



Chevy Chase Historical Society

Newsletter

Spring 2006

CCHS Presents 25th Anniversary Spring Program

The Pre-History of Chevy Chase: North and South, War and Peace, Rural and Suburban

Eminent local historian and educator William Offutt, the author of *Bethesda—A Social History*, will be the speaker at the Chevy Chase Historical Society's 25th Anniversary Spring Program. The program will include Mr. Offutt's lecture and the society's annual meeting, and will take place on May 16, 7:30 p.m., at the Chevy Chase Village Hall, 5906 Connecticut Avenue.

Mr. Offutt will enlighten the audience about the Chevy Chase area before it was known as such. His lecture will include descriptions of the original settlers, the farms, the agricultural economy, and major events such as the War of 1812 and the Civil War. He also will review how the advent of railroads and trolleys set the stage for the development of Chevy Chase as one of the first planned suburbs in the United States.

CCHS often has relied on Mr. Offutt's research and writings in pursuing the society's mission of education regarding the history of Chevy Chase. Mr. Offutt will be acting as an expert historian for the documentary film on the history of Chevy Chase that the society currently is producing (*see inside*, page 2).

Mr. Offutt's family has resided in the area since the 1700s. He has taught in the Montgomery County Public Schools and at Montgomery Community College. He also has written extensively for newspapers, magazines, and journals. In addition, he has assisted both the Montgomery County Historical Society and CCHS with his writings on a variety of topics (*see, for example*, "A Valuable Piece of Land, Part II," on page 3 inside.)

Maps of the area and photographs of some of the houses that preceded the Chevy Chase Land Company's development of Chevy Chase will accompany Mr. Offutt's lecture. These are from the collections of the society's Archives and Research

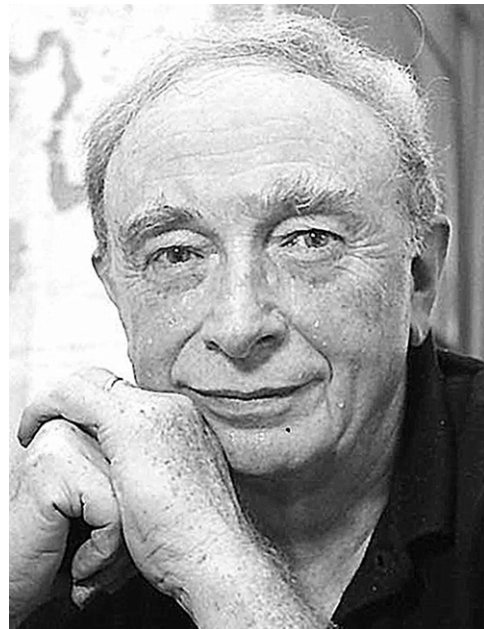


photo courtesy of Gazette Newspapers

Bill Offutt

Center at the Chevy Chase Community Library, 8005 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland, which is open on Tuesdays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and by appointment.

The public is invited to the program, which will begin at 8:00 p.m. A short annual business meeting will precede the program. During the meeting, CCHS will elect three society officials for the next two year term. The candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee are: Marilyn Montgomery for Vice President, and Julie Thomas and Sarah Fry for Directors-at-Large.

Light refreshments will be served. Please call Susan Elwell at (301) 657-1874 with any questions.

**Chevy Chase Historical Society
Newsletter**



Chevy Chase Historical Society
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Open 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. on
Tuesdays and by appointment.

The Chevy Chase Historical Society is a nonprofit organization founded in 1981 to discover, record, and preserve the history of the Maryland and Washington neighborhoods known as Chevy Chase.

Recent Acquisitions

“Recent Acquisitions” is a regular feature in the newsletter, describing documents and other items that are acquired for the society’s Archives and Research Center.

Donations

1. Information about the First Church of Christ Scientist. Donated by Frances Stickles.
2. A copy of the newsletter of Section Five of the Village of Chevy Chase, dated January 1962, and regulations for Section Five circa 1923. Donated by Betty Imrie.
3. Papers relating to the North Chevy Chase Post Office. Donated by Joe Valachovic.
4. A six panel exhibit about Fred Winkler and the Winkler nursery. Donated by the National Audubon Society.
5. Two photographs of Chevy Chase houses from the 1929 National Lumber Manufacturers’ Association publication, “For Homeowners.” Donated by Ramon Santiago de Oropesa.
6. World War II memorabilia concerning Frank Joseph McGuigan. Donated by his daughter, April McGuigan.

Staff Acquisitions

1. “In the Woods,” an article from *Country Life in America*, 1914.
2. “Experimental Roads,” an article from *Country Gentleman*, 1913, which concerns the paving of Connecticut Avenue.
3. Plat of a portion of Chevy Chase surveyed in November 1856.
4. 1960 and 1973 Polk City Directories.

Newly Completed Oral Histories:

Donald Robertson
Gavin Farr



**THAT HELICOPTER HUMMING OVERHEAD
MAY BE OUR CAMERA CREW!**

If you notice a slow-flying helicopter circling over Chevy Chase in early May, it’s likely the camera crew shooting the springtime beauty of our community for CCHS’ new video program on the history of Chevy Chase. VideoArt Productions of Washington, DC, creator of award winning documentaries for Winterthur, the Renwick Museum, the Corcoran Museum, and other prestigious institutions, will produce the program.

This special program will premiere at “Chevy Chasing” History—A Heritage Fair, the society’s family event celebrating our community’s heritage, on Saturday, October 7, at the Leland Community Recreation Center (see announcement p. 7.) Mark your calendar now, and we’ll have your popcorn ready!

A Valuable Piece of Land Part II (1950-2000)

By Bill Offutt and Julie Thomas

Begun in the late nineteenth century to improve the lives of young people in rural areas, the 4-H program became a worldwide movement after World War II. Schools were always involved, as was the U. S. Department of Agriculture, with its Cooperative Extension Division in Washington, D.C. providing professional support and encouragement right from the beginning. By 1915 there were active clubs in almost every state. After the war both the Extension Division and the national 4-H leadership in Chicago recognized the need to raise funds to support popular 4-H programs such as foreign exchange visits and to meet the desire for a campground in the nation's capital. Annual conferences had been held in D.C. since 1927, often on the Mall and using local hotels.

After the creation of the national 4-H Foundation in 1948 and some reorganization, the search for a capital area site began. In 1950 the Chevy Chase Junior College's 12.5 acre campus at 6410 Connecticut Avenue moved to the top of the list because of its existing dormitory and kitchen facilities. Two problems arose: the U. S. Department of the Army wanted the property and was ready to take it through eminent domain, and the price of more than \$350,000 was higher than had been anticipated. A \$200,000 first mortgage was obtained from an insurance company, and Riggs Bank loaned the foundation \$40,000 after a few phone calls to bankers in rural areas. Meanwhile Extension Division Director M. L. Wilson negotiated an agreement with the Army under which 4-H would buy the valuable property, buildings and furnishings and immediately rent the facility to Uncle Sam. The \$43,000 a year lease agreement covered most of the mortgage payment.¹

A ceremony dedicating the 4-H Center took place on the steps of the old school on February 14, 1951, with Undersecretary of Agriculture Clarence J. McCormick giving the principal address. When Edward W. Aiton, the first Executive Director of the foundation and its fundraising campaign, moved back to USDA, Norman C. Mindrum, a 4-H leader from Minnesota, replaced him. To get some distance from the Extension Division, Mindrum moved the foundation's staff to offices on Fenton Street in Silver Spring and found a home for himself in the same area. His stated task was to make the foundation and its center "a major force in training and research for youth development needs."²

Meanwhile the U.S. Department of Defense began conducting its Office of Research Operations, which amounted to a "think tank," in the old girls' school. Operated under an Army contract by Johns Hopkins University, ORO was originally based at Fort Leslie J. McNair, the long-time home of the Army War College. Ellis A. Johnson, who had done similar work for both the U.S. Department of the Navy and the U.S. Office of Atomic Energy, was chosen as ORO's Director, and Brigadier General (Retired) Lester D. Flory as its Executive Director. In June 1951 ORO announced its move to its new, larger quarters on the former campus at 6410 Connecticut Avenue.³

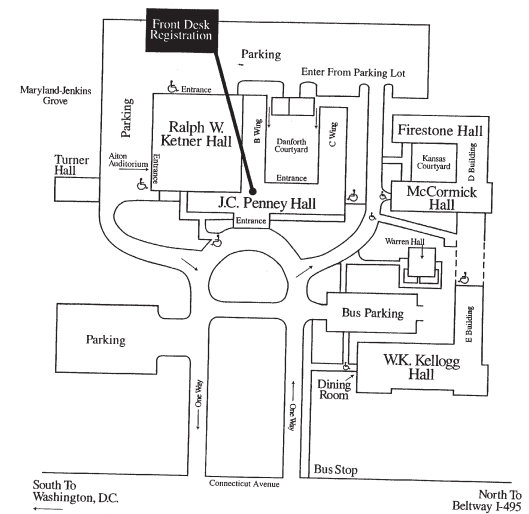
ORO produced a cascade of studies and reports for the Army during its years in Chevy Chase. Most of them were either Cold War related, and had to do with the Korean conflict or the use of atomic, chemical or biological weapons. ORO's mission, according to declassified documents preserved at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, was to provide "rigorous, unprejudiced and independent analysis and evaluation of present and future tactics, logistics, weapons and weapon systems." Originally almost all the reports were classified as top secret, secret or restricted, and some still are.

Usually the staff of ORO provided quarterly reports on the progress of all its projects (these often numbered more than a hundred), and then a final report when each project had been completed. These printed reports varied in length from a dozen pages to several hundred. One of the largest early papers was on the Tripartite Conference among the U.S., Britain, and the U.S.S.R., which was held in London in 1950. Other report subjects included light combat vehicles (project ARMOR), uses of atomic weapons (project ATTACK), defenses against air attack (project ANALAA), the NIKE system, Soviet radio broadcasts (project POWOW) and protecting troops against burns and gas (project ALCLAD). Early on, concluded one report, "ORO used Korea as a theoretical proving ground." Based on the Korean conflict, for example, ORO observed that Negro troops performed better in integrated companies than in all black units. General S. L. A. Marshall, a controversial military historian, wrote an ORO report on Chinese infantry tactics, and ORO contracted with other experts from time to time.

CAMPUS MAP

LOCATION

The National 4-H Center
7100 Connecticut Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815



In the early 1950s ORO was using, among many other programs, the mathematical war game called "Tin Soldier" which had been created by ORO consultant George Gamow of The George Washington University. Using UNIVAC, ORO and Hopkins then developed CAR-MONETTE, the original digital computer game, at first for tank/anti-tank simulations in which the actions of individual soldiers could be simulated.



Past President Angela Lancaster and Caroline Fawcett share a laugh



Our Newsletter Editor, Wendy Adams on the job



CCHS President Mary Sheehan welcomes guests, thanks our gracious hosts, and tips her hat to our many hardworking volunteers. Listening carefully at lower left is Richard Moe



Gala Co-Chairs Marilyn Montgomery and Fran Schorr appear happy with their efforts



Our inimitable hostess, Tricia Saul



The groaning board: an epicurian fantasy



Dining out in the gala



Hidden in the back corner, pianist Kathleen Meredith plays the house with music.

Here's to Our Society Marks Its First With Celebration

The lovely home of Mr. and Mrs. B. Francis Saul II welcomed guests on April 30, as CCHS celebrated its 25th anniversary. The house at One Quincy Street, honored the society's 25th anniversary. Lilted music welcomed guests to the foyer, as set tables and spacious porches for cocktails and a buffet supper were the setting.

A computerized slide show of past galas, created by the society during the evening. An exhibition of pictures and a display by Susan Elwell, also was displayed.

CCHS President Mary Sheehan thanked the Sauls for their home, a color rendering of their home and with a plaque. Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, praised the society's contribution to historical research and preservation. Gala Co-Chairs Fran Schorr and Marilyn Montgomery thanked their continued support.

What a perfect celebration of the society's 25th anniversary!

our History!

st Quarter Century atory Gala

was filled with well-wishers on Sunday evening,
y. The society's 2006 gala at Dudlea, the Sauls'
y in one of the area's most historic residences.
everal hundred spread throughout the house
pper. The park-like grounds provided a perfect

l by Nancy and John Elliott, ran continuously
d text regarding Dudlea's history, prepared by

ls for their hospitality, presenting them with
que commemorating the gala. Special guest
for Historic Preservation, remarked on the
education. Ms. Sheehan also thanked Gala
for their superlative work, and the guests for

anniversary!



That Pepsodent look: cochair Marilyn Montgomery and Pres. Mary Sheehan



Towering over his friends is John Barron: Madeline Will, Jay and Peggy Treadwell, and Donna Barron



On the front porch: Maryanne and Norman Scharpf converse with Bill Senhauser



Thomas and Kristina Schendt



garden in the cool sunshine



Hosts Francis and Tricia Saul share the stairs and the buffet with Alan and Susie Lukens



(be-
oulder)
fills



Looking out to the garden

Champagne and conversation shared by Betty Edelson and Peter Kilborn



A classy couple in a classy setting: Harriette and Charles Hobbs

Chevy Chaser Walter "Ed" Cushen, now of the National Defense University, came to ORO in 1952 after earning his doctorate from the University of Edinburgh and working on the Aberdeen Proving Ground's computers. He became a project leader specializing in atomic weapon tactics and gaming theory. Cushen remembers ORO as an enjoyable place to work in a very collegial atmosphere with guest speakers and weekly seminars as part of the routine. Field work was expected and even Ellis Johnson spent time in Korea, studying the failure of American tanks, while Cushen was attached to U.S. Army Intelligence, Division Two, at Heidelberg for a few months planning responses to possible Red Army assaults.

As for security, Cushen states that, "ORO was, in my opinion, very security-conscious for those days. New employees were quarantined until they got a CONFIDENTIAL clearance, and weren't really part of the system until they were cleared into TOP SECRET and other special category accesses. We went through semi-annual polygraph exams. Our guard force and security personnel were first rate. For all practical purposes, we didn't discuss our work outside of the office or military installations. . . . My wife knew roughly what I did, but we didn't discuss the work at home."⁵

In the mid-1950s ORO was preparing papers on why men left the Army, on nuclear defense, on body armor and helmet design, on Soviet armed forces and on combat communications, and it had created a Home Defense Division as well as sections dealing with tactics, logistics, strategy and intelligence. The organization was growing. The Hopkins people also provided Congress with advice on crafting the Atomic Energy Act of 1953, and in the summer of 1956 operated a training program for young students, mostly from Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, and paid them \$200 a month. "Pretty good money at that time," as one participant recalls. *The Evening Star* headlined the students' report "Boy Scientists Describe Nuclear Attack Horror." The report concluded that the Office of Civil Defense's evacuation programs were worse than senseless.⁶ The next year another group of students met to study the effects of shelter confinement.

One of the members of the original 1956 student group, John Donaldson, now an administrator at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, took part in three more ORO summer programs while he was at Oberlin, and then joined the organization full time in 1960. He was with ORO until Hopkins and the Army parted company over Dr. Johnson's leadership.⁷ One of Donaldson's B-CC classmates, Barbara Oakes, née Caldwell, went to work for ORO right out of high school and stayed with the organization until 1961 as part of the library staff. She recalls that security, both in Chevy Chase and later in Bethesda, was "very tight" with armed guards on the doors and the windows wired. Some parts of the building were "off limits" and there was a "classified" section of the library as well as a technical and maps division.⁸

After getting its lease extended to December 31, 1957 and renting space in both Chevy Chase and Bethesda, ORO left the old girls' school for a new main office at 6539 Arlington Road, Bethesda. It also had plans to build out on Shady Grove Road.⁹

When 4-H reclaimed the property, it found some furnishings missing, many in disrepair and much of the classroom and dorm furniture stored in the attic or basement. No real inventory had ever been taken, but Grant A. Shrum of Missouri, a 4-H leader from 1953 until

his retirement in 1989 as President and Chief Executive Officer, recalls that there were seven pianos including a baby grand that were salvaged and that many 4-H college students in the area were given oak chests, desks and bookcases from the deep and varied collection. He says that the library "was the most attractive area in the structure. The walls were wood paneling, shelving and cabinet work was solid pine and attractively crafted." As for the main building itself, Shrum calls it a "fire trap." Except for the south wing, the structure was entirely of wood frame construction. He remembers that the chemistry and home economics building was "in sound condition," but that the president's residence needed "extensive upgrading to code and remodeling" to become a VIP residential and social facility.¹⁰

In 1957 the Danforth and Ford Foundations made contributions toward the major remodeling of the Chevy Chase property. The first phase involved demolishing all but the façade of the main building and adding two new wings for a much bigger kitchen, dining room, conference rooms and an upgraded power plant. The dormitory wing was remodeled, as was the old president's home. The sewer and storm sewer systems were improved and a modern fire safety system installed. On June 16, 1959 President Eisenhower cut the ribbon to officially open the National 4-H Center. The first national forum for 4-H leaders was held the next year in the new facility.

By the mid-1960s the need to expand the Chevy Chase facility was evident. Program leaders were forced to rent space for some activities, and on occasion the popular citizenship programs were split, with half of the participants at the University of Maryland. Led by Henry Hansen of Connecticut the 4-H Center began to study expansion and its probable cost. As the organization's chief fund raiser Shrum reported in 1966 that the state directors would cooperate, and Raymond Rowland, retired Chief Executive Officer of Ralston Purina, undertook raising much of the needed \$8,600,000 from the business community.



"Ike" officially opens the National 4-H Center

In August 1968 the Montgomery County Board of Appeals granted permission for the center to expand its facilities in what was a residential neighborhood, in order to increase overnight housing from 300 to 800 guests. By 1970 enough pledges had been received to begin work and there was a ground breaking in April, excavation soon began and a year later there were two new buildings large enough to house 650 4-Hers. The new facilities included 190 twin bedrooms with baths, 31 conference rooms of various sizes, some of which were equipped by different states, and a dining room where 600 could be served.

In April 1976 work began on the reconstruction of the main building known as Smith Hall, and the whole front of the old structure was demolished. The new construction provided additional conference and exhibition space as well as a small chapel, a reference library, bigger offices and an enlarged lobby with a huge mural featuring J. C. Penney, the major funder of the project. The expansion was officially dedicated in September 1977 although plans for a large auditorium had to be set aside. A hard-surfaced basketball court and a volleyball court were built on the front lawn. The third phase of construction began after the Town of Chevy Chase moved its offices from the property to the Leland Community Recreation Center, and after several weeks of firefighter training in the derelict dormitory building. That structure was demolished and replaced with the four-story Ralph Ketner Hall, a \$5,000,000 project completed in 1990 to provide a residential, office and auditorium facility.¹¹

Today the National 4-H Conference Center is owned and operated by the National 4-H Council, welcomes more than 30,000 visitors each year. As it has been for most of its existence, this valuable piece of land is often filled with the happy sounds of the young



National 4-H Conference Center

Notes

1. According to a 4-H document, the 4-H paid \$376,356.03.
2. *4-H: An American Idea 1900-1980*, p.73.
3. ORO originally was named the General Research Office. It was the product of many discussions and compromises between the Defense Department and Johns Hopkins University which operated the Applied Physics Laboratory that produced the proximity fuse in Silver Spring and Bethesda facilities during World War II. Dr. Richard Parmenter was hired from Cornell in 1951 to serve as Associate Director of ORO. The address of the former junior college property was changed from 6410 Connecticut Avenue to 7100 in the 1950s.
4. UNIVAC, produced by J. Presper Eckert and John Mauchly for the U.S. Bureau of the Census, had been used to predict the outcome of the 1952 election. With only one percent of the vote in, UNIVAC had said Eisenhower would win in a landslide, but no one had believed it.
5. Quotations are from e-mail Q&A and phone interviews with Ed Cushen in April 2006.
6. *The Evening Star*, Dec. 28, 1956, p. A-24. Publication of this finding "horrified" some at ORO.
7. Donaldson recalls those summers fondly and claims his career was aided by learning early on to work under a woman's leadership.

Telephone interview with John Donaldson in March 2006. One of those present at the parting of the ways between the Army and Hopkins was Ed Cushen, who loudly protested the decision at a Pentagon meeting in 1961.

8. Quotations are from telephone interview with Barbara Oakes in April 2006.

9. The operation had grown from 135 personnel using 22,000 square feet in 1951 (with a budget of \$2,400,000) to 400 employees in more than 40,000 square feet of office space by the mid-1950s (budget \$4,400,000). The Defense Department closed ORO but Hopkins' Department of Operations Research, later Mathematical Sciences, continued with some government projects and probably still does. The Research Analysis Corporation took over most ORO functions. Cushen recalls that he and several other men cultivated garden plots out on Shady Grove Road where the new building was to be located.

10. Quotations are from e-mail with Grant A. Shrum in January 2006. Architect Harry Barrett was responsible for remodeling the president's house, now known as Warren Hall and used to house interns.

11. "History of the 4-H Center," 4-H pamphlet, undated.

Correction

The young ladies in the photograph on page 6 of the Winter Issue of the Newsletter comprised the Chevy Chase Junior College graduating class of 1942, rather than of 1928.

The photograph was courtesy of Jean Roundtree Doyle and Julie Thomas.

Save the Date

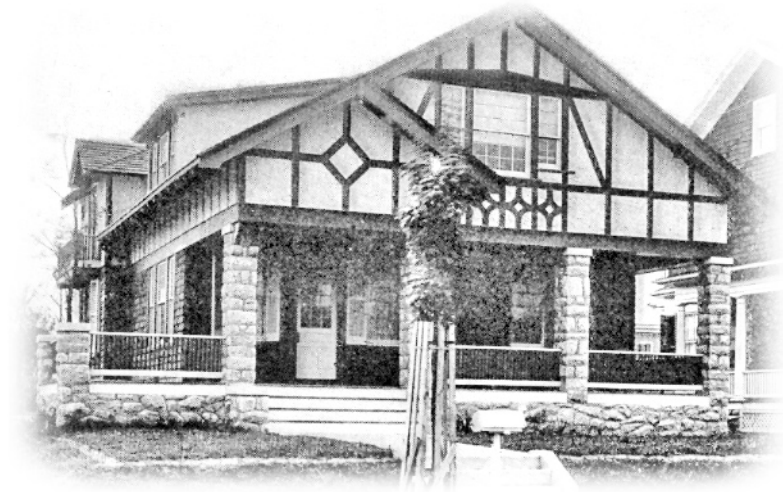
**"Chevy Chasing" History
—A Heritage Fair—**

**Sunday, October 7, 2006
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Leland Community Recreation
Center**

MYSTERY!

With the introduction of this new feature in the newsletter, we invite all sleuths to help CCHS identify the subjects of "mystery" photographs contained in the society's photographic archives.

Is the photograph below of your house? Does it look like a neighbor's house? It is one of five houses featured in the article, "Five Small Houses at Chevy Chase," in the February 1910 issue of *Country Life in American Magazine* (see caption). The person listed as the owner of the house does not appear in the Chevy Chase directory for the relevant period. We need your help! Contact us at (301) 656-6141 or at chevychasehistory@msn.com if you have any clues



"The "Swiss bungalow" of Mr. J. W. Bevin, showing a unique treatment of gables, stone columns, and porch rail. . . . [T]he development of Connecticut Avenue has been phenomenal, and is now extending northwesterly to Montgomery County, MD.; and across the line in the old State, what were formerly fields of wheat and corn rustling in the morning breeze, have been replaced by graded streets, sewers, gas and water mains. . . . The houses shown in the accompanying illustrations average \$5,000 or \$6,000 to build, depending on the materials employed."



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