



Montgomery Modern: The Spirit of Post-War Architecture Spring Program on March 18

Chevy Chase is known for the wide variety of architectural styles reflected in its homes. The CCHS 2017 Fall Lecture explored the rich history of “kit houses” in our community. We will continue to explore local architecture at our 2018 Spring Lecture with an illustrated lecture on “Montgomery Modern: The Spirit of Post-War Architecture.” The program, presented by architectural historian and author Clare Lise Kelly, is at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 18, at the Chevy Chase Village Hall, 5906 Connecticut Ave. The lecture is free and open to the public.



Clare Lise Kelly will speak on mid-century modern architecture

Following World War II, Montgomery County experienced a great post-war building boom, benefiting from access to federal jobs and an alluring natural landscape. A bold, forward-looking architectural design transformed the county. Award-winning projects ranged from organic custom residences in rugged stream valleys to glass-walled tract houses on wooded sites, from jewel-box offices in new commercial districts to gleaming corporate campus headquarters and exuberant roadside businesses. Kelly will discuss how such modern design in our county’s built environment is a testimony of the optimistic spirit of the mid-20th century.

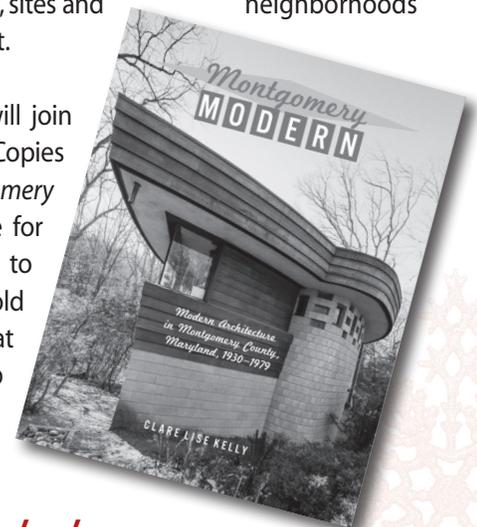
Kelly has been researching and writing about the architecture of Montgomery County for over 20 years, and has been instrumental in the protection of scores of historic resources through historic designation locally and on the National Register. From 1990 to 2017, she was a preservation planner and architectural historian with the Montgomery County Planning Department, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

In 2013, Kelly established the MNCPPC “Montgomery Modern” initiative to raise awareness and appreciation of mid-century modern architecture in the county. The initiative aimed to explore, analyze and record local mid-century modern buildings and communities. Montgomery Modern celebrates the buildings, technology, and materials of the Atomic Age, from the late 1940s through the 1960s. The historic value of these mid-century buildings has, until recently, been largely overlooked. Now, a half century later, we have the perspective to appreciate their historical, cultural, and architectural significance.

Kelly chronicles local mid-century architecture in her most recent book, *Montgomery Modern: Modern Architecture in Montgomery County, Maryland, 1930-1979*, published by the Montgomery County Planning Department in 2015. Her other books include the award-winning *Places from the Past; the Tradition of Gardez Bien in Montgomery County, Maryland*, a reference guide to the county’s architecture and historic communities, published in 2001.

Kelly has won an assortment of awards for her work, and is a frequent lecturer on modern architecture. She is a founding board member of the DC chapter of Docomomo, an international organization dedicated to the documentation and conservation of buildings, sites and neighborhoods of the modern movement.

After the lecture, Kelly will join attendees at a reception. Copies of her book, *Montgomery Modern*, will be available for sale and signing. Prior to the lecture, CCHS will hold a brief annual meeting at which the membership will elect officers and directors at-large.





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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.

Grand Opening Celebration!

A good time was had by all at the Grand Opening reception celebrating the new CCHS Archive and Research Center on February 21.

A highlight was the dedication of the Eleanor Johnston Ford Reading Room.

(Read all about it on page 6)



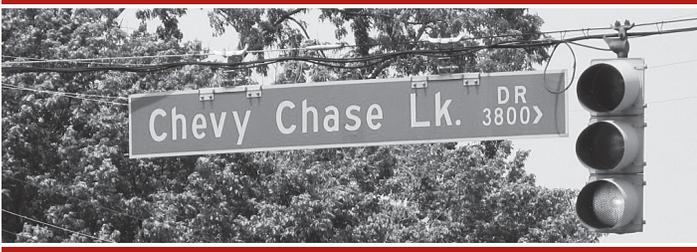
Did you know

CCHS members get priority mailing of invitations to our Spring Gala. See page 8, or chevychasehistory.org, to join now!

Lake? What Lake?

The History – and the Mystery – of Chevy Chase Lake

History-Go-Round Tour on April 14



You've driven by the sign above Connecticut Avenue south of Jones Bridge Road countless times...and wondered what it meant. You've heard rumors that there was once a lake in Chevy Chase...and wondered whether it was true? Well, it is true, and in December, CCHS moved its headquarters to the historic Chevy Chase Lake area (see page 6). Come visit our new home, and learn about the history—and the mystery—of Chevy Chase Lake, at a History-Go-Round tour on Saturday, April 14, led by Gail Sansbury, former Director of the CCHS Archive and Research Center.

In 1892, Coquelin Run, the small tributary that flows to Rock Creek, was dammed to create a lake to generate electricity for the trolley line on Connecticut Avenue that carried residents of the new suburb to their jobs in downtown Washington. The lake was east of Connecticut, just south of Chevy Chase Lake Drive. A trolley turnaround, car barn, and electric generating plant were located adjacent to the lake. With the eventual demise of the trolley, the dam was removed and the lake was drained.

But the lake was much more than a trolley hub. For on its banks was the Chevy Chase Lake Amusement Park, owned by the Chevy Chase Land Company from 1894 to 1936. The park was intended to draw prospective land and home buyers to the company's new suburban development. With picnic areas, boating, a bandstand, dancing pavilions, a merry-go-round, and other amusements, it was open from late spring through early fall. During winters, skaters glided over the lake's frozen surface. Like nearby Glen Echo Park, this amusement park was restricted—only white patrons were allowed.

Participants will explore all this and more with Sansbury, who is known to many residents for her expertise on Chevy Chase history and is a frequent speaker on the topic. Sansbury 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 1:00 and conclude by approximately 2:30. Participants will gather in CCHS' new office at 8401 Connecticut Ave., Suite 1010, where Sansbury will present an illustrated introduction to the history of the lake and surrounding area. She will then lead the group on a walking tour, pointing out the contours in the land where the lake once stood, and passing other points of reference. Along the walk, historic photos of the lake and environs from the CCHS archive will be shared to illustrate the "then and now" of these locations. After the walking tour, the group will return to the 8401 building for refreshments and continued discussion as desired.



Boating on Chevy Chase Lake was a popular pastime.

The price for the tour and refreshments is \$15 for adults and \$5 for children. Space is limited and reservations must be paid for by check in advance. Directions to the meeting point will be provided to all registrants. To make a reservation or for further information, please email Mary Sheehan at msheehan246@aol.com.

CCHS Thanks the Business Sponsors of Its 2017 Spring Gala

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Morgan Oliphant's 1907 Diary: A 17

Late last year, CCHS was contacted by the Local History Librarian at the Harrison Memorial Library in Chevy Chase, D.C. The diary, written in 1907, was written by a 17-year-old resident of Chevy Chase. She kindly offered it to CCHS,

By Bob A

On Christmas 1906, Thomas Gibbes Morgan Oliphant unwrapped a new leather-bound diary in which he would record what life was like in 1907 for a teenager in a place called Chevy Chase.

"Morgan" lived with his family at 19 Grafton Street, just west of Chevy Chase Circle, about half way between Connecticut and Wisconsin Avenues. His parents, Hugh and "Blossom" Oliphant, were extremely active in the community, Hugh being a champion golfer at the Chevy Chase Club and Blossom busy with teas and receptions among her friends. In addition, Morgan's parents traveled frequently – Hugh was often in New Jersey where the family business was located and Blossom often traveled abroad, leaving Morgan to fill his time as he wanted.

In 1907, with less than 40 houses in all of Chevy Chase, a 17 year-old boy had to entertain himself. There were no malls, no televisions, no cell phones, none of the conveniences youth have today. But with friends such as Myron, Jack, Bradley, and Fatty to hang out with, Morgan was anything but bored.

He began his diary on January 1, during the Christmas break in his junior year in high school. Two days later he wrote that "Bradley, Jack and I walked over to a cave by Glen Echo. Took us all day. Jack shot a rabbit." In those days, boys like Morgan

were able to roam the surrounding countryside -- and they had access to guns. The diary entries also reveal that Myron had a rifle, and Morgan himself had access to a pistol.

Many of his diary entries begin with "Went to school," followed with details about his after school activities or where he had dinner. But on January 18, 1907, he wrote the following entry: "Went to school. Snowballed niggers in the afternoon. Myron, Hen, Cubbie and I were on golf links coasting in the evening." This short entry reminds today's reader that children learn about what is "normal" behavior from their family and friends. In the early twentieth century, when Jim Crow reigned, such behavior may have been acceptable for white boys like Morgan.

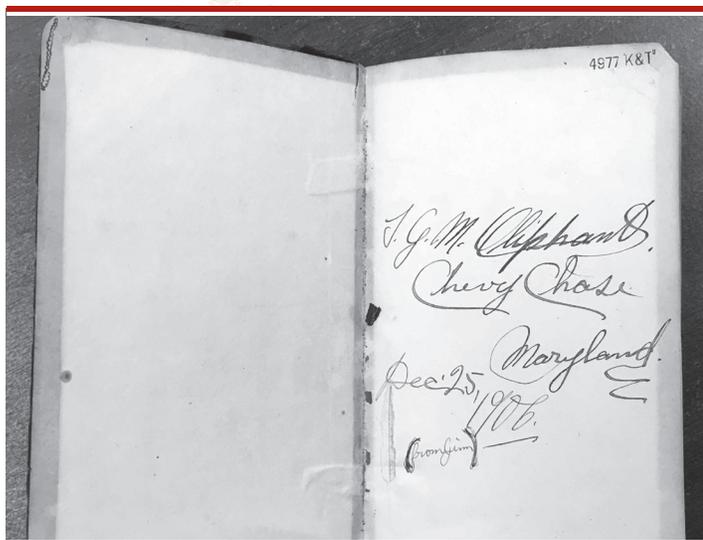
In February, Morgan and Myron began building a shack somewhere in the neighboring woods, a project that would take them into the spring. They filled the rest of their free time either ice skating on nearby ponds or sledding on the gentle slopes of the Chevy Chase Golf Club which lay between his house and his grandparents. In late January, he wrote "Went to school. Went skating with Jack at Bunker Pond. Fell in over my waist." Bunker Pond may have been next to a "bunker," i.e., a sand trap on the golf course.

As the weather warmed in March, Morgan and his friends traveled as far as Chain Bridge to fish for perch and catfish, an activity pretty much confined to the weekends. The weekend of March 24, however, would be anything but carefree: Morgan was called upon to help extinguish a fire in his grandfather's wood shed and carpenter shop at Langdrum.

Langdrum was the country estate of his maternal grandparents, Richard and Lavinia Hunt. Richard Hunt was a distinguished Army man who had served as Adjutant-General under President Grover Cleveland. After retirement, he bought the land in what is now known as Drummond along Wisconsin Avenue, south of Bradley Lane, and built a 20-room mansion he called Langdrum, combining the



Blossom Oliphant, mother



Inside cover of Morgan Oliphant's diary

Year-Olds' Days in Early Chevy Chase

Armel-By-The-Sea, California. Among the unidentified items in her collection, she had found a diary from [redacted] and soon thereafter we received the worn, red leather volume. Here is the story it told.

Andrews



Diary of the diarist, Morgan

names of his mother, Agnes Lang, and father, Simon Drum. Morgan often ate meals at Langdrum on the weekends and lived there when his parents were traveling.

One of Morgan's favorite activities was spending the evening making fudge or having dinner at the home of 15-year-old Ruth and 13-year-old Grace Horney, the daughters of Major Odus Horney. Ruth and Grace were special to Morgan and he was a favorite of the Horneys. In April, he wrote "At Horneys to supper, then to a dance given at Library by them." The Library, now the Chevy Chase Village Hall, was frequently used for dances. The following Sunday, he went to the girls' baptism and confirmation. He and Ruth often took walks together. But at the end of April, the Major was transferred to New Jersey, taking the whole family with him.

At the end of April, when his mother rented out the house so she could travel for six months, Morgan noted in his diary: "Commenced living at Langdrum tonight" – this even though his father was still in town.

At the end of the school year in May, Morgan took the train to summer camp not far from Front Royal, Virginia, where he spent most of June and July swimming, fishing, and occasionally playing poker – as well as drinking beer.

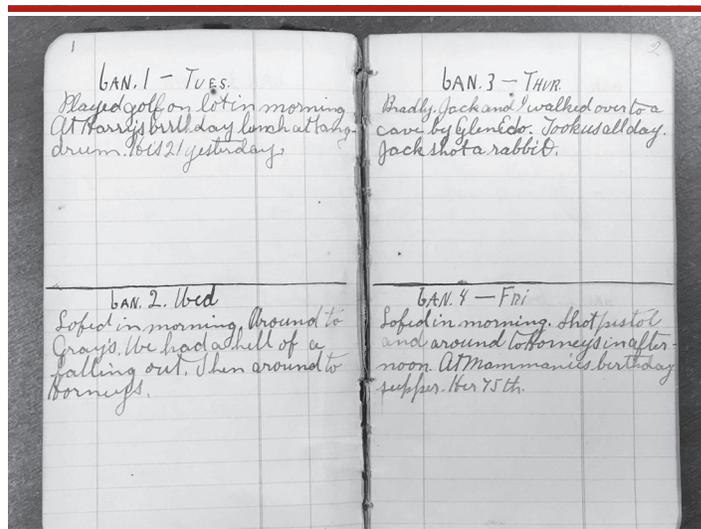
In August, he returned to Chevy Chase with the plan to begin a job at "Harry's office." Instead, he and his friend Fatty took a train to New York. He was met in Jersey City by Major Horney and his daughter Ruth. He stayed with them nearly all of August at the Picatinny Arsenal where the Major was stationed. It was a memorable time for Morgan – to be with what amounted to his surrogate family, especially Ruth and her sister Grace.

Back in Chevy Chase in time for one last adventure before starting his senior year, he and a couple of buddies set out on a hiking trip that took them as far north as Sugarloaf Mountain and back.

In early September, his entries were simply limited to the word "school." As activities began to pick up, he described a taffy pull at a friend's house, overnights with Myron at the shack, an occasional sporting event, a movie downtown, etc. On Saturday, November 2, he wrote: "Hunted all afternoon in pouring rain. Got a couple of shots but didn't get anything. Came back & had lunch at shack. Slept most of afternoon."

On December 19, he had his 18th birthday supper with friends and went to a dance at the Chevy Chase Library. The last entry in his diary, dated December 31, read "Dressed for dance at Inn but nothing doing." In 1903, the Chevy Chase Inn, a failing small hotel, was purchased and converted into the Chevy Chase College and Seminary for girls. In 1907, the school hosted social events, but it was still referred to as "the Inn." It is now the site of the National 4-H Center on Connecticut Avenue.

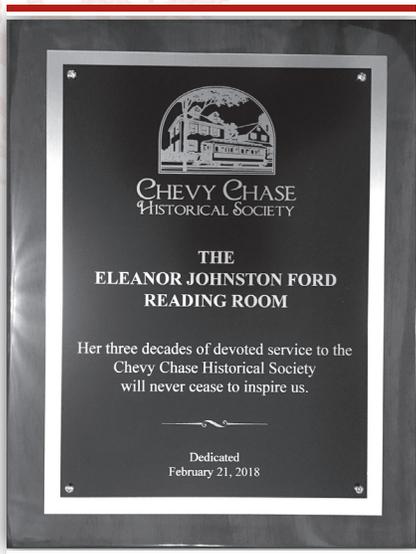
After finishing high school in the spring of 1908, Morgan enlisted in the army. Four years later, he married Ruth Horney and had two boys. They separated in 1926. After a second marriage and a distinguished military career spanning 41 years, he died in Bradenton, Florida, in 1965 at the age of 76. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.



January 1907 diary entries by Morgan Oliphant

We've Moved!

Archive and Research Center is in its New Home



Reading Room dedication to Eleanor Johnston Ford

After fifteen years in the Chevy Chase Library, the CCHS Archive and Research Center has completed its move to new space in historic Chevy Chase Lake. We now are located at 8401 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1010, in office space built-out to CCHS' specifications.

Our new headquarters doubles our former space, allowing for the creation of a separate, secure Archive Room,

with humidity and temperature controls. The Archive Room will hold our collection of historic papers, photos, maps, plans, photos, atlases, drawings, oral histories, house histories and artifacts, dating from the beginning of Chevy Chase in the 1890s. These precious documents are secured in archival quality folders and boxes and stored on a sliding file system, allowing easy access to them. We also have extensive research files on various topics of historical interest to assist researchers in exploring life in Chevy Chase over the past 125 years.

The new Center also contains a Reading Room dedicated to the memory of Eleanor Johnston Ford, a CCHS board member for some thirty years, a true student of Chevy Chase history, a serious historian, meticulous researcher, and a dear friend. Among countless other contributions to CCHS, she established and expanded our photo collection, which now comprises over 15,000 photos. The Eleanor Johnston Ford Reading Room was dedicated on February 21, 2018, at a reception for donors to the *Investing in History* capital campaign. This welcoming, light-filled space provides residents, researchers, and students with a comfortable space to review books from the CCHS library and historic materials from the collection. Patrons will be assisted with their research by the Director of the Archive and Research Center.

The new Center also houses the CCHS library, non-archival storage, desks, and other work space for CCHS staff and volunteers.

The build-out of the new space and the move were made possible by the success of *Investing in History*, a capital campaign launched by CCHS in 2017. We are proud to report that we not only reached, but exceeded, the campaign goal of \$200,000. We are grateful beyond measure to the donors to the campaign, who are named on the next page. We are particularly indebted to Eleanor Ford's relatives, Jim and Bran Johnston and Katharine Farr, as well as Angela Lancaster and Chuck Muckenfuss, for their leadership gifts that made the reading room a lasting tribute to Eleanor. We are also grateful for the support of the four Chevy Chase municipalities who contributed to the campaign, and the one hundred percent participation of the CCHS Board of Directors.

CCHS had many partners in accomplishing the move. We are most grateful to the Chevy Chase Land Company, especially Kate Carr and Tom Regnell for providing the space at a reduced rent, and Nobert Akas and Joshua Smith for helping us complete the construction. We are grateful to construction contractor Webb Property Services, especially Wil Long. And we thank Benton Design, Self-

Storage Zone, Bob Rudolph, Willie Axt, Metropolitan Movers and Storage, and Moving Masters for all their help along the way.

Please visit us at the new Archive and Research Center, and get to know our new home!



INVESTING IN HISTORY

CCHS is deeply grateful to the donors to the Investing in History capital campaign. All donors as of February 21 are named below. The new Archive and Research Center, a resource for the entire community, was made possible by their generosity.

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2018 Membership Reminder:

If you have not joined CCHS for 2018, 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 and are able to collect and preserve historical documents, photographs, and maps, and to take oral histories and house histories. We share the story of our local history through twice-yearly, public lectures on topics of historical interest, and through online exhibits on our website, chevychasehistory.org. You also help us publish this Newsletter. Can we count on you to help and continue your support?

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