



## CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2017



### 101 East Kirke Street Welcomes CCHS Gala Guests

On May 7, the Chevy Chase Historical Society held its annual Spring Gala at 101 East Kirke Street, the home of Naomi and Clarke Camper, situated on the corner of Brookville Road. Since purchasing the home in 2013, the Campers have carefully preserved this exemplary Colonial Revival residence including fully restoring the garden designed by prominent landscape architect Rose Greely.

The original Kirke Street lot was purchased in 1899 by Washington realtor John L. Weaver from the Chevy Chase Land Company. Arthur B. Heaton, who was to become a renowned Washington architect, designed the house for his sister, Mrs. Annie Heaton Weaver. Her husband John L. Weaver and Arthur B. Heaton went on to make significant contributions to the real estate and architectural development of early twentieth century Washington.

Heaton served as the first supervising architect on the National Cathedral, and many of his structures are now historic landmarks. The Weaver Brothers Company has continued to flourish for over one hundred years and today operates as one of the area's most venerable insurance agencies. Weaver

and Heaton partnered on a number of important projects including Washington DC's historic Augusta Apartment Building in 1900, and All Saints Episcopal Church on Chevy Chase Circle in 1901.

Subsequent owners of 101 East Kirke Street include well-known Navy Commander Horace Greeley MacFarland and his socialite wife Arabella Adams Moran MacFarland, who lived in the home from 1915-1921. Whitman and Virginia Cross, who were known for their award winning roses including the Chevy Chase Rose, lived in the home from 1921-1945. The Glassie and Eccles families, residents from 1945-1954, donated the Cross's rose bushes to the Chevy Chase Club in the 1940s. Marriner Eccles, Mrs. Glassie's second husband, was Chair of the Federal Reserve from 1934-1948 and the Federal Reserve Building on Constitution Avenue was renamed after Mr. Eccles in 1982.

Joan and Richard Marsh, active members of the Chevy Chase community and long-time members of the Chevy Chase Historical Society, lived at 101 East Kirke from 1954-2013. In the mid-1980s Joan Marsh housed the CCHS archives on the top floor of 101 East Kirke Street and was the first CCHS archivist.

*Celebrating One of America's First Streetcar Suburbs*



## CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 15145  
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20825

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Chevy Chase Library  
8005 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Tel: 301.656.6141  
[www.chevychasehistory.org](http://www.chevychasehistory.org)  
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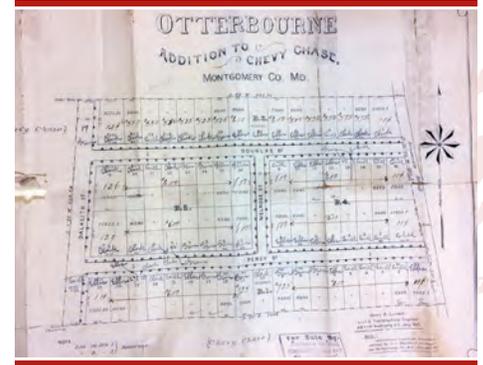
Open 10 a.m. to noon, 1 to 3 p.m.  
on Tuesday and by appointment

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.

## 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

Sharon Isralow, the daughter of Esther Isralow, who resided on Underwood Street in Chevy Chase, MD, has donated a treasure-trove of letters and postcards and two Otterbourne maps dating from the late 1800s. Otterbourne was a subdivision originally platted in 1894 and later absorbed into the Village of Chevy Chase, Section 5.



**Map of Otterbourne Subdivision**

The donated correspondence is from the original owner of the house, Eugene B. Clark, who acquired the Underwood Street property in 1897. Clark was one of the original investors who established the Otterbourne subdivision. Although he trained as a medical doctor, Clark ultimately went into business for himself as a patent attorney instead. He used one of the rooms in the house as his office. The house remained in the Clark family until 1953 when it was purchased by the Isralow family.

Built in 1898, the Queen Anne style house is significant as one of the early homes in the Otterbourne subdivision. Otterbourne is a reference to the medieval *Ballad of Chevy Chase*, the same ballad for which Chevy Chase was named.

## CCHS Welcomes Assistant Archivist



**Caroline Hayden**

Caroline Hayden, a Connecticut native who received her MLIS in Archives Management and Digital Curation from the University of Maryland in 2016, has joined CCHS' professional staff. As Assistant Archivist, she will work with Director Mary Ferranti to assist researchers and manage CCHS collections. She also will develop digital curation projects for the Archive's collections and assist with the Historical Society's community programming.

Learning about local history has been an interest of Caroline's since her undergraduate years at Eastern Connecticut State University. She has worked in the University of Maryland's

Digital Conversion and Media Reformatting department; the OLIN landscape architecture firm in Philadelphia; and National Public Radio's Research, Archives, and Data Strategy department.

Caroline says she is excited about using her experience to delve into Chevy Chase's history and preserve the materials that make this early suburb unique. "Everyone here is so involved with the community," she says, "and the support for preserving and promoting local history is encouraging." Caroline spends her free time reading voraciously, running, and enjoying musical concerts.

## The Spy Among Us in Chevy Chase, DC

In 1915, President Woodrow Wilson remained committed to U.S. neutrality, despite the sympathy many Americans felt for Britain and Belgium as a result of the German invasion and public outrage over the torpedoing of the Lusitania by a German U-boat.

Wilson ran for re-election in 1916 on the slogan, "He kept us out of war," a position he reversed the following year by asking the United States Congress to declare war against Germany and Austria. In so doing, America joined Britain and France as an ally.

What Americans did not learn until long after the war ended is that in 1915 Germany had embarked on a secret scheme to infect thousands of U.S. horses and mules with two deadly bacteria – anthrax and glanders. The animals were purchased by the British government in the U.S. for military use in Europe. This covert mission—developing and growing biological weapons—took place in a laboratory established in the basement of a newly built home on 33rd Street in Chevy Chase, DC. This home was chosen as the site for the biological warfare development because of its easy access to the important transportation route afforded by Connecticut Avenue and the trolley line. Who imagined that access to the extolled trolley lines would be considered an important factor in such a nefarious plot against the United States and its allies?

Anton Dilger, the man who conceived this ghastly scheme, was a University of Heidelberg trained surgeon who rented the house in Chevy Chase with funds provided by the highest levels of the German government, the German General Staff. This organization was responsible for the continuous study of all aspects of war and for drawing up and reviewing plans for mobilization or campaigns used by the Prussian Army in the 1870's and later the German Army.

As described by author Robert L. Koenig in his book, *The Fourth Horseman*, Dilger's father Hubert Dilger emigrated to the United States from Germany where he had been in the army of the

Grand Duke of Baden. Once in the United States, Dilger senior volunteered his services to the Union as a Union horse artillery captain during the Civil War and received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his service in that capacity. At the end of the Civil War he purchased a farm in the Shenandoah Valley farm near Front Royal, Virginia. Anton Dilger spent his



**Anton Dilger**

early years growing up on this farm until Hubert's wife convinced him that 10-year old Anton, their fifth son, should be sent to live in Germany with his aunt and receive a German education and ultimately, a medical degree.



**Manual of Voluntary Aid**

Even though Anton Dilger later returned to the U.S. to attend courses at the Johns Hopkins Medical School in Baltimore and spend several weeks as a visitor at a Boston hospital affiliated with Harvard Medical School, his decision to continue his medical education and laboratory research in Germany before the outbreak of World War I confirms that his first loyalty was to Imperial Germany.

In 1915, when the U.S. was still neutral, Dilger sailed to New York from Europe. Dilger could easily claim U.S. citizenship and a passport by reason of his birth in Virginia. To his fellow passengers on the Dutch liner Noordam, he was a "slim man, slightly over six feet tall, with intense green eyes, black hair and decidedly continental manners," writes Koenig. "At age 31, [he] had an air of sophistication, even mystery – a charming fellow who might catch the eye of an opera singer or an heiress on a transatlantic voyage. He spoke English with a slight German accent but insisted to Americans that he was a proud Virginian."

As he crossed onto U.S. soil, Dilger's appearance and passport gave U.S. customs officers no reason to suspect that inside his



**Connecticut Avenue School for Women**

(continues on pg. 4) 



**The Woman's Land Army of America**

leather hand case were glass vials containing the deadly anthrax and glanders bacteria. Once cleared by customs to move freely in the United States, Dilger caught the first train to Washington, where he was met by his sister, Jo. She lived with her husband in the capital's Mt. Pleasant neighborhood. At dinner with them that evening, Dilger explained his need for a place that was secluded; a place where he could "hang his shingle" as a physician and also set up a small laboratory for

his medical experiments. He found the solution in a new two-bedroom rental house only a few block south of Chevy Chase Circle on 33rd Street in Chevy Chase, DC.

Dilger persuaded his unmarried sister Emmaline to move from the family farm in Virginia and keep house for him. He also invited his brother Carl to join them in Chevy Chase and work as his lab assistant. Carl was formerly an employee of the Heurich Brewing Company in Washington and the co-owner of a Montana brewery. It was believed that his experience with yeast cultures would help to grow the anthrax and glanders cultures. Lacking a U.S. medical license, Dilger never did "hang his shingle" in Chevy Chase, DC, though he assured his sister that his basement laboratory on 33rd Street was essential to his "medical research".

Dilger's lack of a medical license, however, did not prevent the development of biological warfare agents as planned. The opportunity to find a practical application of the research arose when a German passenger and cargo ship was stranded and took refuge in nearby Baltimore Harbor. As a result of being stranded, Frederick Hinsch, master of a Norddeutsche passenger and cargo ship, found himself with time on his hands. He was free to head the German sabotage mission to infect shipments of war materials—horses and mules—destined for Britain or France. His target would be the horses and mules British contractors were loading aboard ships in Baltimore. A visit to Chevy Chase would provide the fuel for this project.

After his visit to the basement lab on 33rd Street, Hinsch handed Dilger several thousand dollars to cover the house rent, purchase of supplies and the salaries of Dilger and his brother Carl (who later claimed to have no knowledge of the operation). Hinsch loaded shoeboxes containing test tubes of anthrax and glanders bacteria into his Model T Ford and drove to Baltimore, where the boxes ended up in the attic of Hansa Haus, a German

business center that housed offices of German shipping lines and a German consulate. Hinsch then paid a stevedore foreman named Eddie Felton some \$200 a week to recruit dockhands to assist with the job of sabotaging freighters loading live cargo—the war materials—bound for British ports.

Dilger's initial role ended in early 1916 when he returned to Germany but his brother Carl continued to produce bacteria cultures in the 33rd Street lab for several months. Despite the brothers' efforts and intentions, the results fortunately yielded little success. During the course of the war, 457,000 horses and mules arrived safely in Britain and the vast majority of those were purchased in the U.S. Thanks to the failure of the German-sponsored mission and the effectiveness of British veterinarians, the number of contaminated animals was kept at low levels. Only 6,600 horses and mules died at sea. That figure includes the animals that perished due to other causes, namely the ships being torpedoed.

In 1917, with the U.S. embroiled in the war and government investigators assigned to find and arrest German saboteurs, Dilger quietly removed himself to Mexico City under new orders from Berlin. His next mission was to encourage a Mexican army attack on the U.S. along its southern border. To provide the artillery and other arms demanded by Mexican President Venustiano Carranza, Dilger (under the assumed name of Dr. Albert Delmar) traveled to Spain. There he hoped to acquire guns and ammunition, along with German bank or General Staff funding to pay for them.

What motivated Dilger? Before beginning his undercover mission in Mexico, he wrote a letter to one of his sisters stating, "If only I can say after this effort ends that I have done something special for Germany, it will be the crowning achievement of my life." Ultimately, Dilger was unsuccessful, and it is believed he died in a Madrid sanitarium of the Spanish influenza epidemic that swept across Europe as the war was ending in 1918.

*Story Contributed by Burt Schorr*

*2017 represents the Centennial Celebration of the U.S entry into World War I. Chevy Chase Historical Society is interested in developing a collection of WWI memorabilia and related materials. Please contact CCHS at [info@chevyCHASEhistory.org](mailto:info@chevyCHASEhistory.org) for more information.*



**WWI poster designed to generate feelings of patriotism**



**Gracious hosts Naomi and Clarke Camper with the Chevy Chase Historical Society 2017 Spring Gala House commemorative plaque.**



**Happy Keystone Gala Sponsors Chuck Muckenfuss, Angela Lancaster, Kathie Legg, Meg and Bob Stillman, and Rajib Chanda.**

## A Perfect Evening for The Society's Spring Gala

The historic home at 101 East Kirke Street was the scene of the CCHS 2017 Champagne Supper Gala on Sunday, May 7. Homeowners Naomi and Clarke Camper warmly welcomed CCHS' guests to this annual celebration of our community's history. On a lovely spring day party-goers enjoyed both the spacious interior of the house and historical detail and the elegant garden, originally designed by noted landscape architect Rose Greely.

CCHS Archive Director Mary Ferranti, Assistant Archivist Caroline Hayden, and Board Member Carolyn Greis researched and produced an informative exhibit on the history of the gala house and its occupants over the years. Board Member Jean Sperling produced a commemorative brochure for guests summarizing the house history. Gala Committee member Bill Mills captured the event in his memorable photos displayed throughout this newsletter.

In recognition of a recently developed CCHS exhibit and lecture, "Chevy Chase Reads," four raffle items were offered in handsome canvas bags embroidered with the Society's logo. They were filled with bottles of wine and favorite books donated by Board Members.

Pianist Jim Catlette proved his expertise at the piano with lively background music. His performance enticed several guests to sing along. Magnificent spring flower arrangements, mostly of fragrant peonies plucked from the garden of Board member Susan Bollendorf were beautifully arranged in elaborate vases throughout the house by Helene Sacks.

La Ferme Restaurant, represented by General Manager Guillaume de Decker and his lovely wife Miriam, offered an exquisite buffet for the party goers, prepared by the Executive Chef Scott Chambers and sous chef Oscar Carballo. Head Waiter Amilcar Feruffino was assisted by his team of Amin, Hirusha, Valerie, Nelsie, Manuel and Nelson, assuring a perfectly executed event. They kept the champagne flowing and the food platters full.

CCHS President Angela Lancaster presented the Campers with a bronze plaque commemorating the gala, as well as a bound history of their house.

CCHS is grateful to the Campers for their hospitality and to gala co-chairs Natasha Coulouris and Jill Kolakowski for orchestrating this lovely evening, and to the Sponsors and Friends of the gala for their generosity and support and all who attended this annual celebration of Chevy Chase history and the Society in its 36th year.



**2017 Gala Co-chairs Jill Kolakowski and Natasha Coulouris are ready for the festivities.**



**CCHS Director Mary Ferranti and Board member Carolyn Greis with their exhibit about 101 East Kirke Street.**



**Gala sponsors Betsy Williams, Chuck Muckenfuss, and Tom Moore pause their conversation.**



**CCHS Board members Helene Sacks and John Higgins welcome Mary and Ed Bartlett**



**The sky cleared for dining on the lawn.**



**Kristen Farman of TTR Sotheby's International Realty and her husband Tucker.**



**Board member Natasha Saifee and past Gala Co-chair Alison Mandell share a smile.**



**Sponsors Bobby Bird of Bozzuto Group and Catherine Cecere, CCHS Board member, are all smiles.**



**CCHS Board member John Higgins greets Sponsor David Jones.**



**Gala sponsors Bridget Quinn of T.W. Perry and Bob Broeksmit chat on the terrace.**



**The talented Jim Catlette plays a delightful musical repertoire.**



**Warm friendships and festive hats on display.**



**Ingrid Dallaire and Pamela Sislen under the tent.**



**Hirusha and Amilcar of La Ferme pouring champagne.**



**A perfect home for a gathering.**



**First-time Gala guests Christopher Kenny and Jessica Johnson.**



**Karen Kuchins and Eric Murtagh of Murtagh Properties enjoy the evening.**



**Melissa Brown and Kirsten Williams of TTR Sotheby's International Realty.**



**Board member Kate Sheckells sells raffle tickets to Betsy Stephens and Joan Nelson.**



**A surprised Anna Brown wins a CCHS tote bag filled with wine and books celebrating the online exhibit "Chevy Chase Reads."**



**An inviting buffet table decorated with peonies.**



CHEVY CHASE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**We are deeply grateful to the Sponsors and Friends of the Gala**

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*All history loving friends are welcome to become members of Chevy Chase Historical Society! Just reach out to us through our website at: [www.chevyCHASEhistory.org](http://www.chevyCHASEhistory.org) or call the Center at (301) 656-6141*



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## CCHS Looking for Sears, Other Kit Houses in Chevy Chase, MD

The Chevy Chase Historical Society has launched a search in Chevy Chase, Maryland for “kit houses” -- the well-built and enduring pre-cut houses offered by companies like Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward and Aladin Houses in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Results from the kit house survey will be added to the CCHS Archive and may be included in CCHS’ 2017 Fall Lecture, “The Kit Houses of Chevy Chase: The American Dream by Mail and Rail” by noted Sears scholar, Kathryn Holt Springston.

**Her illustrated talk will be on Sunday, November 5, at 4p.m. at the Lawton Community Center in the Town of Chevy Chase.**



You could be living in a prized kit house and not know it. Having the original house plans or taking precise measurements are the best ways to confirm you have a kit house. If your house was built between 1906-1941, and if it looks like other houses you have seen in the neighborhood or elsewhere, it might be a kit house.

If you think you might have a kit house and are willing to be contacted by the Chevy Chase Historical Society or kit house expert Kathryn Holt Springston, email a photo of the house with your name, street address and phone number to [kithouses@chevyCHASEhistory.org](mailto:kithouses@chevyCHASEhistory.org) or snail-mail it with the same information to Kit House Survey, Chevy Chase Historical Society, 8005 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815 by June 30. If you prefer that CCHS come out and take a photo of your house, that can be arranged. For further information on the kit house survey and photos of a few of the different 440 Sears kit house styles, visit [www.chevyCHASEhistory.org](http://www.chevyCHASEhistory.org)

**Not all kit houses were bungalows. Sears and its competitors offered styles ranging from this popular center-hall Colonial to Dutch Colonial, Craftsman Cottage and Mission. Scholar Kathryn Holt Springston studies house photos to identify houses worth measuring to confirm their kit house authenticity.**