



CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2009

“Underground Railroad in Montgomery County” Is March 19 Lecture Topic

CCHS Underground Railroad Tour

CCHS Spring Lecturer Anthony Cohen will lead a tour of Underground Railroad landmarks in Rockville—a major starting point on the Underground Railroad—on Saturday, March 21 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Hosted by CCHS' History-Go-Round, the tour will focus on sites and artifacts of 1850s Rockville which remain to tell the story of the secret escape route that shuttled runaway slaves to Philadelphia and on to Canada. Cost is \$15 for CCHS members and \$20 for non-members. Registration is on a first-come basis and is not refundable.

Details will be found at www.chevyCHASEhistory.org and emailed to registrants as they follow the two-step registration process: 1) e-mail your name and number of tickets desired to hgr@chevyCHASEhistory.org, 2) send your check to CCHS, PO Box 15145, Chevy Chase MD 20825.

Any remaining tour tickets will be sold at Anthony Cohen's March 19 lecture.

Please direct questions to hgr@chevyCHASEhistory.org or Susan Elwell at 240-277-3137.



Silver Spring native Anthony Cohen has retraced the treacherous journeys of his ancestors to freedom via the Underground Railroad.

Historian and author Anthony Cohen, who has traveled thousands of miles by foot, boat and rail to trace the steps of runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad, will present the Chevy Chase Historical Society's spring lecture on Thursday, March 19, at 8 p.m. at Chevy Chase Village Hall, 5906 Connecticut Avenue.

A native of Silver Spring, Cohen began exploring the history of the secret network of people and places that helped fugitive slaves escape to freedom when he embarked on a two-month trek from Sandy Spring, Maryland, to Amherstburg, Ontario, in 1996. Since then, he has continued his Underground Railroad reenactments, culminating last summer when he followed the route of his great-great grand uncle's 1849 journey from Savannah, GA to

freedom in Canada. Cohen recalls this journey in a documentary film, "Patrick & Me: A Personal Journey on the Underground Railroad," to be released this year.

Cohen calls the Underground Railroad "...one of the most positive aspects of our heritage, although it grew out of one of the most insidious chapters in our history." To build awareness of the Railroad's importance, he has served as a consultant to the National Parks Conservation Association, Maryland Public Television and NASA. He is founder and president of The Menare Foundation, Inc., which is restoring Button Farm at Seneca Creek State Park as a living history center.

Under the theme R.I.D.E. The Underground Railroad, the Menare Foundation's work includes: **R**estoring what is left of the Underground Railroad for present and future generations; **I**nterpreting Underground Railroad history through innovative programs to bring the story of slavery and the struggle for freedom to life; **D**ocumenting and authenticating Underground Railroad sites by providing primary documentation and verifying oral histories; and **E**ducating people about the Underground Railroad's relevance in the modern world.

Menare offers bus, van and walking tours of Underground Railroad landmarks, homes and history in Montgomery County as part of its mission.

The Society cordially invites the community to attend Cohen's lecture, which will begin at 8 p.m. following a short business meeting. At the meeting, CCHS members will be asked to approve new bylaws for the organization and to approve a new slate of officers and directors. Light refreshments will be served.

Questions about the evening may be directed to Shelly Brunner at 301-907-8072.



CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 15145
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20825

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www.chevychasehistory.org
E-mail: info@chevychasehistory.org
Open 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
on Wednesday 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. Founded in 1981, the nonprofit volunteer 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 CCHS Newsletter feature, describing documents and other items acquired for the Society's Archive and Research Center.

Donations

1. Barney Chapman: 16 letters and receipts from Charles H.L. Johnston and wife Edyth Newlands Johnston (daughter of Senator Frances Newlands), circa 1910s.
2. Ellen Flood Talbott: 8 photographs of the Flood Talbott Family home at 5906 Cedar Parkway, 1928-1946
3. William Bird, Smithsonian Institute: Image of Faith Bradford's Doll House on permanent display at the Museum of American History. Faith Bradford was a resident of Cummings Lane.
4. Marilyn Sutherland: 15 emailed digital images of the log cabin home at 6610 Western Ave., Chevy Chase, MD.
5. Mary Sheehan: 33 images of the filming of the movie *National Treasure 2* at 27 West Kirke Street.
6. Lisa Wright: Blueprints of a home for Mrs. Edwin N. McClellan, East Bradley Lane, 1920 (never built).
7. Mary Lee LeBarton: Photos, bill of sale, and ephemera relating to the home at 4008 Leland Street (presently # 4228).
8. Bryce LeFever: Book *Billy's Club House* written by Chevy Chase resident, Marion Holland.

Staff Acquisitions

1. *Pine Tree* BCC Yearbook, 1936, 1955.
2. Photograph of Home Economics Class at BCC High School, 1935.
3. Book, *American Rose Annual* (1941) with illustration of the Chevy Chase Rose.
4. Five Minnie E. Brooke postcards.
5. "Ancient Ballad of Chevy Chase, In Latin and English Verse" printed in *Barnaby's Journal* (1822)
6. Postcard addressed to A. Kaufman at 23 Grafton Street, 1922.
7. Envelope addressed to Master Blaine Fitzgerald, 8 East Underwood Street, 1937.
8. Brass buttons from a Capital Traction Transit Company employee uniform.
9. The "Corn Pone," Leland Junior High School student newsletter, 1964.

To explore these items in detail, visit our online digital archives at www.chevychasehistory.org

Home Renovation Pictures Needed

Want to be recognized as a donor in this section of the next CCHS newsletter? Donate your photographs of a home improvement project! These images will be added to the society's online digital archives and preserved for all future homeowners to enjoy. All emailed images need to be scanned at 600 dpi, but if you do not have a scanner, interns can do this for you while you wait at the CCHS Archive and Research Center on the lower level of the Chevy Chase Library, 8005 Connecticut Avenue. In particular, CCHS seeks Chevy Chase homeowners' photographs including:

- Exterior home shots before expansion, remodel, or facelift
- Exterior landscaping/hardscaping "before" and "after" photographs
- Interior photographs before home renovations
- "In progress" construction pictures of any home improvement project
- Photos of homes before they were razed
- Demolition photographs of any neighborhood home

Please call Evelyn Gerson, Director of the Archive and Research Center, 301-656-6141 or email digital images to evelyn@chevychasehistory.org to expand CCHS' collection and to allow CCHS to thank you in print.

It's Fun All Around For History-Go-Round

2009 marks the third year of History-Go-Round, a series of CCHS programs exploring history both inside and outside the Chevy Chase community. History-Go-Round offers neighbors with similar interests guided visits to historic sites, roundtables led by distinguished speakers and other educational opportunities. Here's a report on the two most recent History-Go-Round outings.

Meridian Hill Walking Tour

On a brisk January 10th, 28 history buffs met for a tour of the Meridian Hill neighborhood, a follow-up to CCHS' fall lecture by architectural historian, Kimberly Prothro Williams. Veteran Washington tour guide Jeanne Fogle led the walking tour. She related stories about the Beaux Arts mansions along 16th Street, the remarkable Meridian Hill Park and the determined Mary Henderson, who developed most of this area. Henderson used her legendary powers of persuasion in the early 1900s to convince Congress to change the name of 16th Street to "Avenue of Presidents." While she toured Europe some months later, Congress reinstated the name 16th Street.

The History-Go-Round tour concluded at the Potter's House restaurant in Adams Morgan, a mission of the Potter's House Church. Over lunch, HGR participants heard a presentation on the origin of the Potter's House as one of the first coffee houses in the United States and its continuing role in support of the Adams Morgan community.



History lovers enjoy lunch at the Potter's House in Adams Morgan following the walking tour of Meridian Hill



CCHS guests don stovepipe hats to debate the Emancipation Proclamation in a re-enactment of a Lincoln cabinet meeting.

President's Lincoln's Cottage

Several weeks later, 49 CCHS'ers gathered to celebrate the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth by visiting President Lincoln's Cottage on Saturday, February 7. The cottage – actually a 34-room Gothic Revival style house – is located on a picturesque hilltop on the grounds of the Armed Forces Retirement Home (formerly known as the Soldiers' Home) in Washington. It is the most significant historic site associated with Lincoln's presidency aside from the White House. President Lincoln resided here with his family during almost one-third of his presidency.

Guests also participated in a role-playing session recreating a Cabinet meeting at which Lincoln and his cabinet vigorously debated his proposed Emancipation Proclamation. This docent-led presentation uses state-of-the-art touch screen technology to explore the different perspectives of the Cabinet members and the President himself on how to solve the most volatile question of his presidency.

Members to Vote on Bylaws, Elect Directors and Officers

At the spring meeting on March 19, CCHS members will be asked to approve new bylaws for the organization. The existing bylaws were adopted when the society was formed 27 years ago. While they have served CCHS well, the Board recognized a need to update the bylaws, both to conform to current best practices and to better reflect with how the society operates today. New bylaws have been unanimously approved by the Board. Upon approval by the members at the March 19 meeting, the new bylaws will take effect immediately.

Copies of the existing bylaws, the proposed new bylaws and a chart comparing the provisions of the two are available to members at CCHS headquarters in the Chevy Chase Library, 8005 Connecticut Ave., or by telephone request to 301-656-6141. These documents will also be available at the March 19 meeting.

Many of the bylaw changes are technical in nature. The most substantive change is an updated Board structure, designed to create opportunities for new directors to join the Board while maintaining continuity of leadership. The number of directors, between five and 21, will be determined by the Board. A "staggered" Board is established so that, following a two-year transition to the new structure, one-third of the directors will be elected each year. New term limits for directors and officers will also assist in opening new director slots. In addition, the new bylaws clarify that the Board, rather than the membership, sets membership dues and has the authority to amend the bylaws in the future.

Following approval of the bylaws at the March 19 meeting, the election of directors and officers will be held. The Board has set the number of directors at 17, comprised of the five officers and 12 at-large directors. The Nominating Committee has proposed the following nominees for election to the following positions: President, Mary Sheehan; Vice President, Bridget Hartman; Secretary, Alice Kinter; Corresponding Secretary, Ann Toch; Treasurer, Margaret Adelfio; and the following at-large Directors: Wendy Adams, Shelly Brunner, Carol Coffin, Susan Elwell, Mary Anne Hoffman, Angela Lancaster, Joan Marsh, Marilyn Montgomery, Helene Sacks, Helen Secrest, Julie Thomas, and Mary Anne Tuohey.

Questions concerning the proposed bylaws may be directed to Mary Sheehan at 301-652-5726.

Chevy Chase Voices

“Chevy Chase Voices” is a regular feature of this newsletter, highlighting excerpts from the oral histories of Chevy Chase residents that the Society has recorded and transcribed for its Oral History Project. This feature spotlights interesting aspects of the community’s history in order to educate readers and encourage further exploration of the oral history transcriptions at the CCHS Archive and Research Center.



Ella Hawkins lived her entire life on Hawkins Lane, a road that today is still unpaved and reminiscent of a time long past.



“My grandfather bought the land after slavery”

The following excerpts are from the oral history of Ella Hawkins, whose grandfather, James T. Hawkins, a former slave, bought and settled the land that is today considered the Hawkins Lane Historic District. This small, seemingly rural enclave in North Chevy Chase is nestled between the busy streets of Jones Bridge and Rockville Pike.

Majorie Zapruder: Well, I read in the paper that your grandfather took the name of the man who was his owner. Is that true?

Ella Hawkins: I think so. That’s what they usually did in the slave times...you know, they would take their master’s name...

Ella Hawkins: My grandfather bought the land after slavery. He came from southern Maryland.

Majorie Zapruder: Where did he come from? Do you know?

Ella Hawkins: Prince Georges. He bought three acres of land. And he later sold a lot to my dad and my uncle, and they each built houses....Then later on, my dad cut a road through there. That’s what’s called Hawkins Lane, and he built houses. On the other side of the road, Mizell bought some land, and they built four houses there [8823, 8825, 8827, 8829 Hawkins Lane.]

Majorie Zapruder: Are any of the houses that your father built still here?

Ella Hawkins: Yes, they are still here. It’s four still here [8806, 8812, 8818, 8822 Hawkins Lane.] And, the house that he lived in, that really is on Jones Bridge Road. The road was widened. Jones Bridge Road was widened so he had to tear down and build another house [4201 Jones Bridge Road. Samuel Hawkins had it built in 1954]....

Majorie Zapruder: So when you were living here and you were little, were there other families besides the Hawkins?

Ella Hawkins: Originally it wasn’t. Til my dad was the first one built the houses and, my granddaddy didn’t like it. He wanted to keep everyone out...

Majorie Zapruder: When he [Samuel Hawkins] built the houses, what were the dates? Was that in about the 1920s or earlier than that? Do you remember?

Ella Hawkins: It’s about sixty some years ago, I’d say.

Majorie Zapruder: So that’s the 1920s...

Majorie Zapruder: When you lived here in the beginning, were there any other black communities around?

Ella Hawkins: The only one. We were the only ones....

Majorie Zapruder: This street [Hawkins Lane] was not paved then, is that right?

Ella Hawkins: Well’ it’s not, they don’t call it paved then. I’ll tell you, at that time, the people that lived there were taking care of the street because if the county had taken it, which comes up now, they’d have to widen the road. So they are taking care of the road themselves, and it was a private road. But these new people coming in here, they want to take the road, change the name. My father cut the road up here. So that’s why it is called Hawkins. They want to change the name and call it “New Road.” Is that any kind of name? (Laughter)....

Majorie Zapruder: And there was no county plumbing. Were there electric lines?

Ella Hawkins: No, we had to put in...it’s been some time ago, but they weren’t here first, of course. And, you had to pay ten dollars a pole to bring the light up here.

Majorie Zapruder: And what about plumbing? What about sewers?

Ella Hawkins: Sewer, that’s the last thing they brought in here. They didn’t have a sewer at first. We had septic tanks.

Majorie Zapruder: So when you were a little girl, did you have outdoor plumbing? You didn’t have inside bathrooms, you just had outside ones?

Ella Hawkins: Yes, when I was a little girl and lived in the house on the road, my father put in all of those sorts of things himself, a pump and outside we had a bathroom.

Majorie Zapruder: So he put it in.

Ella Hawkins: He was the first one to have a bathroom. (Laughter)

From the oral history of Ella Hawkins taken by Mary Anne Tuohey and Majorie Zapruder on April 25th, 1989.

CCHS Thanks its Benefactors and Patrons

2008 was the inaugural year for CCHS’ streamlined and updated membership structure. We are deeply grateful for the support of all of our members. We wish to acknowledge particularly those who became members for 2008 at the Benefactor or Patron levels:

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Every effort has been made to ensure that the foregoing list is correct and complete. If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, please let us know and accept our apologies.

Valuable Volunteers

First in a series spotlighting local residents who contribute their time and talent to the Chevy Chase Historical Society.

It was a lucky day for CCHS when seasoned writer/editor Marcia McCann walked into CCHS’ Archive and Research Center to learn how to conduct oral histories for another local history group.

The CCHS Oral History Project (OHP) has conducted and archived interviews of more than 75 Chevy Chase residents and businesspeople over the years, supported by grants from the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and private donations.



“The mission of the OHP, begun by Marjorie Zapruder and Mary Anne Tuohey in the early 1980s, is to capture as many stories as our resources will allow, and to promote awareness of these rich stories for students and researchers interested in the history of one of America’s first streetcar suburbs,” says OHP manager Julie Thomas.

The tireless Thomas happened to be at CCHS headquarters the day Marcia McCann dropped in, and she invited McCann to come work on CCHS’ Oral History Project. After a career of freelance and full-time editing for organizations like the National Academy of Sciences and Georgetown University Press, McCann was eager to use her editing skills in a volunteer capacity. She agreed to be Julie’s “sidekick,” taking notes while Julie interviewed long-time local residents, then editing the printed transcripts of the interviews for clarity of meaning.

“I don’t edit what people say,” McCann emphasizes, “but I do take the spoken word and help it make sense on paper. I punctuate run-on sentences, insert in brackets what was left out and break paragraphs to make the speaker’s meaning clear. I also check the spelling of a lot of proper names.”

It’s a painstaking process, with each oral history requiring an average of 60 volunteer hours. In 2008 alone, CCHS along with History Associates Inc., of Rockville, produced a total of 13 new oral histories.

“I love working with words, and I love history, so this is great fun for me,” notes McCann. A resident of Grove Street in Chevy Chase Village since 1990, McCann says she’s learned many things about her hometown she never knew before volunteering with CCHS.

“I didn’t know that the Village Board of Managers had only one female member until the 1980s. And I found fascinating the recollections of Pat Baptiste, the first woman chair of the Board. She worked 20-30 hours per week as a civic activist, in the years when women were transitioning from stay-at-home moms to working full-time away from home. I learned a lot from her about the more recent history of Chevy Chase.”

An index of topics and people mentioned in each CCHS oral history interview soon will be available at www.chevyCHASEhistory.org. In the meanwhile, students and scholars can use the ever-expanding Oral History Project collection at the Archive and Research Center in the lower level of the Chevy Chase Library, 8005 Connecticut Avenue.

MYSTERY!

Circa 1995, graduate student Christine Weppner took photographs of Chevy Chase, DC and MD in conjunction with a research paper that she wrote about suburban change. She has graciously donated over 70 images that we have added to our online archives, but many of these remain unidentified.

CCHS needs help locating the addresses for the two houses pictured here. If you know them, please contact us at info@chevychasehistory.org or at (301) 656-6141. The first person to provide the addresses wins a package of CCHS postcards.



The fall issue's MYSTERY! photographs were correctly identified as 7100 Brookville Road, by Nedra Weinstein and 3603 Underwood Street, by Joanne Young. Another mystery solved by observant CCHS supporters. Thanks for your help!

Want another way to win? Visit www.chevychasehistory.org and search the digital archive using the keyword "unidentified" to see many more images needing identification. Email your answers to info@chevychasehistory.org.
(Only one package of postcards per patron, please.)



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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