



Ring out the Old, Ring in the New!

Our community celebrates a variety of year-end holidays—Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Solstice, Diwali, among others. With these various festivals of light, we bid farewell to the travails of 2020 and fervently hope for a brighter tomorrow. However you may celebrate, CCHS wishes you peace and good health in the new year!

In this Newsletter, CCHS offers a glimpse of Christmases past in excerpts about the holidays from oral histories and other texts in the CCHS collection. While much has changed over the decades, we never fail to celebrate the launch of a new year. Join CCHS as we turn the page on 2020 and begin a hopeful new chapter in 2021. Happy New Year!

1. Reminiscence by Mary Bradford Stone (1868-1946) contained in her son George Winchester Stone Jr.'s profile of his mother.

One memorable holiday time, I was allowed to ride down Pennsylvania Avenue alone to do my Christmas shopping,



Christmas choir from Miss Libbey's School at the Chevy Chase Village Hall, 1954.

with a whole dollar to spend as I liked. I went into Woodward and Lothrop, which was called "The Boston House" and was on Pennsylvania Avenue between 9th and 10th Streets. I wanted a lace neck piece for my mother. Mr. Woodward saw me wandering about and asked if he could help me. I explained that I had a dollar and wanted something for my mother to wear, so he led me to the lace counter and told the girl there all about it, asking her to help me select just what I wanted. When I got home I found the piece I selected, and paid my one dollar for, was marked \$1.25!

2. Excerpt from Bill Offutt oral history interview, dated February 14, 2005.

Question: Did you have a bicycle?

Bill Offutt: Oh yeah, from the time I was nine or ten. I got it for Christmas one year. That was a big deal. I think I was so awe struck by getting a bicycle for Christmas I didn't even say thank you. I just pushed the thing out the front door and rode it.

3. Excerpt from Richard Walsh oral history interview, dated December 5, 1989.

Richard Walsh: We'd go up in the woods [near Chevy Chase Lake] and tear off a limb of a tree and that became a hockey stick. We'd use one arm. It didn't make any difference what, we didn't have a puck, we didn't have regular ice hockey sticks. We'd line up maybe ten or fifteen guys on each side. We'd go around, use a tin can or anything for a puck. [Laughter]

....I delivered the mail out here [near Chevy Chase Lake], Christmas mail. I did it three years running. We were paid a munificent amount of sixty cents an hour. And, you know, that was pretty good. A penny a minute! [Laughter] And I loved to ice skate so much, and the winter was cold and there was good ice

(continued on page 3)

skating on the Lake and all that. Normally I would have stayed on after Christmas was over because there was always several days of more mail coming in and all that. But I quit to go out and ice skate. And I passed up making that money, you see. Funny, we were on the parcel post end of the business with the truck, delivering the packages. And then we'd have to get a receipt, they'd have to sign for it and all that. And the postmaster was named Mr. Early. I'll never forget him.

4. Excerpt from Helen Wolcott oral history interview, dated October 19, 1981.

Question: Were there farms along Brookville Road when you first moved out here?

Helen Wolcott: Yes. There were some houses, now I don't know how far out, but yes, there were farms. Chestnut Farms well, Chevy Chase Dairy, as a matter of fact, used to be out there where the East West Highway is, in that area. Yes, there was a lot of farmland. But you didn't have to go very far to get out in the country. You just had to walk. And Pinehurst Circle was nothing, but we used to go there to get our Christmas trees.

Question: You mean just cut them down?

Helen Wolcott: Uh huh. It was just a pine forest.

5. Excerpt from Augustine Winnemore oral history interview, dated June 28, 1990.

Augustine Winnemore: But my father was real active in the [Chevy Chase Presbyterian] church. He was an elder for many years, taught in the Sunday school for many years, and...he



Brookville Road, looking north from Lenox Street, Christmas 1904.



The Shield family, with Christmas dolls Pinky and Snow White, in front of 5 East Irving Street, Christmas Day 1920.

was in charge of Sunday services. So [at] Christmas time.... after they built this church, present church, in 1923, you know, it had that big tower up there that's up there on the top. He got a trumpeter from the Marine band to come out on Christmas morning and climb up, and I went over with him from Broad Branch Road and met the trumpeter. And we climbed up the tower, and the trumpeter would face the east and blow a Christmas hymn. Then he would face the south and blow a Christmas hymn, face the west and blow a Christmas hymn, face the north and blow a Christmas hymn.... And I remember friends of ours, the McBrides, who formerly lived on Elm Street but then had built a house down on Hesketh Street here. And this particular Christmas we went down there to see them that evening, and Mrs. McBride said that they were in bed that morning, it was a clear morning, and they heard this trumpet from the church, and it was so lovely.

6. Excerpt from memoir "Six West" about life at 6 West Kirke Street, by Anne Henry.

Such excitement at Christmas time. Daily came one or the other of my brothers or sisters home on vacation from boarding school. The telephone jingled merrily. I was busy writing Santa Claus of my fondest wishes, which Daddy took very seriously and assured me he himself would carefully mail to that wonderful man at the North Pole. Safe in bed on Christmas Eve I would hear my parents climb up to the third floor and descend with all manner of wonderful presents - all from Santa Claus, of course. Long before dawn, Billie and Bobby and I would awake to the



Christmas Eve duet by Mary Stickles and Carol Cooper, at 3914 Blackthorn Street, December 1971.

fragrant odor of pine - the Christmas tree, and beautiful it was. Tall and well-rounded and beneath its branches, the presents neatly in stacks for each one. A habit which Mother and Daddy had was to give each other their presents on Christmas Eve. Never understood why - since they made us wait for ours.

7. Excerpt from Helen Hume oral history interview, dated November 1981.

Question: If you could choose one thing that you remember as being a really happy memory about living in this beautiful house [8 Oxford Street], what would it be?

Helen Hume: Christmas! There were marvelous Christmases. Always the Christmas tree was in the dining room right against the porch door to keep it cool. Coming down and seeing that Christmas tree all lit up was pure enchantment! You came down the stairs and made the turn and saw it all! As a little girl that was something I always looked forward to.

Question: And you had the fireplaces going opposite each other?

Helen Hume: Yes, one in the dining room and one in the living room. We had the fireplaces lit, and people coming and going. I loved Christmas in Chevy Chase because it was such a friendly place. It was just all day, people coming and going. And my little girlfriends would come, and we would show each other

our presents. If I got a doll or whatever, I couldn't wait to show my friends, the Demmings next door, and Carolyn Jackson, who lived down the block. Those are the happy memories! It was a very happy house.

...As the tissue paper was hastily torn away there were shouts of delight as our eyes feasted on a special present which we'd been just dying for. Since Daddy was such a large part of our fun, we'd race up to wake him and urge his sleepy self to "Come see, Daddy, come see". Always cheerful in the early dawn, he'd join us and exclaim in a mood to suit our own.

8. Excerpt from a 1944 Christmas letter from "Mom Plitt", of 6309 Delaware Street, to 55 young friends of her son, many in the military, with whom she corresponded during World War II.

Memories of all the Christmases shared in years gone by rise in our hearts and we know they are rising in yours. A bravely Merry Christmas wherever you may be - a Christmas warmed as ours is, with memories and lighted with the sure vision of



Santa and Princess Paula visit with children at the Chevy Chase Village Holiday Party, December 1996.

Happy Christmases to come. While you are away we will be with you: in all your wanderings we will be thinking of you, in time of loneliness and danger we will be praying for you, and when you come back we will welcome you home and the reunion will bring peace to our hearts. "Peace on earth, good will toward men" may seem far removed to some of you in some of those unusual "areas" but don't let this "unusual" Christmas separate you in spirit from your loved ones and friends who are thinking of you. When you are bringing joy into the heart of someone else, no matter how far away, then indeed you are keeping Christmas.



**Residents of the Town of Chevy Chase
Christmas caroling, December 1998.**



**“Candy Pull” at Chevy Chase College
and Seminary, Christmas week, 1907.**

CCHS is deeply grateful to these 2020 Spring Gala Sponsors, who maintained their contributions despite the cancellation of the Gala due to COVID-19.

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See the CCHS 2020 Fall Lecture Online

Learn about the march that turned the tide in the battle for the ballot!

On November 15, the CCHS Fall Lecture featured journalist and author Rebecca Roberts speaking on “Marching for the Vote: The 1913 Woman Suffrage Procession”. Due to a frustrating and unexplained delay of several weeks in the US postal system, our flyers for the lecture did not arrive in most homes until several days after the lecture.

If you missed the lecture, you missed the riveting story of how the grand spectacle of 5,000 women marching down Pennsylvania Avenue became the tipping point in the fight for women’s suffrage. The event also became the template for protest marches up to the present day. To hear the little-known story that was crucial to the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, view a video of the lecture on the CCHS website, chevychasehistory.org.



Scene from the Woman Suffrage Procession, March 3, 1913.



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