

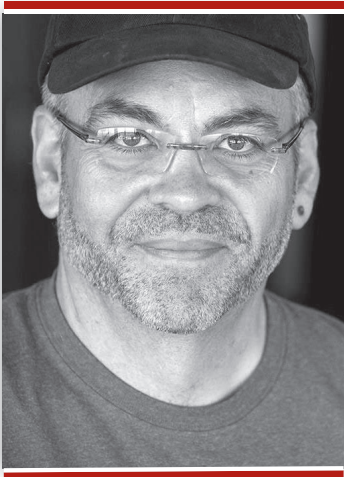


## CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2018

### “The Glory Days of Washington’s Grand Department Stores: A Nostalgic Look Back” Is Fall Lecture Topic



Michael Lisicky to speak on local department store history.

With the holiday shopping season right around the corner, get into the holiday spirit with a nostalgic look back at the history of department stores. The CCHS Fall Lecture, “The Glory Days of Washington’s Grand Department Stores: A Nostalgic Look Back” will feature the history of Chevy Chase’s own “Woodies”, as well as other iconic DC area department stores now closed. The illustrated lecture will be presented by

Michael Lisicky, a nationally recognized expert on once-iconic department stores. The program will be at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 18, at the Lawton Community Center, 4301 Willow Lane in the Town of Chevy Chase. The program is free and open to the public.

Lisicky will take his audience back to Woodward & Lothrop in its heyday – past the elaborate holiday window displays, through the up-to-the minute fashions for men, women and children, past the Wedding Services department, and on to the seventh-floor Tea Room, known for its Chicken Pot Pie and other specialties. He will also discuss other beloved local department stores, including Garfinckel’s, Hecht’s, and more.

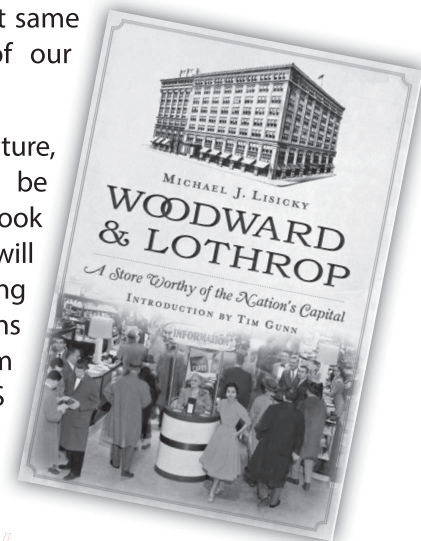
In 2013, Lisicky published a book detailing the history of Woodies titled, “Woodward & Lothrop: A Store Worthy of the Nation’s Capital”. He has written ten other books telling the stories of famous department stores, including Gimbels and Abraham & Straus in New York, Wanamaker’s in Philadelphia, Filene’s in Boston, Bamberger’s in New Jersey, and Hutzler’s in Baltimore. Major media outlets have called Lisicky an “expert,” “guru,” “aficionado,” “junkie,”

and “noted chronicler” of now-shuttered east coast department stores. His books have received critical acclaim from national newspapers and magazines as affectionate histories of the great department stores whose glory days once symbolized America’s major eastern cities.

In addition to his books, Lisicky is a sought-after speaker. He has lectured at the New York Public Library, the Boston Public Library, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the DC Public Library, the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh, New York Fashion Week, the Milwaukee County Historical Society, and numerous other historical societies and book festivals. He has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune Magazine*, *Bloomberg Businessweek*, National Public Radio, and on the CBS *Sunday Morning* television program, among many other publications.

When he is not researching department store histories, Lisicky has an equally fascinating “day job” as an oboist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. A graduate of the New England Conservatory, Lisicky was a member of the Savannah Symphony and the Richmond Symphony before joining the Baltimore Symphony in 2003. His musicianship has been praised for its “magical nuances”, and he brings that same magic to the memories of our great retail establishments.

A reception will follow the lecture, and light refreshments will be served. Copies of Lisicky’s book about Woodward & Lothrop will be available for sale and signing by the author. Questions concerning the program may be directed to CCHS at 301-656-6141 or [info@chevyCHASEhistory.org](mailto:info@chevyCHASEhistory.org).



*Celebrating One of America’s First Streetcar Suburbs*





## Kit House Experts Available for Further Research in Chevy Chase, Maryland



**This Sears "Rembrandt" (left) in Martin's Additions and Sears "No.144" in Section 5 were among 11 kit houses authenticated in last year's search by a noted kit house scholar for the Chevy Chase Historical Society.**

The team of kit house scholars who studied 40 Chevy Chase houses in 2017, and certified 11 of them as authentic kit houses, is offering its services to other homeowners who think they may be living in one of the well-built, pre-cut homes that were delivered by rail from Sears & Roebuck and its competitors during the first half of the 20th century.

Nationally recognized kit house scholar Kathryn Holt Springston, husband Scott, and son Dakota will provide two hours of measuring and kit house catalog research for a \$250 fee when homeowners request their help. Interested homeowners should email a photo of the possible kit house with their 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, 8401 Connecticut Avenue, Suite 1010, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

If the Springstons think a photo shows a likely kit house, CCHS will schedule a time for them to personally measure

the house's interiors to see if it matches a kit house manufacturer and style. If it does, the homeowner will receive a Certificate of Authentication designating the house as a kit house. Confirmed kit houses often command higher sales prices, according to real estate professionals.

CCHS launched a search in May 2017 for kit houses delivered to Chevy Chase from Sears & Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, Sterling, and Aladdin and Lewis in the community's early years. Kathryn Springston presented the results of that search at CCHS' Fall Lecture in November 2017 and presented Certificates of Authentication to homeowners residing in all five Chevy Chase municipalities.

To see photos of the 11 already-authenticated Chevy Chase kit houses, visit [www.chevychasehistory.org](http://www.chevychasehistory.org). For details on how to engage Kathryn Springston and her team to assess your possible kit house, contact [kithouses@chevychasehistory.org](mailto:kithouses@chevychasehistory.org).

***Please patronize these business sponsors of the Chevy Chase Historical Society 2018 Spring Gala.  
We are deeply grateful for their support!***

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# Mansions Made F

By Bob A

*At the gateway to Chevy Chase, at No. 9 Chevy Chase Circle, is one of the community's most prominent "Ishpiming." It is currently listed for sale, a development that has sparked considerable real estate media attention. This is the first of two articles about the family, and particularly two of the brothers, William and Charles. His story is told below. At the same time, his brother Charles lived a short distance north of Chevy Chase. A second article, focusing on Charles, his family, and his*



**Portrait of William Corby, undated.**

William Stephen Corby was born in Binghamton, New York, on May 1, 1867, the son of Israel Corby, a small-town baker. At the age of 13, he began driving his father's delivery wagon through the streets of Cortland, New York. In 1890, at the age of 23, he married Jennie Stiles and moved to Washington to begin working for the Fay and Stiles baking company, which was owned by Jennie's brother. His own brother, Charles Corby, moved to Washington a year later and together they formed the Corby Brothers Baking Company, first located at 520 12<sup>th</sup> Street NW. His parents soon joined them in Washington, along with brother Stephen, sister May, and 17-year-old brother Robert, who had just completed his studies at the Chidlow Institute of Baking and Milling Technology in Chicago, specializing in the chemical side of baking, studying mold and bacteria.

With the help of a \$500 loan for the down payment, the brothers moved their business to a larger bakery near Howard University on Brightwood Avenue in northwest D. C., now Georgia Avenue. After they constructed a new building in 1902 and made further additions in 1912, the Corbys' operations filled most of the block and ranked as the largest bakery in Washington. Thanks to younger brother Robert's knowledge of chemistry, a laboratory was included in the new plant, along with on-site refrigeration, and its own power plant. The Corbys were also the first to wrap their loaves in waxed paper.

Marketing its "Mother's Bread" as being "pure as mother made it," the company grew rapidly, due in large part to the Corbys' focus on automation. In 1897, they received patents for high-speed mixers and dough dividers that could form loaves much faster than by hand. Their process and machines produced bread of a uniform quality previously unattainable.

By 1905, the Corbys were producing as many as 55,000 loaves a day and had a payroll of 165 employees. An article about the baking business published in *The Sunday Star* on April 2, 1905, declared that "when cut the loaf reveals bread of the finest grain and unequalled whiteness." It required 30 wagons and 60 horses to distribute the bread to customers around the city three times each day.

The business grew, and eventually produced more than 90,000 loaves of bread and two-and-a-half tons of cakes each day. It employed more than 450 workers. Additional plants were established in Alexandria and Richmond. Deliveries were made several times daily throughout the Washington area in 52 wagons and along eight auto routes. The plant maintained on-site stables for 96 horses, and built and maintained its own wagons.



# From Bread - Part I

Andrews

ent homes. Commonly referred to today as the “Corby Mansion,” the property was previously named *media coverage. But little is known in the community about the Corby family after whom the mansion is named and Charles Corby. William lived in the mansion at No. 9, on the northeast point of Chevy Chase Circle. Part of today’s Capital Beltway in the mansion now known as the “Mansion at Strathmore.” This home, will be published in the next CCHS Newsletter.*

In spite of his rapid and huge success—or perhaps because of it—William’s personal life was disintegrating. In October 1905, his wife Jennie filed for divorce on the grounds of “unfaithfulness,” revealing that her husband’s one-half interest in the company was valued at \$125,000. The divorce was granted on February 15, 1906. Four months later, on June 2, 1906, 39-year-old William married Muriel Hannah Clark, the 23-year-old daughter of a Treasury Department official. That very same day, he signed the deed to a house at 4 East Kirke Street (later changed to 6 East Kirke) in the new suburb of Chevy Chase. It was in this house that his first daughter, Justine, was born in 1908.

In 1909, William paid \$35,000 for the first and largest home in Chevy Chase, located at 9 Chevy Chase Circle. The huge house was built in 1894 by the developer of Chevy Chase himself, Nevada Senator Francis Newlands. William named the mansion “Ishpiming”, which means “high ground” in the Chippewa language. He hired architect Arthur Heaton, also supervising architect of the Washington National Cathedral, to renovate the home in the Tudor style. The renovations included a 30-foot high “Great Music Hall” to contain the Corbys’ three pipe organs, one of which used perforated rolls to play automatically.

Over the next 30 years, William and Muriel accumulated a fortune in art and antiques from Europe. Among their prized antiques was the chair occupied by President William Howard Taft during his inauguration, and a 16<sup>th</sup> century table used by Quaker-founder George Fox when he visited a family ancestor in England. The couple sponsored highly-acclaimed concerts in the Grand Music Hall, featuring such artists as Marcel Dupree, chief organist at the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. During these years, the all-African American staff of the mansion included a “waitress,” maids, a cook, a butler and a gardener.

A second daughter, Eleanor, was born at Ishpiming in 1911. As the sisters entered their teens, their parents provided them with elaborate parties that often included more than 100 guests, particularly around the Christmas and New Year holidays. In their later teens, both girls began to make the news by participating in, and often winning, speedboat races both at their summer home in New Hampshire and during the President’s Cup Regatta on the Potomac River. Eleanor was not as skillful, however, with the car her father gave her when she turned 21. In 1932, her car skidded on some ice and overturned, throwing her passenger out and fracturing his skull. The passenger later sued William (as he was “head of the family”) for \$50,000, but the suit was denied in court.

William was very active in a number of social and business organizations, including the Masons, the Washington Board of Trade, the Board of Trustees at American



**Corby Baking Company laboratory, National Photo Company, 1921-1922. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.**



**Corby Mansion, "Ishpiming," circa 1920.**

University, and the Columbia Country Club. In an article in *The Evening Star* published on August 29, 1967, Muriel is quoted as saying that "The [Chevy Chase] Club always boasted of the fact that businessmen were not allowed in. So we joined Columbia." William was also a founding member of the Congressional Country Club.

In addition to the baking empire, William was president of the Corby Compressed Yeast Company, which was purchased by the Fleischman Company in 1919. He retired in 1925, after the baking business was sold to the Continental Baking Company, the maker of Wonder Bread and shortly thereafter, Twinkies.

Continental Baking continued to operate the Corby complex, but replaced the Corby Mother's Bread with Wonder Bread, which was sold in modern pre-sliced form by the 1930s. The plant's bread production activities ceased in 1988, when Continental consolidated its operations in Philadelphia. Continental continued to use the Corby complex as a distribution site for several years, then sold it to a local real estate developer, who in turn sold it to Howard University in 1993.

William Corby died of a heart attack at his New Hampshire summer home at the Bald Peak Colony Club on August 18, 1935, at the age of 69. In his will, William revealed a protective concern for his daughters by prohibiting their future husbands from ever sharing the girls' inheritance of the Corby fortune.

Within a few years, the daughters married and moved out of Ishpeming, leaving Muriel Corby alone in the vast mansion with a single servant. Nevertheless, she remained active in the Chevy Chase community. In 1926, she hosted the founding of the Chevy Chase Garden Club on her property. During World War II, she "adopted" several refugee children in Europe, sending them money for food and clothing and pursuing efforts to find them new homes in their native countries. She lived in the mansion on Chevy Chase Circle until her death on August 25, 1967, at the age of 84. She and William were both buried in the family vault in Rock Creek Cemetery.

After Muriel's death, her daughters gave the mansion to the National Cathedral School for Girls, which they had both attended, but because of zoning law constraints, it was never used as a school. It was eventually purchased by a series of private owners, and as of the date of this writing is on the market for \$25,900,000.

You can see what Mr. J. E. Staub, of the Crescent Market, Second and C streets N. W., thinks of Corby's Mothers Bread not only commercially, but personally:

**"Corby's Mothers Bread sells itself. I have handled it for over fourteen years, and because of its high quality about 80 per cent of the bread I sell is Corby's Mothers Bread. I also use it on the table, as we like the best."**

*Joseph E. Staub*  
Second and C Streets, N. W.

That word "best" describes Corby's Mothers Bread exactly. The best of ingredients, the best skill is put into every loaf—every day.

**The Corby Baking Company**

Eat Corby's Mothers Bread —pure as Mother made it.

Delivered hot to your grocer three times a day.

**The Washington Times, Washington, D.C.,  
March 15, 1919.**



## CCHS Historic Photos Displayed at Potomac Pizza



**Panoramic view of a wall of historic Chevy Chase photos at Potomac Pizza.**

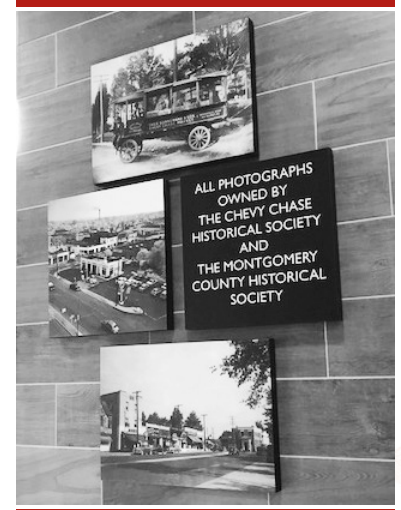
in the CCHS collection, searching for his ideal images of places, people, and events throughout the history of the community. He did a similar search at the Montgomery County Historical Society for images of Bethesda and the surrounding area. After Martin made some tough choices, CCHS provided the photos he selected from our archive as high resolution images to be printed on canvas and hung in the newly renovated restaurant.

“We chose to include CCHS photos in our display at the newly renovated Potomac Pizza in Chevy Chase to highlight the history of local events, people, and even buildings that may be gone or have been turned into new businesses. This walk down memory lane could be a great conversation starter for our customers. By partnering with CCHS on this project, we hope to bring the community together.” said Martin.

Visit Potomac Pizza to see for yourself the fabulous results of the project. CCHS is proud to have partnered with Potomac Pizza and looks forward to working with more community businesses on similar projects. Interested in displaying historic CCHS photographs at your business? Contact us at [info@chevychasehistory.org](mailto:info@chevychasehistory.org) for more information.

The Chevy Chase location of Potomac Pizza recently underwent a renovation and Chris Martin, Director of Marketing and Community Relations, reached out to CCHS to help decorate the interior with community photos. Potomac Pizza wanted to capture what Chevy Chase is about, its spirit, its people and its history. He came to the right place—CCHS.

Using the CCHS online catalog and visiting Director Beth Huffer at the Archive and Research Center, Martin combed through the more than 10,000 photographs



**Portion of the photo display at Potomac Pizza.**

### 2019 Membership Reminder:

If you have not renewed your membership, please do so today. We very much want and need your support. It's because of you that we are able to maintain 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, [www.chevychasehistory.org](http://www.chevychasehistory.org). You also help us publish these newsletters. Can we count on you to help and continue your support?



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#### 2019 Annual Membership Dues (make check payable to CCHS):

Friend \$40    Patron \$125    Benefactor \$250

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail this to:  
CCHS, 8401 Connecticut Ave., Suite 1010, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

### CCHS books and documentary make great holiday gifts, hostess gifts, and stocking stuffers.

### They can be purchased at the CCHS Archive and Research Center or through our website at [chevychasehistory.org](http://chevychasehistory.org).



**CCHS books *The Placenames of Chevy Chase, Maryland* and *The Wizard of Chevy Chase*, and documentary *Chevy Chase, Maryland: A Streetcar to Home*.**



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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### Address Correction Requested

## MYSTERY!

*"Mystery!" is a regular feature in the Newsletter, inviting all history-loving sleuths to help solve "mysteries" contained in the CCHS Archive.*

These two images were taken in June 2003 by George Ford. We are hoping to identify the location of this house. Does anyone know the address of this charming home?

If you can help solve this mystery, email [info@chevychasehistory.org](mailto:info@chevychasehistory.org) or call (301) 656-6141.

