Chase and Eleanor Daly of Charleston, South Carolina, and of husband Jon Stover.

Theirs is a family of military leaders. Numerous men in previous generations on Murray Preston's side have been Army generals. His great-great-great-grandfather James Ord fought in the Cumberland, Maryland area in the War of 1812 as an Army first lieutenant and later rose to the rank of general. Murray's father Ord Preston, president of the Union Trust Company, was a general's grandson and served as an Army major in World War I. His mother Carolyn was the daughter and granddaughter of generals. Her brother became a general and her sister married one.

Yet Murray's closeness to his fiancée Betty's father, Lewis "Cap" McBride, a Navy captain, may have influenced Murray's decision to enlist in the Navy Reserve in 1940. Or perhaps it was an affinity for the water on the part of the young man who sailed, swam for Yale, canoed the wilderness, and surfed in Hawaii with some of the greats.



Historical artist Mort Kuntzler's illustration of the rescue on the cover of *Stag*, a mid-20th century men's adventure magazine

In any event, it was fairly inevitable that the graduate of University of Virginia School of Law, a junior partner in the Washington law firm of McKenney, Flannery and Craighill, would volunteer for military service when World War II commenced.

Murray had met Betty, a history graduate of Smith College, at a Chevy Chase Club dance. They married in 1941 and she joined him at his station at Pearl Harbor, where he served as an ensign on a PT boat and defended against the Japanese attack on December 7.

It was daring duty. PT boats' smaller size and mahogany hulls made them less expensive to build. Swift and maneuverable, they were used to attack larger, metal hulled surface craft, although many also carried depth charges. They were heavily armed, with four torpedos and numerous automatic weapons, including machine guns, anti-aircraft guns, mortars, rocket launchers, and cannon.

Murray was promoted to lieutenant junior grade in 1942 and to lieutenant in 1943, then transferred to the Navy's new Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron Training Center in Rhode Island to train other officers. One of his students was future president John Kennedy. "Murph" and "Jack" became friends and went on to captain PT boats in the Pacific theater.

(Continued) ▶

Murray's service as a PT boat captain and squadron commander already had earned him awards by 1944 when he volunteered to lead two PT boats through 60 miles of heavily mined waters to rescue a Navy pilot shot down in Japanese-held Wasile Bay, Halmahera Island. Twice turned back from the bay by heavy fire, he was aided by a Navy aircraft smokescreen in taking the pilot aboard, clearing the area, and speeding back to safety through minefields and shelling.

Austin Kiplinger of the Washington business and finance publishing family was one of the Navy pilots involved in the mission. Kiplinger had known Murray for 20 years but did not know that the latter was captaining one of the PT boats for whom the fliers were providing cover. In his book *Letter from Washington*, Kiplinger includes a vivid description of the rescue from his aerial perspective:

"One of our torpedo pilots ... was laying smoke along the beach to screen the action in the bay. We continued to circle. We had about four hours of fuel, and only two hours had transpired, so we waited to give air cover during the PT boats' final dash into the bay. Finally one of the PT boats started its move towards the downed pilot, under heavy fire and close range. From our altitude the only thing visible was a thin wake of white water and a little sliver at the tip. The PT boat stopped dead in the water and splashes of foam rose around it, as the Japanese shore batteries fired away. Then another spurt of white water, and the boat was heading toward the exit from the bay."

Despite exposure to 160 minutes of sustained fire and submerged explosives, the boats' crews sustained no casualties, and the boats only superficial damage.

"Mr. Washington" on the Home Front

In 1945 Murray left active Navy service as a lieutenant commander. He returned to Washington, joining Betty and their sons Peter and Lewis ("Mac") -- born during the war -- and resuming his law practice.

1947 was the banner year in which President Truman presented him with the Medal of Honor, and he and Betty bought their house on West Thornapple Street. Relatives joked that their lowest ranking officer was receiving the award; his banker father advised that the new house was too expensive at \$17,000. Murray's sense of humor and self confidence surely came in handy.

By 1953 the Prestons' family included daughters Judy and Ellie. Murray retired from the Navy Reserve with the rank of commander.



The 1950s contained additional pivot points for him. The combined changes fostered what his children regard as a natural movement into civilian community service for a person who enjoyed volunteer work.

Murray left a senior partnership in his law firm, Craighill, Aiello and Preston, to become vice president of American Security and Trust Company, where one of his responsibilities was community relations. And through his and Betty's diligence in finding excellent education for son Mac, who had a physical disability, he helped to create alternative schools such as the Hawthorne School and Georgetown Day School, whose teachers later founded The Lab School, The Field School, and the Edmund Burke School.

The arc of Murray's community activity only rose. From the service detailed by John Murtaugh earlier in this article, to serving as treasurer of All Saints Episcopal Church, as treasurer of fellow lawyer and World War II sailor Charles "Mac" Mathias' campaign for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, on the boards of the Metropolitan and Chevy Chase Clubs, on the Montgomery County Planning Board, as president of the Washington Hospital Center, on the executive council of the Congressional Medal of Honor Foundation, and with organizations helping

The Preston Family at home (L to R): Mac, Murray, Peter, Ellie, Betty (standing), and Judy

abused children and orphans, (and the list is longer), he truly became “Mr. Washington,” as his children only half jokingly refer to him.

Asked which activities were most close to Murray’s heart, they smile. His favorites were clear: presidency of the Washington Hospital Center as it consolidated seven DC hospitals, membership on the board of the Washington Home for Incurables (now The Washington Home), and – wider smiles – serving on the board of the Instructive Visiting Nurse Association.

Why would a man with a challenging job and four children engage in such an array of activities benefitting the community? Judy explains that her father enjoyed volunteering. It simply was not “work” to him. Her husband Jon adds that Murray was motivated by “a sense of character, and of himself as responsible for contributing to society – an understanding that he needed to be the best he could be, to give back to the country that had given so much to him.”

‘Life with Father’ ordinarily would suffer with Father so involved in outside endeavors. Not true of Preston family life. Murray was a warm and involved parent. Judy relates that he enjoyed listening to musical comedy with the children, and that both girls would dance with him, standing on the toes of his shoes in that father-daughter tradition. The family bought a farm in Poolesville where they grew organic food and kept cows, and marched through the woods and flew kites from the hills with Murray. He liked to drive the children along Rockville Pike and around farm and forest in his World War II jeep. He and Judy “sailed” on a surfboard in the farm’s pond. “He was fun!” says Judy. “He also could be serious when necessary. He was a responsible parent. And he had a fine aesthetic sense that he shared with us.”

One thing Murray did not do with his family was talk about his military service. The children were aware that he had served and had been honored because he was a sought after speaker to veterans’ organizations. He was naturally modest, though, and like many veterans he shielded his family from his experience of war.

He did maintain a relationship with fellow Navy veteran Austin Kiplinger, although the latter would not learn that Murray was the courageous PT boat captain whom he had watched perform the rescue in Wasile Bay until he read Murray’s obituary in 1968. Kiplinger and his son Knight remain friends with Murray’s children.

Murray also enjoyed a reunion with his former PT boat pupil when President Kennedy brought Congressional Medal of Honor winners together for a Veterans Day ceremony at the White House. The movie *PT-109* regarding Kennedy’s naval heroism had just been filmed, starring Cliff Robertson as Kennedy. Robertson was in town, so after the honorees’ dinner, Jack, Murph, and Cliff retired to the White House movie theater for a private preview.

Clearly, Murray Preston not only was fun, he had fun. In addition to all else he shared Betty’s love of nature and was an active adult athlete, enjoying sailing, golf, and deep sea fishing. His happiness and vitality radiate from family photographs taken shortly before his untimely death of coronary failure at age 54.

Of all her father’s Murray’s attributes and accomplishments, Judy says she is most proud “that he was a wonderful man whom everyone loved.”



PT boat captains President Kennedy and Preston reunite at a White House ceremony for medal winners

MYSTERY!

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



Who was Ida Powell Blackmon Couper? This photograph of 5 West Lenox Street was taken around 1912. The six people standing in front of the porch (L to R) are Miss Beatrice S. Goodwin, Mrs. James M. Goodwin (Eugenia Holmes Blackmon), Mr. Cogswell Welsh, Mrs. William Page Couper (Ida Powell Blackmon), Mrs. Welsh, and Mrs. Charles Gregory McRoberts (Virginia Powell Goodwin). We think the house belonged to Jesse Chester Bowen and his wife Grace Robertson Bowen, so why are they not in the photo? Mrs. Bowen was one of the founders of the Chevy Chase Reading Class. In a written history of the Reading Class, "Mrs. Couper" is identified as the person who gave the four founders the idea of creating such a group. Does anyone know anything about Mrs. William Page Couper (a.k.a. Ida Powell Blackmon Couper)? All we know is that she was born in 1854 in Alabama. Help us solve this mystery!

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