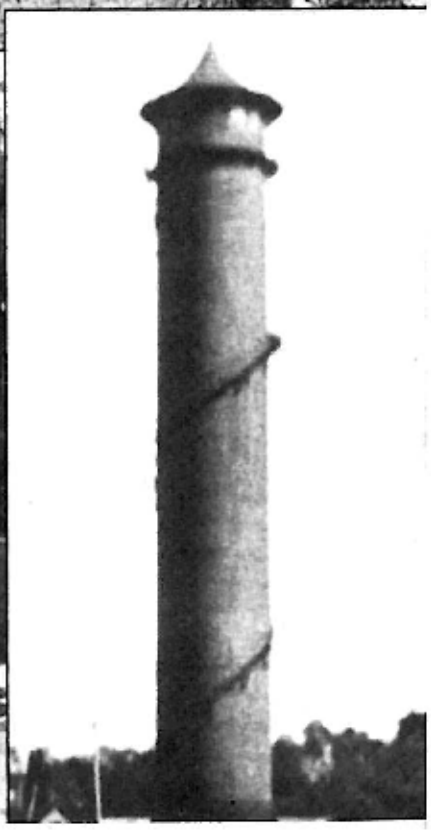
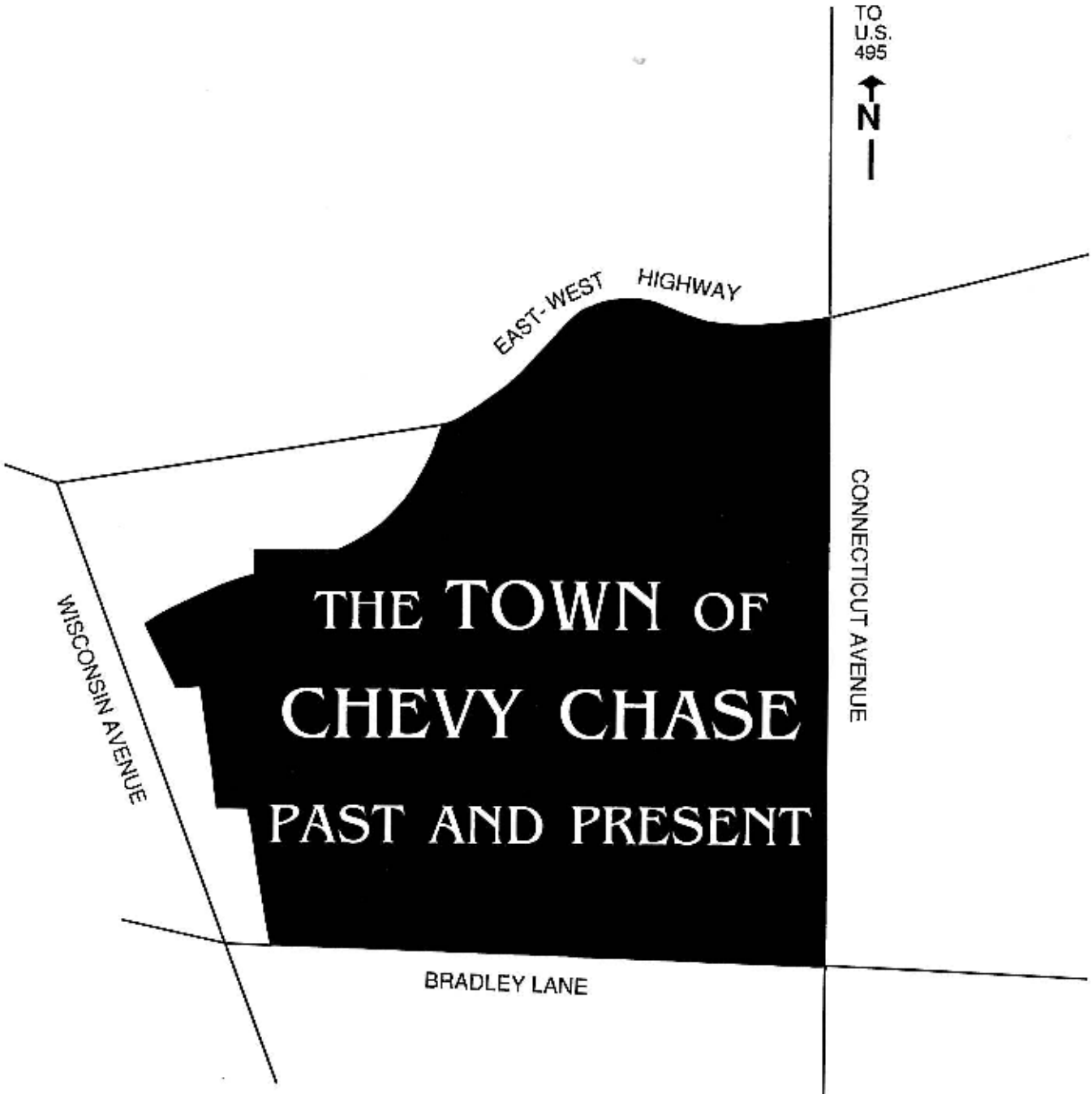
THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

PAST AND PRESENT





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THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE PAST AND PRESENT

Produced by the Town History Committee

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INTRODUCTION

The Town of Chevy Chase is bounded by Connecticut Avenue, Bradley Lane, Wisconsin Avenue, the B&O Georgetown Branch right-of-way, and the East-West Highway. Within this area are slightly more than one thousand single-family residences, the Chevy Chase Elementary School, the National 4-H Center, the Leland Community Recreation Center, and two parks.

In 1983 the town celebrated its 65th birthday. The program included the portrayal of selected events of local history. At that time it was noted that the recall of long-time residents was dimming and that family documents and photographs were becoming scarce as houses were resold and individuals moved away. There was an urgent need to collect and organize information if our heritage was to be preserved. The Town Council and concerned residents decided to create a history committee to accomplish this task.

This publication is one of several accomplishments of the committee, which has also produced a slide program featuring historical highlights of the Chevy Chase area. A town archives of local documents is also being established. Contributions of items such as maps, photographs, video tapes, and house deeds will be included in this ongoing project. Subjects considered to be of sufficient interest will become part of future publications or exhibits presented during community gatherings.

The chapters of this publication were written by local residents past and present. The many and generous contributors of information are acknowledged on the opposite page.

The History Committee

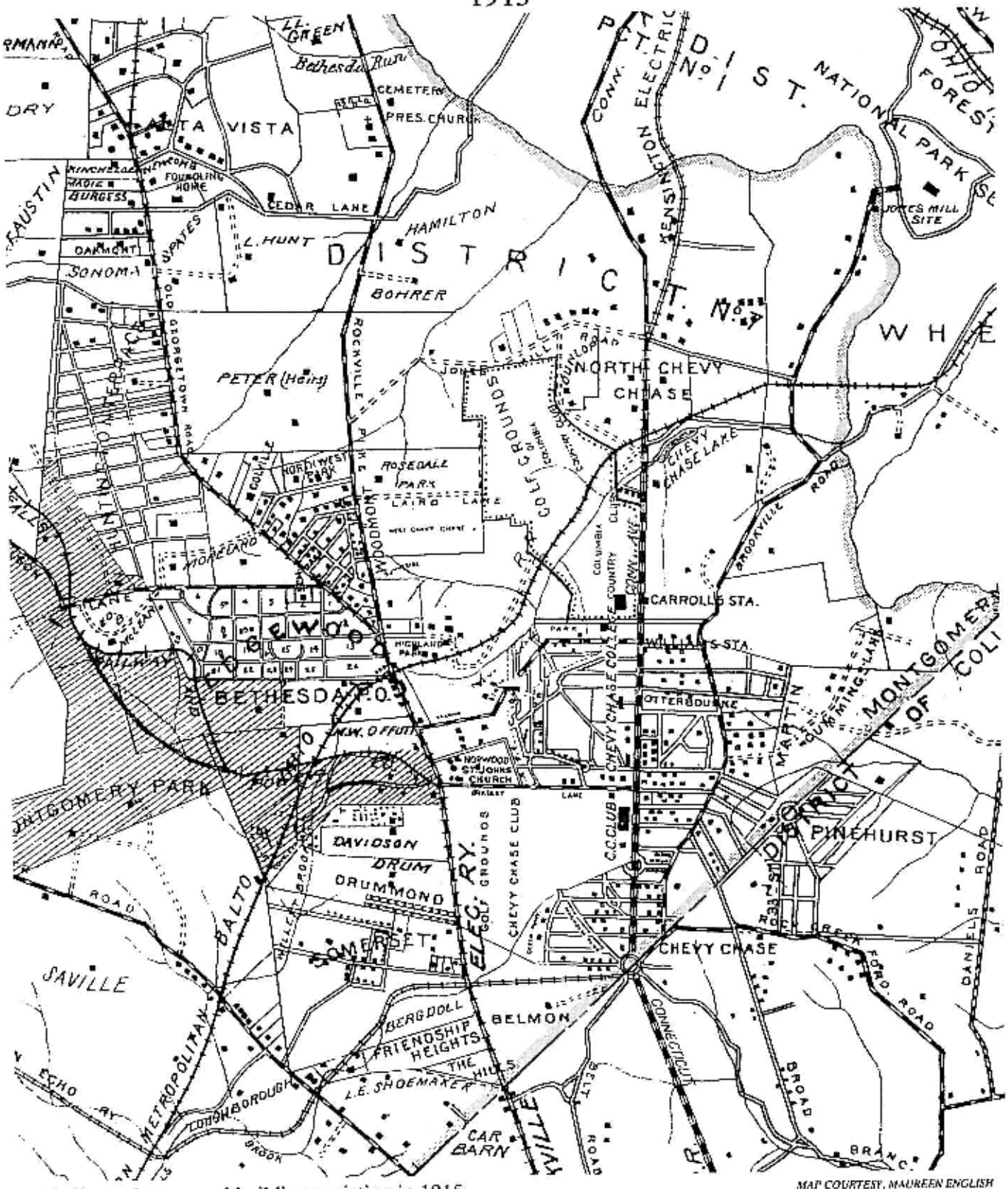
DETAIL FROM

BETHESDA DISTRICT

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

Compiled by S.D. Caldwell

1915



MAP COURTESY, MAUREEN ENGLISH

■ Indicates houses and buildings existing in 1915.

THE SETTING

Long before our time, the Town of Chevy Chase was part of a larger, gently rolling, wooded countryside, punctuated by several small fresh-water springs and streams. The soil, though thin, was adequate for farming, and the drainage was excellent. The high point, on Bradley Lane, is approximately 360 feet above the Potomac tidal basin, and the low point of some 110 feet is where Coquelin Run passes under East-West Highway.

The land is less punctuated by small streams today, as the two principal ones have been piped underground. Coquelin Run, which appears to be spring fed, was placed in large round cement conduits along the west side of Maple Avenue in the early 1960s and the intermittent stream, which ran down the little valley from Woodside Place along Meadow Lane, was placed underground long before Coquelin.

When Coquelin Run was placed underground, a pleasant flat green area was created southwest of the junction of East-West Highway and Maple Avenue. The southern part of this green space became Zimmerman Brothers' Park in honor of Fred and Paul Zimmerman. These two brothers, who had made the terrace in front of their home at 7605 Maple Avenue into one of the most attractive gardens in the area, did most of the planning of the park across the street.

The area is still covered with many trees, but they are more regimented and thus reflect the cultural influence of owners and town planning. The native trees in our town include ash, birch, butternut, catalpa, cedar, wild cherry, cottonwood, crab apple, white dogwood, elm, hemlock, holly, locust, maples of several types, oaks, redbud, spruce, pines, tulip poplar, and willow. Exotic trees include bamboo, Japanese cherry, pink dogwood, gingko, linden, Oriental and star magnolia, mimosa, and Norway maple. Azaleas have found this climate much to their liking, and the many varieties provide an abundance of color from the last week in April to the middle of May. Other flowering shrubs include deutzia, forsythia, laurel, mock orange, rhododendron, japonica, and spirea. In the summer, the rose of sharon and hydrangea are in bloom, followed by the crepe myrtle.

A fascinating and ancient perennial, the anemone japonica, blooms each early fall in the Fessenden garden at 4117 Woodbine Street. This plant produces a beautiful display of single white blossoms well worth seeing.

The well-cared-for trees and gardens provide food and cover for a great variety of birds and a few wild animals. The birds that commonly nest in the area include cardinals, catbirds, chickadees and titmice, crows, mourning doves, house finches, flickers, and several woodpeckers, including the large pileated woodpecker, grackles, ruby-throated hummingbirds, blue jays, kingbirds, and flycatchers, purple martins, mockingbirds, and robins, song and chipping sparrows, English and white-throated sparrows, starlings, chimney swifts, brown thrashers, vireos, and house wrens. An occasional local nester might be the yellow-billed cuckoo, Baltimore (now Northern) oriole, nighthawk, nuthatch, wood duck, and mallard, or wood thrush. In the spring and fall, the area is alive with migrating birds, such as grosbeaks, hawks, tanagers, veeries, warblers, and frequently gaggles of high-flying geese.

The most common wild animal in the area is the grey squirrel with an occasional black one. The smaller red squirrel, which used to be numerous, has become quite rare. Rabbits, o'possums, and raccoons are still around, but seem to have made such a nuisance of themselves that they are disappearing. If one has a quick eye, one might get a glimpse of a chipmunk or a shrew, or, quite late at night, a red fox.

Early Residents

Before the arrival of the first Europeans, this part of Maryland was settled for many generations by the Piscataway Indians, a generally peaceful branch of the great Algonquin Nation. Evidence of their past presence and settlements has been found not only in this immediate area but also in many places along the Potomac River, Rock Creek, and lesser streams. The usually moderate climate and the pleasant and variable terrain, particularly that part above the marshy area of the tidal basin of the Potomac, provided these early inhabitants with all their basic needs. There were abundant game animals and fish, many fresh-water springs, large streams for travel and trade, wood and stone for their tools and weapons, soil fertile enough for their few crops, and forests to provide the means for protection against weather and foes.

The first Europeans in this general area were probably Spaniards who came up the Chesapeake Bay from the Caribbean about the middle of the 16th century. They were followed into the bay considerably later by John Smith of Jamestown and Henry Fleet, a fur trader. The latter reportedly came up the Potomac River as far as Little Falls in the 1620s.

In 1632, a few years after Henry Fleet had made his

observations of this area known in England, Charles I granted a large area of land west of the head of Delaware Bay to Sir George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore. This tract included most of present-day Delaware, all of Maryland as we know it today, including the Potomac River, and the northern half of the Chesapeake Bay. This large grant was called Terra Maria or Maryland in honor of Queen Henriette Maria, the wife of Charles I.

After Sir George Calvert died, his grant passed to his eldest son, Cecil Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore. Cecil never came to America himself, but in 1633 he asked his younger brother, Leonard, to lead a group of some 200 colonists to Maryland. They sailed in the early months of 1634 in the 400-ton "Dove" and the much larger "Ark of London," landing on St. Clements Island in the southern part of the Chesapeake Bay on March 25, 1634. Shortly thereafter they established a settlement at St. Mary's City near the tip of a large peninsula projecting southward into the bay.

In the middle 1600s, settlements continued to grow around the bay. It was not until the late 1680s, however, that the Calverts were able to stimulate the interest of wealthy Englishmen in the Maryland areas north of the Potomac River. Some of the earliest grants made to these absentee landowners were immediately north and east of the present-day Town of Chevy Chase. They included such tracts as "Girls Portion," "Joseph's Park," and "Clean Drinking." About 1715, the landowners began to encourage tenants to move into what was considered uninhabited country.

Although there were a few well-to-do Englishmen among the permanent settlers, most were poor, uneducated, often indentured, men and women of English, Scotch, and German descent. Many found this part of Maryland to be remote, wild, and sometimes hostile. The fear of attacks did not come from the generally friendly local Indians but from northern marauding French and Indian raiders. The lack of passable roads made communication between tenant farms, movement of local militia, and transportation of supplies and products extremely difficult. Another continuing and increasing source of frustration were taxes levied first by the British government and then later by the federal, state, and county governments.

One of these early grants that is of particular interest to residents of the Town of Chevy Chase was that given to Charles Beall and Thomas Fletchall in April 1716. This tract of some 400 acres encompassed most of what is now the town, from Bradley Lane to Leland Street, as well as a large segment of Chevy Chase Section Three to the east. Less than a year after the original "Charles and Thomas" grant was made, it was sold to William Ray for 60 pounds sterling. In 1730, Ray began to subdivide his property, selling some lots and willing others to members of his family.

One of the eventual recipients was Mary Ray, who inherited 70 acres in 1760. Her triangularly-shaped property centered on what is now the intersection of Thornapple and Ridgewood Streets with apexes at Hillcrest and Bradley Lane on the south, East Avenue and Stanford Street on the west, and about the middle of Leland Street on the north. In 1780 the county tax assessor evaluated Mary Ray's estate as: "Property-20 lbs, no slaves, no plate, 8 cattle-17 lbs, other property-5 lbs." The tax assessor also indicated the main house contained four whites and was "old and very sorry, all cleared and of little value, as can be well conceived."

Cheivy Chace

The grant of most interest to all residents of Chevy Chase, in the District and in Maryland, is the 560 acres deeded to Colonel Joseph Belt by the fifth Lord Baltimore: "Wee Doe hereby Grant unto him the Said Joseph Belt all that tract or piece of Land Called Cheivy Chace . . . this tenth day of July Seventeen hundred and twenty-five."

No one knows why the name Chevy Chase was chosen for this grant. It refers to the Cheviot Hills, now rounded and green with lovely watered valleys grazed by Cheviot sheep, in Roxborough County, Scotland, and England's Northumbria. In Belt's time, this Cheviot Chase was wild, wooded, lonely border country, fiercely fought over for centuries by Scotch and French and English armies and by resident clans. One of the most famous of these battles had been joined at Otterburn, on the southern edge of the Cheviots, on August 19, 1388. The story of this clash between Douglas and Percy, told and retold in popular ballads such as "The Hunting of the Cheviot" and "The Battle of Otterburn," was well known to Scotch and English immigrants like the Belt family in 18th-century America. In 1802, the tale was published by Sir Walter Scott as "The Ballad of Chevy Chase," and it was this version which was most familiar to the 19th-century Americans who developed Chevy Chase and founded the Chevy Chase Club.

The first verse of one of these ballads reads:

"God prosper long our noble King,
Our lives and safties all!
A woeful hunting once there did
In Cheivy Chace befall."

Colonel Belt himself was English, third generation of

Bradley Lane in 1910. St. John's Church of Norwood Parish is in the background. COURTESY MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

a family established for 45 years in Virginia and Maryland. Born in Arundel County, Maryland, in 1680, he was the grandson of Humphrey Belt, who came to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1635. He was also well educated and a talented person. He became a colonel in the local militia and served in the French and Indian War. He was a member of the Maryland House of Burgesses, a trustee of the first free schools of Maryland, a founder of the Rock Creek Parish, an avid horseman, and the owner of a large estate. Married to Esther, daughter of Scotsman Ninean Beall, he was the father of a large family.

Shortly after receiving his grant, Colonel Belt built a two-and-a-half-story brick house on a site—now 3734 Oliver Street—just southeast of what is now Chevy Chase Circle. In order to transport the materials, especially the hundreds of English bricks, he built a road which branched off the old north-south Indian trail and ran northeast to his homesite. This intersection later became Tenleytown (Tenley Circle). A few sections of this old Belt Road are still in existence. The Belt family home was torn down in 1907.

In 1747 Colonel Belt built a large farmhouse about a half mile north. This site, now at the southwest corner of Connecticut Avenue and Bradley Lane, was later owned by Abraham Bradley and is now the location of one of the main buildings of the Chevy Chase Club.

Following Colonel Belt's death, his heirs began to divide the original 560-acre grant. This division and the creation of the District of Columbia in 1799 left the southeastern part of the Belt estate in the District and the remainder under the jurisdiction of Maryland. This dismemberment of the old estate helped accelerate the settlement of this part of Montgomery County. Later,

the establishment of Rock Creek Parish, the Bethesda Meeting House, St. John's Episcopal Church, and the Bethesda Post Office, as well as the influx of commercial families into the area, greatly increased the need for better roads for the transportation of goods and products and for communication and protection.

Trails and Roads

The earliest settlers in this area were heavily dependent on the old Indian trails. The principal trail, now Wisconsin Avenue, began on the north side of the Potomac River near where Rock Creek enters the Potomac. It ran north toward what is now Bethesda, Rockville, and Frederick, and then beyond to the west. The trail is now marked by 12 Madonna of the Trail statues, stretching across the United States. The first of them is immediately north of the Bethesda Post Office. By the middle 1700s, the rough trail was suitable for wagons as far as Frederick. From there on, it was basically a wide footpath, as General Braddock discovered when he led his heavily-burdened British and Colonial troops to their ignominious defeat by the French and Indians near Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburgh.

Colonel Belt built a road off this main trail, and near Tenleytown, where that branched off, another road—now River Road—was established running generally along the north side of the Potomac River toward Cumberland. These three roads generally running northward from the Potomac, along with such later east-west roads as Cedar Lane, Jones Bridge Road, Bradley Lane—once called Jackson Road—and Military Road, formed the basic network from which the current Bethesda-Chevy Chase road system was developed.

Although the initial grants to such recipients as John Courts in 1699 ("Clean Drinking Manor") and Colonel Belt in 1725 helped open the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area for settlement, it was the development of the area by the Chevy Chase Land Company that established the style of living that has endured for nearly 100 years in Chevy Chase.

Linscott Hall

Connecticut Avenue looking north from Rosemary Street about 1912.

COURTESY, MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DEVELOPMENT

Chevy Chase was founded largely on California gold and Nevada silver, for the two men most responsible for its development had brought fortunes from the west that had been made through both.

At the time Chevy Chase was conceived in the 1880s, Washington was a small federal city that did not extend west as far as Georgetown or north farther than Florida Avenue. To the northwest, a group of western mining millionaires had built mansions on farmland—transforming the area around Dupont Circle into what was briefly known as "The Honest Miner's Camp." One of the biggest houses, called Stewart's Castle, was built in 1873 on the present site of the Riggs Bank by William Morris Stewart, an easterner who had made a fortune mining gold in California and profiting from the silver of the stupendous Comstock Lode in what was then western Utah Territory. Stewart, a lawyer, became the leading political figure there, sponsored Nevada's admission as a state in 1864, and was Senator from Nevada when a good friend and business associate, lawyer Francis Newlands of San Francisco, arrived in Washington with experience in real estate development—and with money to invest.

There was considerable interest in developing real estate outside the city core. And Newlands soon focused on a vast area of farmland on the northern side of Rock Creek which had been pointed out to him by retired Army Colonel George Armes. Charles Glover of Riggs Bank suggested that Newlands and Stewart, who also had money to invest, involve Edward J. Stellwagen of the real estate firm of Thomas J. Fisher. Decades later, Stellwagen, then head of the Fisher Company and the Union Trust Company, was to succeed Newlands as head of the enterprise.

The story from which this sketch is primarily drawn is documented by Judith Helm Robinson in her piece about Chevy Chase in the book *Washington at Home*, and by Albert W. Atwood in *Francis G. Newlands, A Builder of the Nation*, published by the Newlands Company in 1969.

The Newlands group, using proxies, quietly bought up most of the farmland between Calvert Street in the District and Jones Bridge Road in faraway Maryland just south of what is now the Capital Beltway. They amassed more than 1700 acres in all.

The group formed the Chevy Chase Land Company in June 1890 with Newlands as chief executive and Colonel Armes out of the picture, apparently because he talked prematurely about the land purchases. Senator Stewart originally invested $300,000 in the project but seems to have sold out sometime after he retired from the Senate in 1905 and returned to Nevada.

The millions that were to be poured into the development of the new suburb of Chevy Chase were in the hands of Newlands.

The Senator from Nevada

Born in 1848 in Natchez, Mississippi, and raised in Quincy, Illinois, and Washington, D.C., Newlands went to Yale, then studied law at night at Columbian College, now George Washington University. He moved to San Francisco in 1869 to seek his fortune, and he found it.

Francis G. Newlands

He became the valued lawyer and friend of William Sharon, who had prospered in California real estate, and, like Stewart, in the Comstock silver mines in Virginia City, Nevada. Sharon, a financier and part owner of the Bank of California, moved into that rough and ready boomtown at a time when the more accessible veins of silver had been mined. He reorganized, centralized, and financed mining operations, and built the 16-mile Virginia and Truckee Railway to carry out the ore. Subsequently the mines poured forth such riches that President Abraham Lincoln credited them with propping up the United States during the Civil War.

Sharon had a son and two daughters. One of the daughters, Flora, married a British nobleman, Sir George Fermor-Hesketh, who had rounded Cape Horn in his yacht, had met and married her in lavish style in San Francisco, and had borne her away to his huge estate in England. Newlands married the other Sharon daughter, Clara Adelaide, in 1874. Handsome, sensitive, well-educated, she was to die in childbirth in 1882, leaving three daughters. When Sharon died three years later, Newlands became a trustee of his vast estate and in charge of one-third of it.

Newlands' father-in-law Sharon, like Stewart, had been a U.S. Senator from Nevada. Newlands himself was to become a Nevada Congressman in 1893, then

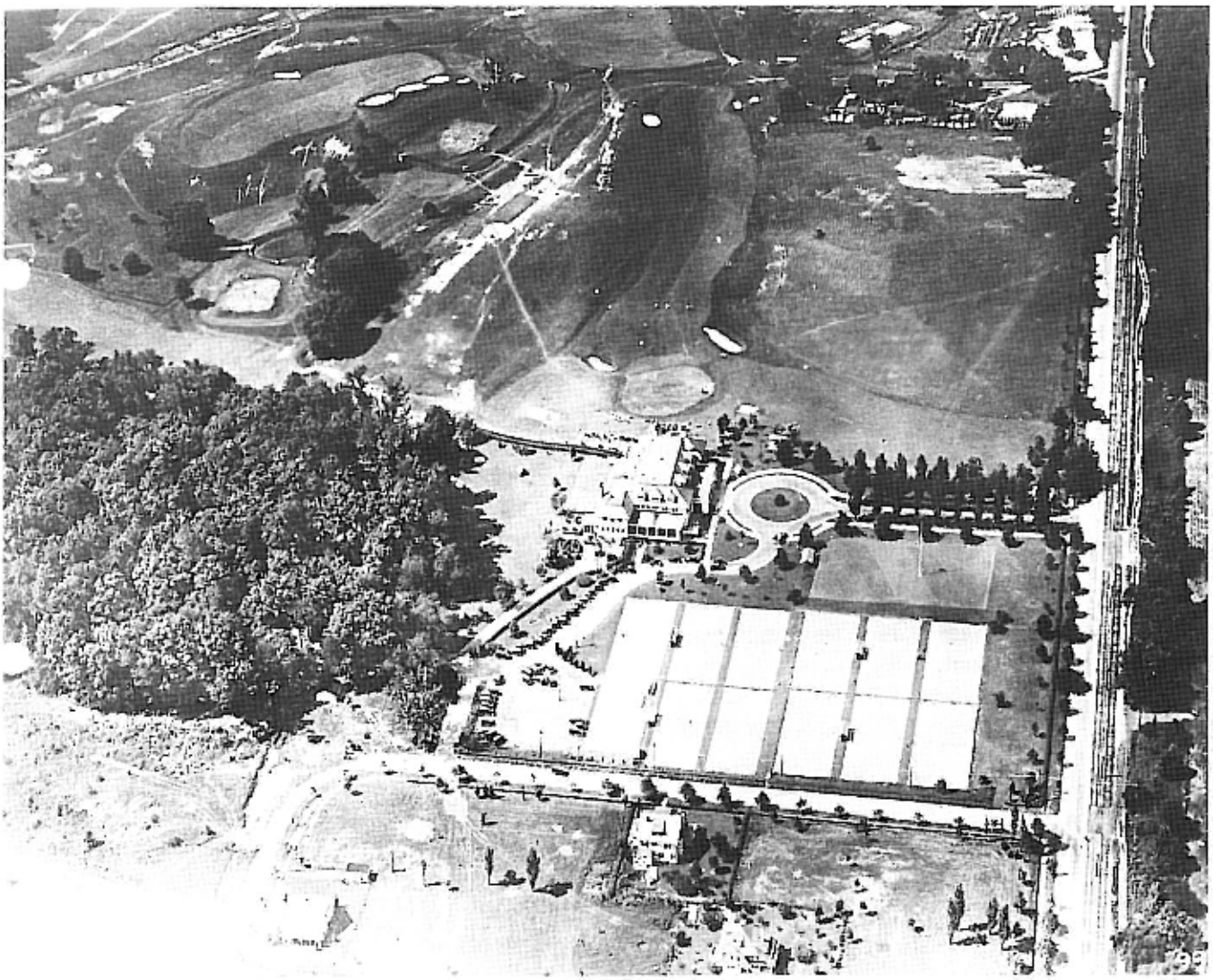
became Senator in 1903 and served until he died in 1917. He was active on more than 19 different Senate committees, spearheaded irrigation projects in the west, and became a close friend of President Wilson. Some of his colleagues, including Senator William Henry King of Utah, had wanted Newlands to be the Democratic presidential candidate in 1912, but, according to King, Newlands was "too modest and too unpretentious." Atwood reports that the *Los Angeles Times* once said in an editorial that Newlands was "honest and patriotic and learned, and as much of a statesman as it is possible for a Democrat to be."

Once the Chevy Chase Land Company was formed, largely with Sharon-Newlands money, the company undertook a gigantic development project.

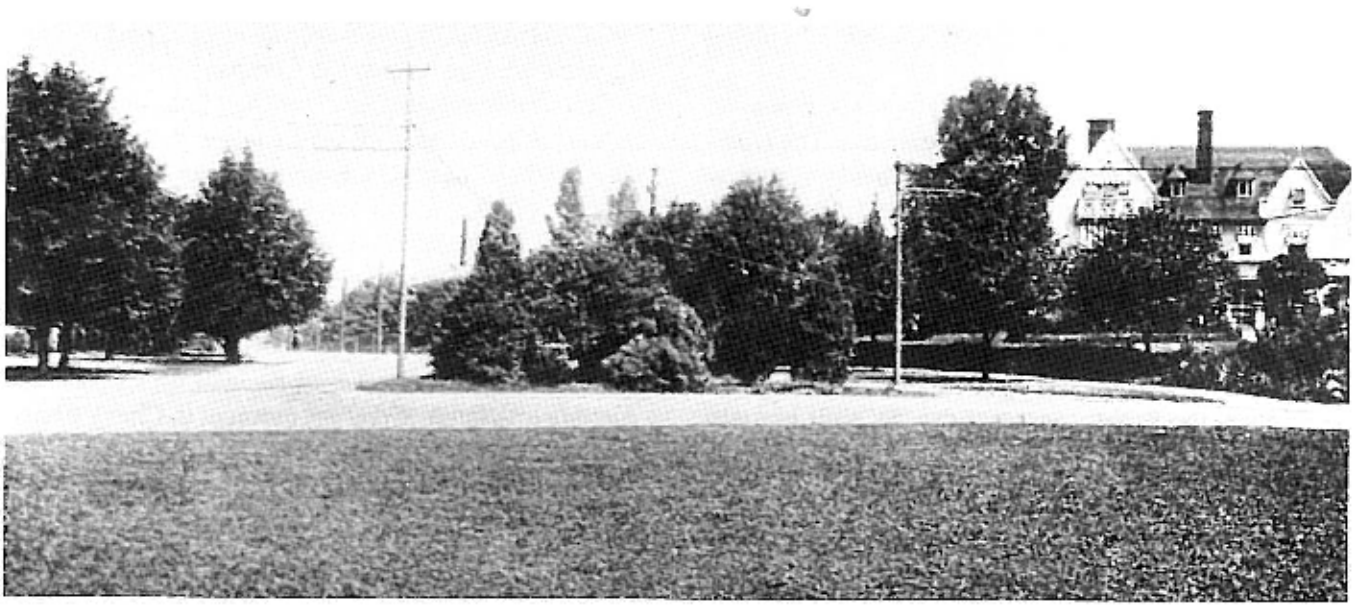
Building Connecticut Avenue

To connect this far-away area to the city, the company extended Connecticut Avenue through all the land it had purchased, with workers using picks and shovels to excavate miles of roadbed up hill and down. Trestle bridges went up over Rock Creek at Calvert Street and over Klingle Road. The company built an electric railway at a cost of $1.5 million to thrust out to the end of its area.

The building of Connecticut Avenue—and its railway—incidentally stimulated the development of Cleveland Park in the District. But more important for the Town of Chevy Chase, Senator Newlands had many specific ideas about suburban development for the origi-



Looking north with Connecticut Avenue on the right side of this circa 1915 photo. Meadow Lane, lower left, curves into Cypress Street, now East-West Highway. The Columbia Country Club occupies the upper area.
COURTESY, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



Chevy Chase Circle looking north with the Newlands/Corby Mansion at right.
PHOTO BY MRS. MINNIE E. BROOKE. ROBERT A. TRIAX COLLECTION

nal Chevy Chase area that were later incorporated into other sections of Chevy Chase when building began there after the turn of the century.

He employed several experts to plan and build in Maryland a development with good roads, wide streets, pure water, a sanitary sewage system, and sidewalks, with provision for such amenities as shopping, schools, churches, and clubs. He established zoning regulations that barred apartment buildings and row houses.

Nathan Barrett, a student of the illustrious Frederick Law Olmstead, was employed as landscape architect to design the suburb. The development was to have large lots and wide streets with English and Scottish names. The homes on the main street had to cost at least $5,000, a substantial sum in those days, and those on the side streets $3,000. Newlands thought good landscaping was an economic asset and a pleasant amenity. Native tulip poplar, white and black oak, pin oak, linden, and sycamore were planted or carefully preserved. And many foreign trees were planted, including maples from Norway, English elm, and Japanese boxwood.

"Uncle Frank's Folly"

Big steps were taken to lure potential buyers to the area. With an eye toward the carriage trade, Senator Newlands and the Land Company helped form the Chevy Chase Club, and he became its first president. To attract potential buyers to the healthy cooler air of more elevated Chevy Chase, the Land Company in 1893 built the Spring Hotel, which is now a small part of the main building of the 4-H Center. And to attract everyone able to afford a trolley ride through the rising new suburb, the Land Company dammed a small stream, Coquelin Run, near the northern end of the company's holdings at Jones Bridge Road, creating Chevy Chase Lake to the east of Connecticut Avenue. An amusement complex there drew people to the area on weekends; the complex eventually included boats for hire, refreshment kiosks, a merry-go-round, a bandstand where the Marine Band often played, and a dance pavillion where Irene and Vernon Castle introduced the Castle Walk in the ragtime era.

Newlands built a house for himself—known later as the Corby Mansion—at Chevy Chase Circle. However, when he found that his guests were missing the last trolley to town and time and again had to spend the night at his place, he sold it and moved closer to the Capitol, buying the estate called Woodley, which is the Maret School today.

By the end of 1893, a year of perhaps the worst depression in American history, Atwood writes, Newlands had spent three million dollars on land, grading, bridges, and taxes, and nearly a million in developing Chevy Chase Village.

While other developments went under, the secretary of the company wrote stockholders four years later, in February 1897, that "sales of lots (for 1896) totaled $15,166.50 . . . [but] the town of Chevy Chase has quite held its own in growth during its three-and-a-half years

of life, there being now 27 houses occupied by families."

There was very little further development, however, until Chevy Chase was nearly 30 years old. The Company was land poor for that long period, held together by the banks and mortgage lender Thomas J. Fisher. The Senator's nieces called the Chevy Chase venture "Uncle Frank's Folly." But, according to Atwood, Newlands never lost his good disposition or his faith in the future of Chevy Chase: he "had no taste for quick speculative gains but was interested only in long-term results."

Besides, the Senator was not exactly poor himself. Extensive family holdings in the west included San Francisco's Palace Hotel.

Over the years, Chevy Chase was to become one of the most famous suburbs in the United States. In our town, beautiful houses were to be built at different times on such streets as Leland, Beechwood, and Rosemary, as well as Meadow Lane. But little progress was made in developing Chevy Chase until the building boom that followed World War I, when lots in Section Four and other sections finally began to sell.

The Land Company was to pay no dividend until 1922, five years after the death of Senator Newlands and 32 years after he formed the Company.

Since other original investors had long since cashed in their chips, or papered their walls with the stock, the Chevy Chase Land Company today is owned by the Senator's direct or collateral descendants.

Today the company is going strong, with far-flung interests. In our area, it owns the Chevy Chase Shopping Center and the Metro building which it built in Friendship Heights on the northeast corner of Wisconsin and Western Avenues. It also owns land on Connecticut Avenue just south of the bus terminal in Chevy Chase, D.C.

In the area where Chevy Chase Lake once stood, the company owns the office and retail complex—land and buildings—on both sides of Connecticut between Manor Road and the railroad tracks, as well as the townhouses and garden apartments on Manor Road.

Senator Newlands would be pleased to know his company is doing very well indeed and that his nieces were short-sighted in calling Chevy Chase "Uncle Frank's Folly."

John Linehan

COURTESY, MIREK DABROWSKI

The Offutt farm house, 4500 Leland Street, has been a private residence since it was built circa 1888.

TOWN GOVERNMENT

By the turn of the century, the development of Chevy Chase by the Land Company straddled the Maryland-District of Columbia line along Western Avenue. Chevy Chase south of Western Avenue was part of the District of Columbia, which provided it with the services of a city. Chevy Chase north of Western Avenue was part of the State of Maryland and had to look for services to Montgomery County.

Because Montgomery County then was rural and sparsely populated, services were geared mainly to meet the needs of a farming constituency. The county did not yet have home rule. It was governed by a Board of County Commissioners under the state's authority. The county seat was in Rockville, ten miles north along a rough road. In spite of the presence of a commissioner who lived in Bethesda, the commission's interests were rural.

The First Associations

As a consequence, the residents in the increasingly suburban south organized themselves into citizens' associations to provide many missing services for themselves. First to form in 1895 was the "Chevy Chase Association," which met monthly in "Library Hall" located on Connecticut at Kirke Street. It maintained a "Free Library" at that site with open hours on Wednesday and Saturday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Next came the "Bethesda Citizens' Association" in 1904, meeting each month and working through committees for Law and Order, Roads and Highways, Education, Health, "Farms, Gardens and Domestic," and Transportation. In 1909, residents of Section Three and Four formed the "Chevy Chase Citizens' Association of Section Three and Four," also meeting monthly to deal with matters similar to those of the Bethesda Association. At that time, the "Chevy Chase Taxpayers' Committee" was active in the area and included among its officers a health officer, Dr. Conrad of Section Four, and a building inspector.

The developers of Chevy Chase had a general plan for their new community. They envisioned a village of only single-family residences, detached houses, with a minimum value. They laid out wide streets to allow for sidewalks and green parking strips with street trees; more space between homes for privacy; and large yards, open in the front with stables and accessory buildings only in the rear. Corner lots had to comply with even greater setbacks to insure the openness of the community. The Land Company applied covenants to the deeds of their properties to achieve these goals, and later developers of surrounding properties did the same.

The early residents no doubt chose their properties because of these amenities. It is not surprising that the local citizens' associations sought not only improved services but the authority to preserve the general plan and to insure that the requirements of the deeds were met. Since local authority was given by the state, they sought the help of the State Legislature.

In 1910, the Maryland State Legislature passed what was known as "The Municipal Control Act" (PLL 1910, Chapter 383) under which the sections of the Village of Chevy Chase were given the ability to seek self-government as Special Taxing Districts. In this Act, the Village was described as Sections Two, Three, and Four, and Martin's Addition. As such, each section, or any combination of sections, would be empowered to levy and collect taxes to open and maintain their streets, sidewalks, drainage and sanitation; to provide for police protection and other public services; and to require that building and land restrictions were strictly followed. The process for becoming a taxing district was invitingly simple. An advertised public hearing, a petition of the majority of a section's voting residents, and an evaluation of all taxable properties upon which to base a section tax rate were to be in the hands of the county commissioners by the 15th of April in any year. The taxes collected would then be paid to the treasurer of the incorporated association and used for the purposes enumerated in the enabling legislation.

Not Quite Rural

Although much of the suburb was platted, it was still in its undeveloped state in 1910. Rolling land with wooded crests descended into meadow land, some of it made soggy by the numerous artesian streams just below the surface. While making some areas too wet to plant and build on, these streams provided the area's water, which was stored by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission in its water tower at Rosemary Circle. Coquelin Run ran free northward to the Columbia Country Club. The building of houses was concentrated along Connecticut Avenue, Bradley Lane, Rosemary Street, Elm Street (now Stanford), and along Meadow Lane on the east side. The building boom was to come in the 1920s. Adjacent to Section Four to the north was a Shannon and Luchs development known as

Chevy Chase Park, and beyond that only woodland up to Cypress Street, which was later to form part of East-West Highway. On the west, outside the section along Bradley Lane, lay another development known as Norwood Heights that had a small church on the corner of Bradley Lane and Wisconsin Avenue. All the rest of the area along Wisconsin Avenue to the B&O Railroad was in open lands owned by the Barrett and Walsh families, later to be purchased by the Chevy Chase Land Company as Section Eight, and sold for residential home sites in the 1920s.

Olive and Mary Imirie leave their Bradley Lane residence in a 1915 Hupmobile
COURTESY, MR. AND MRS. SCOTT IMIRIE

Of the original Village of Chevy Chase, the first section to take advantage of the "Municipal Control Act" and the opportunity for self-government was Section Two, including part of Section One. They became a Special Taxing District in April, 1914 (Md PLL 1914, Chapter 610), and are known today as Chevy Chase Village.

During this same period, owners of building lots and the approximately 25 families who lived in Section Four of the Village of Chevy Chase formed the Section Four Citizens' Association and also sought self-government. Its chairman was Dr. William Blum, a former professor of Chemistry at the University of Utah, who had come to work at the U.S. Bureau of Standards in 1910. He lived on what is now Stanford Street with his wife and son.

The First Town Fathers

As chairman, Dr. Blum wrote a letter in April 1915, to the Montgomery County Commissioners, beginning a process seeking the special taxing status and incorporation for the section. Three years later, on April 10, 1918, action of the Maryland Legislature in Senate Bill 403 (Md PLL 1918, Chapter 177), created another Special Taxing District in the Village of Chevy Chase, to be known as the Village of Chevy Chase Section Four.

These Enabling Acts for Section Two (later called The Village) and Section Four (later called The Town) are exactly the same language throughout and gave both the legal authority to govern themselves and to preserve and protect the general plan of development first envisioned and specified by the Chevy Chase Land Company.

The five members of the organizing citizens' committee became the governing "Citizens' Committee" in the enabling legislation, with William Blum designated as chairman and E. Percival Wilson, J. W. Imirie, J. C. Pearson, and Henry H. Glassie as committee members. These names were listed formally in the legislation. In the minutes of that first meeting, at which he was elected secretary-treasurer, E. P. Wilson noted that "all members present [at the Imirie home] called upon Judge Butterfield at his home in Bethesda at about 7:15 p.m. and took the oath of office as prescribed in Senate Bill 403, after which "the members returned to Mr. Imirie's home and there discussed generally the provisions and interpretations of said Bill," finally adjourning "without coming to any decision."

What the members of this first government undertook to do was to levy taxes "for the purpose of opening, improving, repairing and lighting the streets, roads, lanes, alleys, sidewalks, parking, drainage, sewerage, sanitation, and other village maintenance and improvements, and for furnishing police protection, clerical and other public service, including the removal of ashes [from coal-fired furnaces], garbage and other refuse, and the disposal thereof; for the employment of a building inspector to enforce the requirements of all deeds of conveyance for properties situated in said village; for enforcing building, sanitary, and other regulations; for the incorporation, election and succession of the Citizens' Committee who shall appoint a Treasurer to receive and disburse said funds; also direct the said Board of County Commissioners to pay over to the Treasurer of said village for opening, improving, main-

taining and repairing the County and other public roads, streets, and lanes, the money collected on the account of the County road tax in the same amount and manner as is now required by law to be paid to incorporated towns . . ." as stipulated in the Enabling Act. The Citizens Committee also had the power to make special assessments, to acquire, condemn or otherwise obtain property for public purposes, and to borrow money for these purposes.

The minutes kept by the Citizens' Committee from 1918 to 1920 were not found in the archives. One can only assume that the committee met and did take the place of the Land Company in managing Section Four. Although the section was entitled to receive $570 in each of the first two years for road taxes collected by the county in the section, as well as the $1,153 per year based on $.20 a hundred dollars of assessed base on all properties, they may very well not have received the money. Letters written after 1920 requesting the payment of funds due the section from the county treasurer were very frequent.

On May 10, 1920, the Citizens' Committee was ready to conduct a general association meeting at the county school on Valley Place. The main business was to elect members of the Citizens' Committee for a term of one year, and to set the tax rate. Incumbent members were reelected, and the tax rate of $.20 continued for another year.

At the first regular committee meeting in June, at which the oath of office was sworn to, a schedule of meetings was set. They were to be held monthly, except for July and August when they would be at the call of the chair. Two committees were appointed, one headed by the chairman to write regulations for the governing of the section, and the other to plan for the repair of roads. It was also decided not to change the method for collecting subscriptions to the electric light fund for street light, namely a "volunteer contribution" by each household.

At a special meeting on June 17, 1920, the Bill of Recommendations and Regulations as prepared and submitted by the subcommittee was discussed. According to the minutes, "Mr. Blum stated that he had gone over the report of his committee very carefully with Messrs. Glassie and Imirie and that they were in accord with same." After making some changes, the recommendations and regulations being "the same as adopted and now in vogue in Sections II and III Chevy Chase, Maryland," were accepted. The document was referred to the general meeting of residents later in June. A paragraph-by-paragraph reading by the 25 residents in attendance resulted in additional changes and additions from the floor, with final approval of the document that evening. On July 13, 1920, the County Commissioners approved the "Regulations for the Welfare and Government of Section Four of the Village of Chevy Chase." At a cost of $500, a booklet was printed and one distributed to each residence.

At an August meeting, the committee made two important and required appointments, those of Building Inspector and Health Officer.

The committee appointed Edwin A. Schmitt, of Ridgewood Avenue, to be the first Building Inspector, a part-time position whose salary was one-half of the fees collected from builders for a required building permit. His duties also included making sure that fences were no more than five feet high, that no garages were being lived in, and that no one was dumping trash on empty lots. By 1926, the position became one of Superinten-

The J.W. Bowie house, Blackthorn Street, was built in 1913. COURTESY: ANNE HERRING

dent under "Judge" A. Moore Berry, also a section resident. He got a straight salary of $50 a month and two handymen to assign to making "repairs" to the streets, cutting overgrown shrubs on street corners, painting hydrants white, and other odd jobs to keep the section tidy. He was most conscientious in keeping an eye on illegal and untidy practices by home owners, which earned him a raise in pay to $75 a month.

Also required by the regulations was the appointment of a practicing physician to the position of Health Officer. The first was Dr. Ryan Devereux of Bradley Lane; he was followed by Dr. Thomas Conrad, who had been active in the first Chevy Chase Association and in the Chevy Chase Taxpayers' Committee. The duties of the Health Officer included having the county school on Valley Place fumigated regularly, investigating contagion, and quarantining houses. He complained at a 1922 general meeting that he was not being informed either by residents or their physicians of births, deaths, and contagion which were to be reported to the state. The Health Officer received no compensation for his work, but was reimbursed for expenses. The last Health Officer was appointed in 1946, after which time the health responsibility was assumed by the county for the state.

In the fall of 1920, the Citizens' Committee in response to residents' objections to what seemed like unusually high rates of assessments in the section, called a special citizens' meeting for October 13. To it was invited Mr. Hunt, the Bethesda Commissioner, who could then hear from taxpayers directly. With so few services from the state, how could taxpayers be assessed so much for them?

The upshot was that the county "saw the injustice in such assessments" and ordered reassessments in a number of cases. This action on behalf of its citizens cost the committee $100 in revenues for the year, reducing the total from $1,798.19 to $1,694.43.

Later, during the regular committee meeting for October 1920, the section's first budget was agreed upon: for roads—$800; for street lighting—$400; for everything else—$300. The treasurer was authorized to open an account at the Bethesda Bank for the deposit of all section funds.

A tip from the county treasurer to the section treasurer regarding revenue sources in Tangible and Intangible Property Taxes resulted in the preparation of an alphabetical list of all property owners. All furniture over a value of $500, as well as automobiles were taxed at a rate of $.45 per hundred value of which $.15 came back to the section. Pressure on the Girls' Seminary to pay section taxes, and the requirement of the Chevy Chase Land Company to do the same, did add to revenues a bit.

By the January 1921 winter meeting and election of Citizens' Committee members, a regularity had been established. New committee members were elected for a term of one year, all five at one time, with the annual tax-setting meeting held in the spring. The committee met each month, usually at the home of the chairman, even in July and August in spite of their intention to skip those two months.

By 1925, annual election of all five was discontinued in favor of election only in the even years for a term of two years. In 1950, this changed again to three persons elected in the even years and two persons on the odd years, keeping the term of office at two years. Each new committee elected its own officers for the year. The annual winter meeting was discontinued in favor of just one annual citizens' meeting in the spring for both electing the committee members and tax rate setting.

In 1921, the committee entered into a contract for the regular removal of trash and garbage from the rear of each residence. The garbage, which had to be free of glass and tin, was then trucked out of the section to be fed to hogs. Trash was collected separately and simply dumped into designated sites within the section and burned. Complaints of untended trash fires were frequent. While garbage and trash were removed weekly, ashes were picked up twice weekly from October through April and dumped into low spots in the streets.

Chevy Chase Park

Adjacent to Section Four to the west and north was Chevy Chase Park, which shared lower Ridgewood and Maple Avenues with the section. Land to the north and west was open and still undeveloped. The desirability of including Chevy Chase Park in Section Four was realized in 1924, when the charter was modified to include it within the section boundaries. Land to the north belonging to the Chevy Chase Land Company and known as Section Four-B was undeveloped and was not to become part of Section Four until its annexation in 1967. Chevy Chase Park increased the section tax base by $251,000, bringing the revenue up from $6,735 to $7,912.

Besides enlarging the area of the section, the 1924 charter change authorized the committee to borrow money, to issue bonds, and to contract indebtedness for the maintenance and repairs to streets and for other improvements, including the purchase of equipment.

Eastward view of Rosemary Street from the water tower in 1927 ROBERT A. TRUAX COLLECTION

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission was made responsible for water and sewerage in the section, and for making all water and sewer connections.

Dispute About Streets

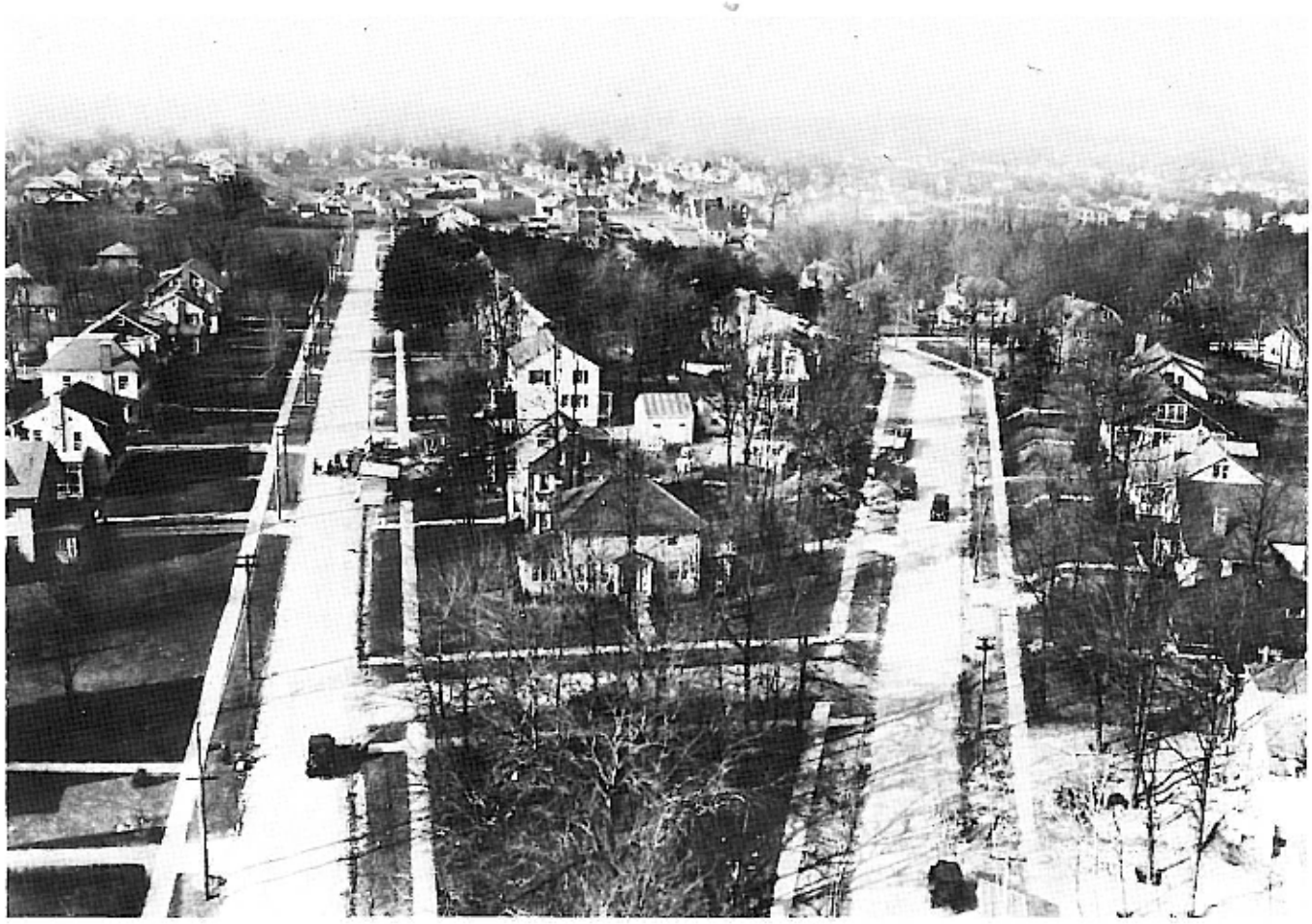
With its new charter-authorized ability to borrow money for street work, the committee proposed a plan by which it could have the necessary funds in hand with which to do it. With streets of crushed stone regularly disappearing in mud and pot holes, they felt that residents would welcome tackling the job at one time and applying a macadam surface which would hold up better. The residents, first by a post card vote and later at the annual meeting, rejected the plan because of its front foot assessment requirement. In desperation, the committee decided to go ahead with the plan to float a bond, but the residents countered with a petition to nullify the action. The Circuit Court responded positively to the petitioners, and nullified the committee's actions. So opposed were residents to front foot assessments that they agreed to a large increase in the tax levy from $.25 to $.45 in 1925, and again in 1926 to $.50, the rate limit authorized by the charter.

While each of the sections of the Village of Chevy Chase was concentrating on internal matters, outside forces were at work that needed watching. Representatives of the sections met in 1921, not only to share information, but also to discuss ways of working together when necessary. A proposed "Community Welfare League" was not established, but an understanding was reached that all would stay in touch and in close communication in an emergency.

Apartment Threats

The first threat came in 1923 from the Chevy Chase Land Company, proposing a small but elegant commercial development on its land north of Thornapple Street on the east side of Connecticut Avenue. It was angrily challenged in a public meeting of the Chevy Chase sections, resulting in backing down by the Land Company. Its president wrote later in a letter that this "would have been the handsomest thing of its kind in this part of the country," but since the residents did "not seem to want it, there seems no reason why we should go ahead with this expense." It would have cost $50,000.

When again in 1929 the Chevy Chase Land Company proposed the rezoning of its land along the east side of Connecticut Avenue for apartments, the outcry in the



Looking west from the water tower along Rosemary and Stanford Streets in 1927 ROBERT A. TRUAX COLLECTION

form of section resolutions to the County Council was vehement. The County Council turned down the rezoning request and no apartments appeared.

Land on the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Bradley Lane had been deeded in 1898 by the Land Company to the school board for school construction. Not all of the area was used for that purpose, so the board sold it in 1904 to a Bradley Apartment Company. Curiously, it was sold without the covenant restricting its use to single-family residential use. When, in 1925, an apartment company representative approached the section committee asking for assurance that a building permit would be issued to it, they were chagrined to learn that this was not probable. They proceeded, nevertheless, to make a formal request for the permit, and were denied it by the committee.

Again, all the neighboring sections raised a cry against the proposal, supporting Section Four in its position and offering to raise funds to oppose the proposal legally if necessary. When the company went ahead to break ground for its building, the committee had the foreman arrested. In turn, the company took the section to court for refusing the permit—and won. Fearing high costs in appealing the ruling, the committee verbally agreed to issue a permit. The company still decided to have a writ of mandamus served on each of the committees, just to make sure it got the permit. Then in June of 1926, the company attorney requested a return of the $100 deposit for the permit. For reasons of its own, the company had simply abandoned the project. Subsequent sale of the property included the covenant.

Problems, Problems

The decade of the 1920s was certainly booming in growth for the section, and possibly even "roaring," considering all the vocal and written complaints to the Citizens' Committee. So much so fast, with so little resources to take care of maintenance and repair needs called for by a greatly increased population, developed frustrations that erupted at the first citizens' meeting of the 1930s.

The dispute was brought to a head at the general meeting over who would have to pay for the repairs to the

broken down sidewalk on Bradley Lane. A potential contractor for the work advised against repairing the walk as more expensive in the end than simply replacing it. Front foot assessment again reared its unwelcome head. Repairs came out of general funds, while new construction for sidewalks came out of front foot assessments. Residents attending the meeting did not agree with a former committee member and resident of Bradley Lane that the work should be paid out of general funds. The Bradley resident was so outraged that he questioned whether he and other residents were getting their money's worth out of local government. He wondered if it wouldn't make sense to give up the charter and go under the Suburban Sanitary District of the County.

The ensuing heated discussion solidified in favor of his proposal that a committee be appointed to consider giving up the charter. Such a committee was appointed and ordered to report back at a special general meeting later in the year. Its conclusion after serious study was that it would not be in the best interests of the residents to make such a change, stating that members of the committee are residents acquainted with its needs, are non-partisan, take pride in the beauty of the section, and have a concern for its welfare, unlike the "political members of the County Commissioners who direct the Suburban District." What is more, members of the committee are unpaid volunteers who are civic minded in their service to the community. They recommended against a change and were supported in this by residents attending the special meeting.

Improvements Begin

The reconsideration of the charter, although the result of a civic temper tantrum, did make it possible for residents who came after 1918 to make a positive statement in favor of its value to them in 1930. The problem of sidewalks on Bradley Lane was not solved, largely due to the issue of who was responsible for it, Bradley being a state road. Not until 30 years later was a new sidewalk in place—at town expense.

Petitions by other residents for concrete curbs and gutters got street improvements underway. Storm sewer catchbasins were moved to within the parkings to prevent breaking and displacement by cars, and the dish gutters were paved with small boulders. Macadam surfaces were applied to streets, replacing gravel roads.

A program for tree plantings in the parkings was begun, using maples and dogwoods to replace the dying pin oaks. Attention was paid to tree infestations by scale and borers, in the attempt to save older trees. As houses were erected, every attempt was made to work around the standing trees which gave the section its country-like look. Street names in the town reflect this concern in their allusions such as Oakridge, Ridgewood, Sycamore, Thornapple, Maple, and others.

Adoption of the building code in use in the metropolitan area by the Citizens' Committee was important in maintaining the quality and look of the new houses. Connecticut Avenue was paved along its west side, keeping the center strip. The section provided light poles along it and on more streets within the section as the number of houses increased. The Davis Trash Company was serving a community of 427 houses by the middle of the 1930s, a large increase from the 25 houses at incorporation in 1918.

Concern for safety resulted in night patrols from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. By 1940, the need for more official policing was recognized by the county, which appointed a Deputy Sheriff, whose duties included the inspection of empty houses, and ticketing moving and traffic violations. Cost to the section was his uniform and revolver.

The Effects of War

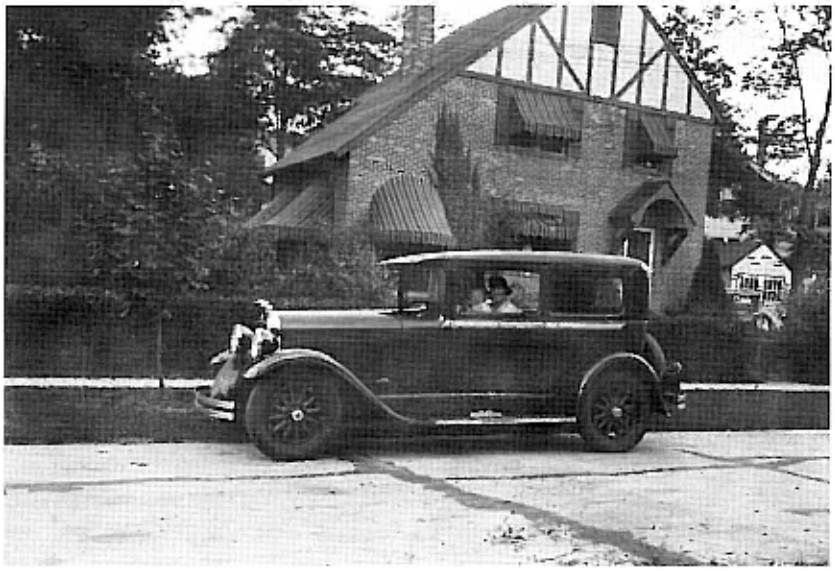
After the American entry into World War II in December 1941, blackouts, rationing, and Civil Defense programs were strictly observed by the residents of Section Four. The Chevy Chase Fire Department became active in the section on behalf of the Civil Defense effort.

With the influx of people into Washington, need for temporary housing spread out from the city into the suburbs. Residents took in individuals as boarders if they had the space, generally without too much objection from neighbors. But when the large house on the corner of Bradley and Connecticut advertised itself as a "boarding house," the section took measures to control such use. The committee approached the county zoning authorities regarding such use, not so much for the duration of the war, but as an opening wedge in zoning changes by default. Assured that this would only be used as a "high class boarding house" to the end of the war, the committee withdrew further action. The house, owned by a town resident, was closed in 1945, and sold for a single-family residence. However, an attempt to construct a two-family house was legally stopped, and the builder had to return the structure to a one-family use.

As early as 1942, a resident on Rosemary Street opened a day care program for children of defense

workers and was permitted to do so only for the duration of the war, with no advertising. Another house on Ridgewood Avenue ran a preschool nursery school for section residents employed in war work.

The section invested tax funds in Series "F" bonds,



The Duncan home on Willow Lane in 1931. COURTESY MRS. ROBERT C. DUNCAN

while curtailing new public works not essential for health and safety until after the war.

At the end of World War II, the committee found it necessary to remind home owners of the single-family use in the section. Not until 1947 was a dancing school on Meadow Lane discontinued by the owner.

In 1948, the section shed its Special Taxing District status to become a municipality "with all the powers and privileges of a body politic and corporate, and by said corporate name may have perpetual succession, sue and be sued, plea and be impleaded in any court of law or equity, may have the use of a common seal and may hold real, personal and mixed property when the best interests of said section may so demand."

In November 1950, things had quieted down so much that the Citizens' Committee held no meeting, because there was "nothing of importance to be brought to a meeting"! But, by May 1951, concern over the establishment of doctors' or other professional offices in several single-family houses raised the ire of both neighbors and the committee, which determined to enforce its regulations. The fact that county regulations did not preclude such non-family use did not hold up in the face of covenants that were enforceable in the courts.

After the outbreak of the war in Korea, the section responded by forming a Civil Defense Committee composed largely of qualified servicemen from World War II. On the 4-H grounds the appearance of quonset huts for army personnel and provisions for 100 parking spaces were the most visible effect on residents. Since the section had ruled that no parking would be permitted on the 4-H grounds after 6:00 p.m., even this effect was minimized.

By 1955, electricity requirements for the section became so heavy that the power company sought to put a booster station in the section, housed in a residential structure near the corner of Connecticut Avenue and East-West Highway. The fear, again, was that this might set a commercial precedent, but when reassured, the Citizens' Committee permitted the use. The house has since been returned to single family use.

In 1955, the state legislature drew up "Home Rule Procedures of Municipal Corporations" under Chapter 23A of the Constitution of Maryland, further strengthening the positions of towns and cities within counties.

As a result of this historic action by the Maryland legislature, important changes were made in the town charter in 1962. In addition to changing the original "Citizens' Committee" to "Town Council," and including all amendments to the charter in the main body of it, most important was the authority to legislate on its own behalf without County Council approval. The state had, to a large degree, made the municipalities the equal of counties, and certainly much less subservient. Specific duties assigned by the state to counties, such as health, remained with the counties, and agencies like the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission were unaffected by the new legislation.

The Town Council could now legislate on its own behalf in all things, providing it was prepared to enforce its legislation. The Town Council could also accept county legislation by reference and have it enforced by the county in the town.

The Maryland Municipal League had been very active in the formulation and passage of this legislation, which gave small municipalities a stronger voice in their own management. The town, along with other smaller towns, joined the League in 1956, and has been active in it ever since.

In 1964, the town regulations, unchanged since 1924, were rewritten to provide for changes required by the passage of 40 years.

Upsetting Growth

By 1970, small-town Bethesda was beginning to have a big-city look. First two high rise apartments appeared on East-West Highway, and a high rise office building on Wisconsin at Elm Street reaching over the air space of the railroad tracks. The drug store and theater on the corner of Wisconsin and Old Georgetown Road were gone, with rumors of other small neighborhood businesses on Wisconsin Avenue losing long-term leases. And then the small six-store shopping "center" on the corner of Leland and Wisconsin was slowly being vacated with no new tenants. This was of very special concern to all residents along Leland and down into Section Four. In spite of a ban on increasing water flow into the sewer system out of the area, the Ford Motor Company of Dearborn, Michigan, having bought the site, was planning to build a high rise office building.

It had become clear to the neighboring communities and the Park and Planning Commission that the explosive high density construction set in motion by actions of an earlier County Council had to be brought under control. The 1970 Master Plan adopted by the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area had recommended a reduction in the size of the central business district, but the Park and Planning Commission could do nothing about land uses and zoning changes without suitable zoning categories. As things stood, all commercial development was in one high density zone regardless of location. Even Montgomery Triangle, a green space used by the B-CC students for touch football, was zoned at a level that later produced two tall office towers.

A special Planning Board Citizens' Advisory Board composed of residential and business community representatives was formed, and the town was represented. In 1974, after months of concentrated effort, a plan was presented to the public and the County Council for hearings and possible changes. Under the plan, three central business district zones were formed, each having a zoning deemed appropriate for the area, with the densest zoning at the center, where Metro was to come.

Even before the hearings were held on a plan that would down-zone many areas, developers moved to get under way before a deadline down the road.

Although a deadline was no threat to the construction of the Ford Building in 1972, the sewer moratorium was. Residents of the area and the town, dismayed by the prospect of having an inappropriately tall office building overhead, made urgent requests of the County Council not to allow its construction. Picketing of the cleared site along with public criticism had no effect on the granting of a building permit by the County Council. When the hole appeared on the corner, the Section Four Council took a legal step. It sued the County Council for issuing a building permit in the face of a water moratorium for a building that would surely need more water than the small center it replaced.

The Circuit Court denied the suit, saying Section Four was not in close enough proximity to the construction to have necessary "standing." Not wishing to use public funds for a probable lost cause by appealing, the council went no further.

A groundswell of resentment, anger, disappointment, and feelings of impotence among the residents of the area between Wisconsin and Section Four resulted in their seeking to join the town by annexation so that there would be "standing" in the future. A similar feeling of disappointment with the county's action grew in Section Four, so that annexation was seen as mutually beneficial.

The Last Addition

A lengthy and very precise process was begun by a joint committee of representatives from Section Four, Section Eight, and the Elm Street, Oakridge and Lynn Association. A hard-nosed look at the dollar costs for each of the groups indicated that it would not cost the town more to provide services since taxes from the new area would take care of that, and the annexed areas found that they would not pay higher taxes as the result of being town residents.

In a newsletter preparatory to a general meeting of the EOL Civic Association, its chairman wrote:

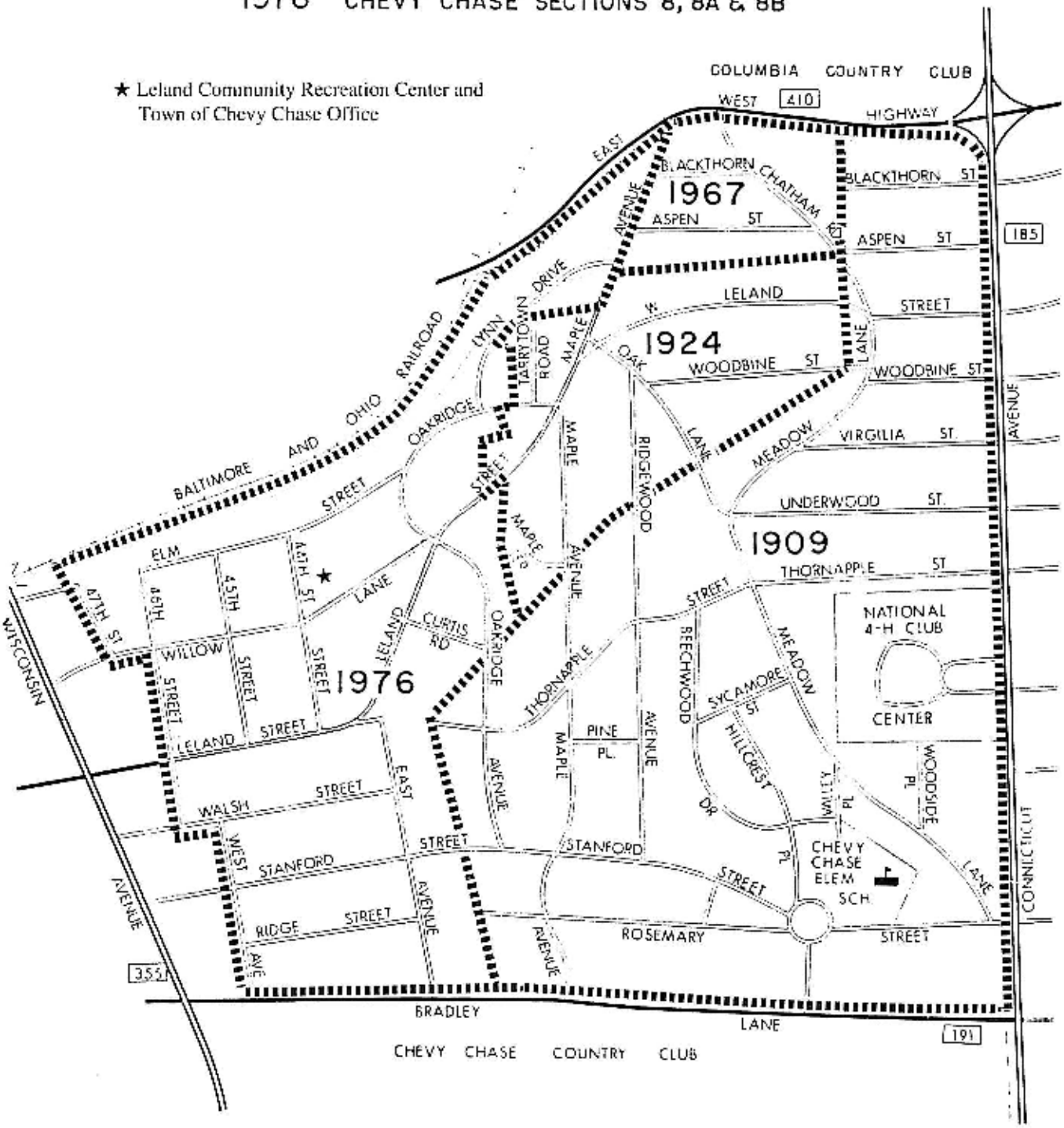
> "The overall effect of the merger of Section Eight with Section Four would be to broaden the base of our political strength for the fight to maintain our homes and our schools against the encroachment of the Central Business District with its high-rises, traffic and parking problems, air and sound pollution—all of which are bound to be worse with Metro. If Section Eight had been part of Section Four when Chevy Chase Section Four sued to prevent the construction of the Ford Building, the judge would not have been able to deny the case on the grounds that Chevy Chase Section Four was not contiguous to the Ford Building."

In its own newsletter to town residents, the Section Four Council wrote:

"We cannot turn our backs on what is going on

GROWTH OF THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

1909 CHEVY CHASE SECTION 4
1924 CHEVY CHASE PARK
1967 CHEVY CHASE SECTION 4B
1976 CHEVY CHASE SECTIONS 8, 8A & 8B



about us. We need Section Eight every bit as much as they feel they need us, in mutual support of our common needs and the necessity to present a united front in all matters that concern our whole community. It does not make sense to have a unitary geographical area artificially divided by what is in fact a convenient land developer's demarcation long after its usefulness is past. It made sense to annex Section Four-B several years ago (1967); it makes even more sense in this day of siege by outside forces for us to annex the remaining residential area. We share the same geography, the same schools, the same main arteries which encircle us, and the same concerns for our children and our properties. We should share the same local government."

Petitions from Section Eight indicated that a majority of voters and property owners were in favor of being annexed to Section Four. In May 1976, by secret mail ballot, residents of Section Four voted overwhelmingly in favor of annexation. A resolution of annexation was passed by the Town Council, effective June 30, 1976, creating a larger Town within natural borders composed of the residential area between Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues, north of Bradley Lane, and south of the railroad right of way and East-West Highway.

The Town of Chevy Chase

Residents of Section Eight introduced the idea of changing the name of the Village of Chevy Chase, Section Four. Several names were suggested and a postcard survey endorsed the name Town of Chevy Chase. The Town Council delayed action for a long time but finally reintroduced the legislation to change the official name to The Town of Chevy Chase. At the 1983 general election another vote was taken and residents narrowly passed a resolution supporting the name change. The Council took final action on the legislation, and the Town of Chevy Chase was official.

In 1976, Section Four had added 326 houses, 1,043 more residents, and the Elm Street Park which had been carved out of the residential block of former Section Eight between Elm Street and Willow Lane, and 46th and 47th streets. Cheek to cheek with the Bethesda central business district, the town certainly had standing, and would certainly face any threat to its integrity and value.

To protect town residents from negative effects of the heated commercial development along Wisconsin Avenue, the council appointed a number of citizens committees to monitor the effects of traffic on town streets and the kind of development seeking to build in Bethesda. Council members have served on county committees, testified before county bodies, and joined with other Bethesda communities to protect the residential life around the commercial community.

Effects of Board of Education rulings on the two schools within the town have stimulated anxiety at the least, and community activism at the most. The Town Council, on behalf of the town, appointed committees to assist with presenting town positions and to cooperate with neighboring communities also affected.

From the first days of the Citizens' Association to the present incorporated town, the five citizens who have constituted the "government" have served as volunteers without monetary compensation. In tune with the practices of the time, early "committees" and "councils" were composed entirely of men prominent in government, the professions, or business. Not until 1955 was this pattern changed with the election of Laura Dale, a lawyer, to the council. Later she was elected its chair.

The early section committees met monthly in the home of the elected chairman, who then took charge of the files. These were moved as the chairmanship changed, stored in ordinary containers and not always easily accessible. With the employment of the first full-time town manager in 1972, and the renting of a small office in the St. John's Church, residents could say that the town had an "office." Three laborers and a part-time bookkeeper, under the supervision of the Town Manager and the Council Treasurer, constituted the town staff. Provisions were made for pensions and health coverage for town employees, putting town personnel procedures on a professional footing.

When the 4-H center requested permission to enlarge the size of the center under a special exception in 1968, they sought the support of the Town Council. In exchange for town support, the 4–H center agreed to provide the town with office space at cost, and parking space for town trucks. Town meetings were already being held at the center, so that locating the office at 4–H provided residents with a town office location easily found and accessible. Turner Hall was the site of the town office for about 15 years.

With the completion of the new Leland Community Center, the town office is located in its own home, with space designed to meet its needs, and located centrally within the town itself. The Town of Chevy Chase finally has its own "Town Hall."

Anne Bushart

THE HOUSES

Before 1915, there were approximately 36 houses and other buildings scattered through the area that comprises the present-day Town of Chevy Chase, according to a 1915 Caldwell Bethesda Directory map. They included a few houses and other buildings from the late 19th century, several commodious 20th century suburban houses along Connecticut Avenue and Bradley Lane, and a scattering of bungalows along Ridgewood, Maple, and Stanford—then called Elm.

By the early 1920s, a building boom was underway. Houses began cropping up like mushrooms after a rain. Factors contributing to this development were inexpensive land, pent-up demand after World War I, convenient transportation, standardization of building materials and methods, economies of scale in speculative developments, longer-term mortgages, and the continued stability and growth of government employment during the Depression.

By 1941, approximately 85 percent of the town's 1,000 houses had been built, according to Klinges' *Real Estate Atlas.*

The Chevy Chase Land Company, which sold lots on the eastern side of our town, promoted Chevy Chase as "the best suburb in the nation's capital," a place where one could "get away from the crowded sections of the city" and live "where light and air can be had on four sides," according to a 1916 real estate brochure published by their agents, the Thomas B. Fisher Company.

Offering both the privacy of single-family homes and the amenities of a planned community, Chevy Chase was designed "to meet the requirements of discriminating people—but that does not necessarily mean, in our opinion, people of great wealth." In 1916, lots in Section Four, "between the grounds of the Chevy Chase and the Columbia Country Clubs," were still available. It was also noted that living in Maryland gave residents the right to vote in national elections—a right then denied District residents.

The Chevy Chase Land Company promised that "every residence would bear a touch of the individuality of the owner," but property values would be protected "against the encroachments of undesirable elements by a blanket covenant which set minimum costs for houses, defined setbacks, and prohibited apartments and commercial buildings."

Covenants were commonplace in American suburbs. Their aim was not only to strike a balance between individuality and uniformity in architecture but also to govern who would live in these neighborhoods, according to Gwendolyn Wright in *Building the American Dream: A Social History of American Suburbs.* By setting minimum housing cost, the company's covenant automatically excluded low-income buyers. Furthermore, individual owners in the early days could insert

Tudor Revival style houses on Oakridge Avenue in the "Leland" subdivision, 1929 MONROE WARREN COLLECTION

additional restrictive clauses into deeds that excluded buyers on the basis of race, religion, and ethnic origin.

Architectural diversity was touted as one of Chevy Chase's "principal charms," and today almost every popular 20th century suburban style is evident: bungalows built in the late teens and early twenties; eclectic revivals of Georgian Colonial, Dutch Colonial, Neoclassical, Tudor, Spanish Colonial, Mediterranean, and Renaissance, built in the mid-1920s and 1930s; and contemporary, split-levels and ranch styles tucked into remaining lots after most development was completed.

Bungalow on Maple Avenue PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

Few of these houses are unique designs. Most are similar to the suburban house plans published in builders' catalogs, newspapers, popular magazines like *The Ladies Home Journal*, and mail order catalogs like Sears, Roebuck, Montgomery Ward's, and Aladdin. Building permits in town records from the 1920s and 1930s frequently list a single name for owner/builder/architect/contractor, suggesting that many were built on speculation.

The Bungalow: A Progressive House

Bungalows were the most fashionable houses built in America from 1900 to 1920. In Section Four, bungalows built in the teens and early 1920s occupy choice lots on Rosemary, Woodbine, Ridgewood, Maple, and Underwood Streets. Many were situated on the crests of the hills, probably to avoid the flooding that turned the low areas on Meadow and Oak Lanes into notorious mudholes after rain.

To the west of Section Four, bungalows were the first houses built by Monroe and Robert Bates Warren, the developers of "Leland," a 57-acre subdivision bounded by Bradley, West Avenue, the B&O Railroad, and Oakridge Avenue.

These two-bedroom bungalows were described as "compact and conveniently arranged so that one would not be embarrassed because of the shortage of domestic help immediately following the war," according to a 1929 advertising brochure.

The classic bungalow was usually a one-story house with a low-pitched roof, overhanging eaves, and exposed roof rafters. A front porch was often supported by heavy piers, and the exterior was usually covered with natural materials like shingles, with fieldstone foundations and chimneys. As the style became popular, the name was used to describe any small house.

Bungalows were designed for informal living. Foyers and formal entrance halls were eliminated. Open floor plans in which one room flowed into another were preferred. Built-in furniture, room dividers, and ceilings with dark oak beams gave interiors a rustic, masculine look.

Despite its quaint coziness, the bungalow was considered a modern house which reflected progressive social and architectural ideas. Gustav Stickley, a self-trained designer and publisher of *Craftsman* magazine, believed small, inexpensive, and unpretentious houses could remedy a variety of problems facing the family, including the shortage of domestic help or the rising divorce rate. "We don't believe in large houses with many rooms that are elaborately decorated," he wrote. "Living beyond one's means makes a man haggard with anxiety and might contribute to him becoming unscrupulous in business."

Moral imperative aside, people began building smaller houses for a variety of reasons in the early 20th century. Families were having fewer children. Indoor plumbing, central heating, and electricity were by then considered standard, and their cost was offset by building a smaller house. Specialized rooms such as rootcellers and coal

bins became obsolete through better food distribution, refrigeration, and central heating by oil or gas. With domestic help in short supply, a small, efficient house made good sense.

Eclectic Revival Styles

The most popular styles built in the 1920s and 1930s were the eclectic revival styles: Georgian Colonial, Dutch Colonial, and Spanish Colonial, as well as the Mediterranean and Renaissance Revival.

This trend began in the late 19th century, when European-trained architects began designing period houses for their wealthy American clients. Although these styles constructed of solid brick and masonry were too expensive for the middle class, a new technology for applying thin veneers of brick or stone over conventional wood frame became available in the early 20th century. A stylistic jacket could transform a standard wooden frame house into a picturesque English cottage, a prim New England colonial, or a romantic Mediterranean villa.

Dutch Colonial Revival on Virgilia Street
PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

Spanish Colonial Revival on Stanford Street PHOTO BY RICHARD RIVERS

Revival-style houses built in the middle-class suburbs were practical, comfortable, and stylistically restrained, according to Allen Gowens in *The Comfortable House*. They acknowledged both European roots and American history, engendering a sense of continuity with the past which has been important to all people in all times, and most especially to the upwardly mobile middle class moving to the suburbs.

In 1929, because of a "growing demand" for larger homes, M. and R.B. Warren began building "economical" three-bedroom, two-story houses with garages in either "English or Colonial design" in a development they called "Leland," west of Section Four. Houses were priced from $7,950 to $13,450. Terms were 10 percent down with the rest to be paid in monthly installments over a definite period of years, according to their advertising brochure. These houses were designed to "meet the needs and desires of the average salaried man, and [were] well within the reach of the young professionals, business executives, and employees of the Federal and District governments."

In the mid-1930s and 1940s, the Warrens also developed "Meadowbrook," an area bounded by East-West Highway, Meadow Lane, Aspen Street, and Maple Avenue. Sixty houses were built in "Colonial Federal Style" and priced from $10,500 to $18,500.

Italian Renaissance Revival on Connecticut Avenue
PHOTO BY RICHARD RIVERS

"Colonial Federal Style" houses on Aspen Street in the "Meadowbrook" subdivision, 1935 MONROE WARREN COLLECTION

Georgian Colonial

The Georgian Colonial, called the "pin-stripe suit" of Washington suburban houses by architect David Jones, is the most prevalent style in our town. This "ample, and even elegant, but not grandiose" house evolved in England during the 17th and 18th centuries as a dwelling for a new class of landed gentry that occupied a niche in the social hierarchy between the nobility and the yeoman, according to Mary Mix Foley in *The American Home*.

The English Georgian house, derived from the 16th century palaces of Palladio, was a radical departure from medieval architecture, according to Foley.

Georgian Colonial Revival, corner of Chatham Road and Aspen Street, circa 1935 MONROE WARREN COLLECTION

In the middle ages, buildings evolved over several centuries. Rooms were tacked on where needed, and windows and doors arranged according to necessity, accident, or whim. But the symmetry and balance of an English Georgian house, which was the result of a unified design where the parts were subordinated to an overall concept, reflected a Renaissance ideal—that man could impose reason and order on his world.

The suburban Georgian Colonial Revival house is often quite similar to the 18th century versions built by the English colonists. It usually retains an oblong shape, a gabled or hipped roof, and the symmetrical arrangement of windows. The center front door is frequently decorated with fanlights, sidelights, and classical architectural elements that were popular during the Colonial and Federal periods. The side porches common to the 20th

century revival of this style are a legacy of the Victorian period.

Tudor Revival

The Tudor Revival house was especially popular in the 1920s, and is nearly as prevalent as the Georgian Colonial Revival in our town. The suburban version often mixes elements from both high-style palaces and humble medieval cottages of the Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean periods.

Steep-pitched, front-facing gables recall the picturesque rooflines of medieval houses. The front door is often shaped with a pointed "Gothic" or rounded "Romanesque" arch and is usually placed off-center, creating an asymmetrical appearance. The exterior is frequently a mixture of brick and stone. Strips of wood applied over stucco mimic visually, but not structurally, Elizabethan half-timbering. Chimneys are usually prominent and massive. Casement windows are often set with leaded glass.

Susan Goodman

Tudor Revival on Leland Street

PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

Tudor Revival on Meadow Lane

PHOTO BY RICHARD RIVERS

SERVICES FOR BETTER LIVING

Gas

Before the 1840s, downtown Washington was a dangerous place at night. Because of poor lighting from dim oil lamps, citizens were subjected to robberies which sometimes led to physical injury. Unpaved streets through swampy areas made walking hazardous.

In 1847 a dramatic demonstration of lighting took place. A gas lantern six feet in diameter was mounted on the dome of the Capitol building. At night it illuminated the grounds and surrounding areas and could be seen for miles. A gas chandelier suspended from the ceiling of the Senate Chamber provided a superior interior light. Gas lights were installed on downtown streets shortly thereafter, according to the Washington Gas Light Company's *Growing with Washington*, published in 1948.

The following year, Congress granted a charter to the Washington Gas Light Company, and a gas plant was built at 10th Street and Louisiana Avenue, N.W. Mains were laid to the White House, government buildings, and private businesses, and later to residential areas for street lights and interior lighting.

The Georgetown Gas Light Company was chartered in 1854, bringing service to communities in Northwest Washington and Montgomery County. During the early 1920s, when there was much building in the areas of Rosemary and Thornapple Streets and Meadow Lane, gas mains were extended into Section Four. Electric lights were already in use, but gas was used for stoves, hot water heaters, and furnaces.

The Georgetown and Washington Gas Light Companies were merged in 1936. Twenty years later, a pipeline system was installed from Texas to deliver natural gas to the metropolitan Washington area.

Electricity

Early experimentation with electric lighting in downtown Washington began in 1879, the year Thomas Edison perfected the first incandescent lamp. During the 1880s, the first practical electric street lights were installed along F Street, N.W., at the request of merchants who believed they would encourage business. Electric lights were installed in the White House in 1891. These efforts were the work of a number of small competing companies.

The Potomac Electric Power Company was incorporated in 1896. It was a subsidiary of the Washington Railway and Electric Company, a major operator of trolley cars in the Washington area. PEPCO's *50 Years in Washington*, published in 1940, states that electric lights began to replace gas lights in the District of Columbia in the early 1900s.

During the early years of its residential development, the Chevy Chase Land Company supplied electricity to homes in nearby Maryland. It was generated at the Chevy Chase Lake power house, but was available only between the hours of sunset and sunrise. *PEPCO News* of November 1908 announced that all equipment and rights to supply service were transferred to the Potomac Electric Power Company, which was able to supply electricity on a 24-hour basis. During this period, small electric heating devices such as cooking aids, irons, and radiators were developed for home use. Small motors were perfected to operate sewing machines, pumps, and fans.

In the early 1920s, Chevy Chase Section Four had a separate billing from PEPCO for street lights. Town volunteers maintained payment lists and collected 50 cents per month from property owners. An interesting side light of this procedure was that prominent residents were sometimes delinquent and gave dubious reasons for non-payment.

Water Supply

The circle on Rosemary Street across from the Chevy Chase Elementary School was once the site of a water tower. Constructed in 1893, this 130-foot steel structure was of handsome design. It stood on high ground, dominated the nearby neighborhood, and was a landmark visible for miles. From a series of wells, a pumping station 300 feet to the north conveyed water to the tower. Residents of the Chevy Chase area were supplied through a system of water mains at a cost below city prices. This source of water was replaced during the 1920s, and the water tower was removed in 1934.

Many families had wells on their property. A hand pump was mounted on the platform which covered the well. Some of these pumps were protected by architecturally attractive pump houses. The installation of automatic electric pumps in basements began about 1912. They supplied running water to kitchens, bathrooms, radiators, and hot water heaters.

In the early 1920s, state and county health officials began to receive complaints. Local wells and springs were drying up during the summer months. There were

also indications that raw sewage was being discharged into the natural flows of water according to *A History of the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission*, published in March 1979. Clearly, corrective measures were imperative. Town records indicate that eight-inch water mains were installed on Leland and Woodbine Streets in 1926 by the Suburban Sanitary Commission, and it can be assumed that the entire town changed over around that time.

Telephone

For our readers born after 1940, the instrument below is a telephone. It had no rotary dial or touch-tone. When the receiver was lifted, an operator at the telephone company responded in a charming feminine voice with "number please." She was also referred to as "Central," and she completed all calls by plugging in lines in her switchboard. When asked for Kensington 91 she connected you with McKeevers Ice Cream store. Bethesda 31-K was the number for Alfred Wilson, Coal, Wood, and Feed. She could reach numbers in the District which were prefixed with exchange names such as North, Main, and Lincoln.

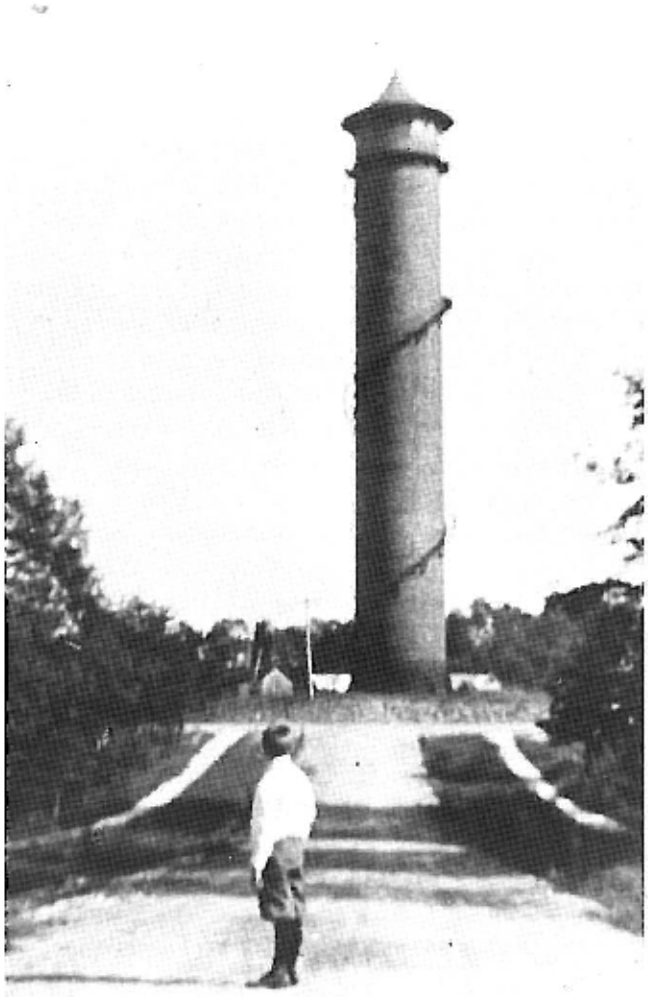
The first telephone in Chevy Chase was a line extended in 1893 from D.C. to the trolley car house at Chevy Chase Lake..

By 1902 there were 13 telephone lines in operation in the Chevy Chase area. Service was transferred to the Cleveland (Maryland) exchange in 1908 when the number of lines had increased to 311. In 1927 the exchange name for Chevy Chase became Wisconsin and 1,224 lines were in operation.

The central office at Wisconsin Avenue and Stanford Street was opened in 1928 to handle the Wisconsin and Bradley (Bethesda) exchanges. Service was converted to dial operation in 1940. Oliver became the exchange name for Chevy Chase in 1941. In 1953 the seven-digit numbering plan replaced the six-digit numbers, with designations known as Oliver 2 or Oliver 4, today dialed as 652 or 654.

William Duvall

Information for this article was furnished by the Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company.



An eastward look at the water tower from Elm, now Stanford Street. 1913 PHOTO BY LAWRENCE WINNEMORE

CHEVY CHASE FIRE DEPARTMENT

During the early 1920s, there was a large steel frame next to the Post Office Building in Chevy Chase Village at Connecticut Avenue and Kirke Street. Hanging from it were a locomotive wheel rim and a sledge hammer. When a fire occurred, a citizen would swing the hammer to sound the alarm. Residents were expected to rush to the fire with their extinguishers or man a hand-drawn fire truck. A call was usually made to the District of Columbia fire companies about two miles away, and apparatus was dispatched. A periodic payment was also made to the Kensington Volunteer Fire Department in an agreement for protection.

The fire gong at the Village Hall
COURTESY, CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

During this same period, there was also a hand-pulled hose reel kept in a small shed on Cummings Lane near Brookville Road. Volunteers from Martin's Addition lugged it to the scene of the fire, where hopefully there would be a fire hydrant. The volunteers later moved their equipment to a steel shed on Georgia Street near Taylor Street. The Chevy Chase Fire Board later provided them with a Chevrolet hose wagon.

Old-timers say that, except when personal injuries or substantial property damage occurred, these activities were "rather fun." They provided our quiet, sometimes boring, residential area with colorful local heroes and amusing news items.

But in 1926 the need for an organized and incorporated fire department was recognized. Representatives of the five sections of Chevy Chase held numerous meetings and gave careful attention to advice from a number of sources. The commissioner and fire chief of the District of Columbia pointed out that in the event of a large fire in downtown Washington there might not be enough equipment to respond to a simultaneous fire in Chevy Chase. They encouraged the establishment of a regularly-employed force with at least one piece of serviceable motorized apparatus.

In order to expedite the establishment of a fire department, a contribution of 15 cents per $100 of taxable real property was solicited from homeowners. In Section Four this averaged out to about $10.00 per year. A tax bill for fire protection with the same assessment was passed by the Maryland State Legislature shortly thereafter.

A chief and six firemen were employed in 1927. They were stationed in the Chevy Chase Post Office building. A new American La France pumper was purchased and put in service. The Martin's Addition Volunteers supplemented the regular force.

Better housing was needed, and the Fire Board authorized construction of the present building located at 8001 Connecticut Avenue. Firemen and equipment moved in during the winter of 1931. The American LaFrance pumper, the Chevrolet hose wagon, and a new Seagraves pumper were all located in this building in 1933.

The Department had an agreement with nearby companies in Maryland and the District of Columbia to respond to requests for help when major emergencies occurred. In 1942, they assisted at the scene of a train wreck at Dickerson, Maryland, where 25 people were killed. During World War II, they trained 200 auxiliary firemen and furnished them with equipment supplied by the Office of Civil Defense.

In September 1966, after considerable research into visual safety, chrome yellow was adopted as the fire engine color for the Chevy Chase Fire Department. Currently there is an ongoing fire prevention program,

with inspection of buildings and exhibits conducted by firemen at an annual open house.

Montgomery County Fire Station Number 6 was completed in 1970. Located at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Boulevard, it has answered many emergency calls from the Town of Chevy Chase.

James H. Garrett

Mr. Garrett grew up in Chevy Chase and was appointed paid fireman in February of 1932. He became Chief of the Chevy Chase Fire Department in 1959 and retired in 1970.

1932 and 1940 Seagraves fire engines pose at the Chevy Chase Fire Station, 8001 Connecticut Avenue

PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

CHEVY CHASE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

From the beginning, the elementary school was an important institution in the Town of Chevy Chase. For Chevy Chase parents, their children's education has always had a high priority. And the Chevy Chase Elementary School has provided a focus for community interest and activities since it first was formed.

At the turn of the century, the Montgomery County school system consisted of a few small schools. The majority were one- and two-room structures. They adequately served the thinly-populated upper county's small towns and farmlands. The only high school was located in Rockville.

Communities near the District of Columbia, such as Chevy Chase, Bethesda, and Silver Spring, faced a different situation. Their population was increasing, and they were an extension of the city. Residents observed the rapidly improving D.C. school system south of their border. Many of these homeowners were well-educated employees of the federal government. Their occupations, interests, and lifestyles were more urban. For their children, they wanted the best education possible.

It took the residents of Chevy Chase 20 years of planning and persuasion to establish a neighborhood school in a permanent building in 1917.

From the Beginning

In those early days, funding schools was a problem. In 1900, the disbursements for schools throughout the county amounted to only $64,000, and the total did not exceed $1 million until 1929. Chevy Chase community leaders began in the late 1890s the long tradition of working with county legislators and school officials to increase the school budget. Parents donated an indispensable commodity, their time. They worked with teachers and helped to establish a sustained performance of superior educational achievement and a tradition of outstanding extracurricular programs.

The first school in Chevy Chase opened in 1898. It was a two-room structure on Bradley Lane west of Connecticut Avenue. The Chevy Chase Land Company donated the property and built the building. The county school board paid the $2,200 construction costs. This school served the community until 1903, when low enrollment forced it to close. The building was sold for

Residence on Bradley Lane was originally built in 1898 as the first Chevy Chase School. PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

$1,700. It stands today, the attractive frame house at 3905 Bradley Lane.

The declining enrollment was caused by the transfer of many Chevy Chase students to a large new school on Connecticut Avenue just two blocks south of Chevy Chase Circle in the District of Columbia. The public schools in D.C. were among the best in the country, whereas the Montgomery County schools were considered by federal employees to be very marginal, and definitely not geared to families expecting their children to go on to college.

In 1911, the District of Columbia announced a tuition charge for non-resident students. It would cost $24 a year for first grade, $29 a year for sixth grade, on up to $68 for high school. Shortly afterward, primary children outside the city limits were prohibited outright from attending D.C. schools. There suddenly was a need once again for a local neighborhood school in Chevy Chase. At least many people felt there was a need. The *Sentinel* reported on August 16, 1912, that "Mr. Andrew J. Cummings, a prominent resident, has taken the backers of the situation to task, asserting that not more than a dozen children could be found who would attend such a school if erected. Other citizens declare that at least 150 pupils would attend the school."

The First Home and School Association

There was little organization among local citizens in 1912, and no parent-teacher association. Dr. Ryan Devereux, a county school commissioner, became the leader of the Chevy Chase effort to establish a school. He called a meeting to form a Home and School Association, the first such organization in Montgomery County.

In September, two teachers and a principal were hired. The house at 6812 Delaware Street, one block east of Connecticut Avenue, was rented for classrooms. The school was an instant success, and during the first year an enrollment of 108 pupils was reported, including an eighth grade, "under the supervision of a Wellesley graduate," that included children from Bethesda and Kensington. Trustees were appointed from the community, and the *Sentinel* reported in October: "The entire community, as well as the trustees, is devoting considerable time and taking a great deal of interest in the school proposition, and it is fully expected that before long the Chevy Chase school will be pointed out as the model school of Montgomery County."

Some measures of progress, duly reported in the press in succeeding weeks, were an honor roll of 25 names, a piano, and new ventilators, "making the building very comfortable."

But the building was too small for the number of students, and was not available for a second year. The community demonstrated their determination to have an adequate neighborhood school. They collected $5,000 to provide four portable frame classrooms on Rosemary Street—"a macadamized street, with granolithic sidewalks," the trustees proudly announced. There were no more than 15 houses within two blocks of the site at that time.

"Four competent and qualified teachers have been engaged," the trustees noted, and the school was to serve all grades, including the first two years of high school.

By 1915, there were five teachers and two assistants, and S.D. Caldwell's *Directory of Bethesda District, Montgomery County, Maryland* for that year listed them in its section on the five schools in the district: ". . . No. 3—Grammar, located, temporarily, on Rosemary Street, Chevy Chase, west of the Capital Traction Electric Line. Mrs. Florence E. Barksdale, Principal; M. Lillian Morgan, Emma Washington, Mary Tracy, Elsa D. Muench, J.R. Daly, and Edgar Thompson (M.T. Dept.), Effie G. Barnsley (Domestic Science Dept.), Assistants. Total salaries paid, $2,482.85, and total cost of school $4,749.02. This school accommodates seven grades, averaging 19 pupils each and three high-school grades with an enrollment of 44. The building was first occupied in September 1914, and cost $5,000." In the same year, by the way, Bethesda Elementary's total cost was $2,140.46, and the school "located at Friendship Heights" (Somerset Elementary?) cost $745.35.

There were still high school students crossing the line to the D.C. schools. The trustees exhorted the citizens to send their children to the new school—particularly high school students—to help convince the legislature of the need for a bond issue to fund a permanent school building on the site. "Every child of this community attending the D.C. schools will serve as an argument against our needs."

A bitter controversy between Chevy Chase and Kensington began. Both towns needed new school buildings. Both towns wanted the area high school grades to be located in their building. Montgomery County faced a difficult choice; the total school budget for 1913 was only $115,000. This matter delayed the construction of both schools until 1917. Records indicate that a few students in grades eight through ten attended the Chevy Chase School during those years.

A Permanent Building

The 20-year goal of a permanent school building was realized in 1917. A two-story red brick building was built by contractor Roy W. Poole of Frederick, at a cost of about $20,000 in county funds. The county reimbursed the Chevy Chase residents for the cost of the portable buildings, and moved them to other sites. The school fronted on Valley Place, which at that time connected Rosemary Street and Meadow Lane. The ground-breaking ceremony for the new "high school" was reported in the Sentinel in April. The building was dedicated in November. Actually, Montgomery County listed the Chevy Chase school as a high school for one year only—1917-18.

Enrollment dropped again in the early 1920s. Congress had enacted new legislation allowing children who lived outside the District to go to D.C. schools if their parents owned property in D.C. or worked for the federal government. The Chevy Chase School was a five-teacher school with grades one through seven. In 1926, a kindergarten teacher was assigned. The school had already been the first in the county to hire a school secretary.

Elsie Irvine and her third grade class in a 1924 photo taken at the south entrance of the 1917 first permanent building. COURTESY, ELSIE IRVINE

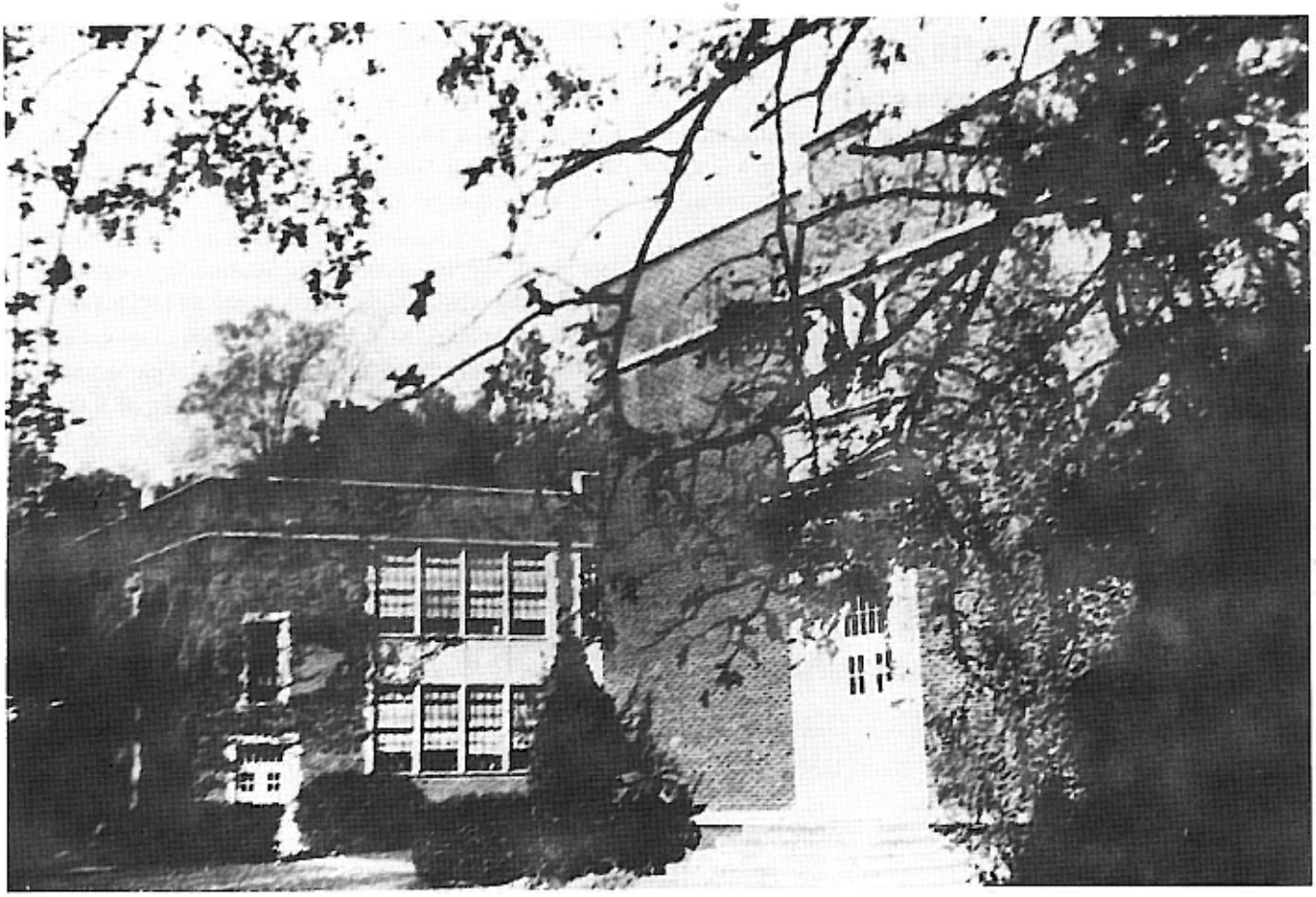
In the mid-1920s, enrollment began to increase rapidly, and two portable classrooms were added to the north end of the brick structure. When the new Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School was finally located on 44th Street in 1928, the seventh grade was relocated there.

Much of the foregoing information was obtained from E. Guy Jewell's *From One Room to Open Space*, which was published with the assistance of the Montgomery County Board of Education.

A lunch room was established in the basement of the 1917 building. It was not quite a cafeteria, because most of the food was brought from home in lunch boxes or brown paper bags. Milk, juice, and light snacks could be purchased. Fourth grade teacher Elsie Irvine supervised this facility. She saw to it that the supply of food was maintained, and that there were volunteers to act as cashier, rule enforcer, and cleanup crew. She also kept the financial records and made bank deposits.

In 1930, a 12-classroom brick building was constructed at a cost of $94,000. It fronted on Rosemary Street, and caused the closing of Valley Place as a through street. The southern portion of this structure remains as part of the current east wing. With its new address, the school became affectionately—but never formally—known as "Rosemary School."

Enrollment continued to increase, and in 1936 Chevy Chase added another brick building—a nine-room addition costing $103,000, the existing west wing. During this year, the 1917 structure was demolished, according to the *Chevy Chase Elementary School Feasibility Study*, published in January 1973. The two brick buildings were connected by a wooden "Long Hall," so that it was possible to get from the rear of one building to the rear of the other—but only on the first floor. The "Long Hall" had a row of windows on each side, and no pretense of insulation or heat. A ten-year-old, running hard, could shake the whole structure and make the windows rattle. "Lost and Found" items were set out in boxes there. Book sales were conducted there. And in the large square enclosed by the school buildings on three sides was lawn for the annual May Day dance and for graduation ceremonies, weather permitting. The grass extended all the way to the Rosemary Street sidewalk.



Chevy Chase School in 1936. The east wing, constructed in 1930, is in the foreground.
COURTESY, MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Fun and Games

The school had a softball team that competed with those of other local schools. The playing field was in the southeast corner of the school property, with home plate located approximately where the entrance to the parking lot is now. A 20-foot tree in very short left field did not detract from the quality of play.

Dodgeball was another interscholastic team game. One team was positioned around the circumference of a 25-foot circle and threw a basketball with a vicious side-arm motion at members of the opposing team, who were within the circle. When a player was hit, she or he retired with chagrin. After a timed period, the positions were reversed. The team with the most survivors was declared the winner.

The athletic high point of the school year was the county track meet. It was held in the spring at the Rockville Fair Grounds, now Richard Montgomery High School. Children practiced at Chevy Chase Elementary for several weeks prior to the big day. Events included high jumps, broad jumps, races of various distances for individuals, and the relay race. At the end of the day, much-coveted ribbons and medals were awarded.

Another First for the County

It was some years before the entire 1936 building at Chevy Chase Elementary was needed for classrooms. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase Cooperative Nursery School was permitted to use a room adjoining the kindergarten on the first floor. There were a health room and a music room, as well.

In the late 1930s the PTA Library got its start in one of the unused classrooms. The library was the biggest and most productive volunteer undertaking in the school's history. Planning began in 1938, and an incredible number of work hours were contributed by parents each year until 1965 when the county took responsibility with a full-time librarian and an increased appropriation for books.

The Chevy Chase PTA Library was the first library in a county elementary school.

Edith Dinwoodey had volunteered to set up a PTA library when her first child went to kindergarten in 1935. "Wait until you are president, and then you can try it," they told her. And she did. She enlisted hundreds of parents to help, and they gained the enthusiastic support of principal Anna P. Rose and school superintendent Edwin Broome.

The objective was a bright cheerful atmosphere where children would want to go—a service, not just a room. The parents brightened the walls with paint, built bookcases, found furniture in second-hand shops, and made curtains. From the grand opening in the spring of 1939, for 20 years, mothers volunteered to keep the facility open every day during school hours. Families donated books.

All the money for the library came from the PTA. Funds for books and library furnishings were raised in a variety of ways. There were book fairs just before Christmas; one raised $1,400, but weary mothers had to deliver the promised books on Christmas eve that year. Sixth grade teacher Agnes Kain organized a Creative Club, which met after school to read books and dramatize stories. They built scenery and rehearsed the plays they wrote, and friends and parents filled the long narrow auditorium which occupied the west side of the ground floor in the west wing. Ticket money went to buy more books for the library, and members of the Creative Club were allowed to make suggestions about which books they wanted their money to buy.

The long narrow auditorium consisted of three stepped-down floor levels for chairs, and a stage at the front. In addition to the plays, it was used for school assemblies, for PTA meetings, and even for a time was rented to a church group on Sundays. Citizens meetings for Section Four, now the Town of Chevy Chase, were held there.

A booklet, *The PTA Library Story*, by Marion Holland, parent, author and illustrator of children's books, and long-time neighbor of the school, who was a former library chairman, documents the history of the library, and can be borrowed from the Town History Committee.

The Cafeteria—A Cooperative

The PTA cafeteria occupied the remaining space in the ground floor of the west wing. Mrs. Russell Sowers, a dietician who had children in the school, ran the cafeteria with a firm hand and a minimum of paid kitchen help. All the less-skilled jobs were handled by mothers. They were told which days to be there, and showed up dutifully, wearing their aprons, to be put to work making sandwiches, assembling salads, folding paper napkins, and punching lunch tickets. The teachers were able to eat their lunches in peace and quiet on the auditorium stage.

During the war years of the 1940s, Mrs. Sowers supervised a home canning "cooperative," in which mothers who wished to could come to the cafeteria on Saturdays and jointly "put up" bushels of tomatoes or peaches or beans to line the shelves at home for winter use in the days before frozen foods. Children were enlisted for the production line. In the process, Mrs. Sowers taught the fundamentals of nutrition to a whole generation of Chevy Chase mothers and their families.

As before and since, a distinguishing mark of the Chevy Chase Elementary School was the interest and effort put into the school by the students' parents. But in the years during and after World War II, that interest was translated into actual service in the school itself, mainly by the mothers, who were well educated, energetic, and full-time homemakers for the most part. Principal Mildred Smoot and the teachers welcomed their help. The mothers ran a health program, a music program, and the library, worked in the cafeteria, and monitored the playground. Parents could set the rules in these situations, reports Marion Holland. In the cafeteria, students had to eat what they chose from the serving line. In the library, there were fines for overdue books.

The county eventually took over many of the functions that the PTA had initiated.

Toward the end of the 1940s all the space in the building was needed for classrooms. The cooperative nursery school went first, then the science room, the music room, and then the auditorium, which became two classrooms. The library was moved from its second floor space to the basement of the east wing, in a space separated from the boilers by wooden partitions installed by fathers. Some grades were on double shifts. The parents were gratified to find that newly-named principal Francis Powers was a firm supporter of the library, whatever other squeezing arrangements had to be made.

PTA meetings had to be held in adjoining space in the basement, in a dim, dank area, with the tiny ground-level windows splattered from the last rain, a small rickety wooden platform at one end for speakers, and rows of folding wooden chairs set out by the janitor ahead of time. The space was completely filled every time.

In 1958, a new brick addition was built to relieve the crowded conditions. A new front wing housed school

offices and an "all-purpose" room that served the same functions as the auditorium and was a physical education facility as well. Upstairs there were classrooms and a new school library. In the rear, replacing the old wooden "Long Hall," were more classrooms. The additions enclosed the grassy yard and the trees as a hollow square inside the new building. In 1968, another building was added at the back to house an expanded library, now called the "Instructional Materials Center."

In 1969-70, there were 828 students at Chevy Chase Elementary from 487 families. Twenty-eight teachers in kindergarten through grade six were joined by a physical education teacher and a full-time librarian, and by part-time teachers of art, instrumental music, vocal music, reading, and speech. The principal and assistant principal were assisted by three school secretaries. The cafeteria manager and custodian rounded out the paid staff.

Parents and More Parents

The PTA, with an active board of 35 parents, and a budget of about $3,000, sponsored before- and after-school art classes, foreign language classes, group piano lessons, and a physical education program. In-school theater and music programs were arranged and paid for by the PTA cultural arts committee. Parents assisted the school librarian by supervising the checkout desk, repairing books, and conducting an annual inventory, and the PTA Fair raised enough money to provide nearly $1,000 annually for the library. The PTA also raised money by sponsoring movies at the school on weekends. Fifty parents assisted teachers with lunchtime playground duty. Parents helped to plant and maintain the school grounds. A community service committee organized food and clothing collections and housing for foreign visitors. Parents volunteered to tutor non-English-speaking students, or to act as liaison to the community and the school for their families. A new "Interact" committee instituted a cooperative during-school program with a sister school in the District to give children an opportunity to learn about others so as to combat racial isolation. Home room mothers in every classroom organized meetings and enlisted other parents to assist the teachers.

The PTA board met monthly, and five general PTA meetings, a back-to-school night, the annual Halloween parade in which costumed students and teachers marched around the school yard, and the Veterans' Day open house brought other parents to the school. PTA-sponsored discussion groups met in homes to talk about problems of children with learning disabilities, about long-range planning for the school playground, about whether there should be changes in the school's report cards, or about the special problems of divorced or widowed parents. Block mothers helped to cope with emergencies on the way to and from school. The PTA editor produced a school handbook for parents and staff, along with 16 newsletters per year, delivered to parents by their children. Other parents actively followed county school budget and election processes, and testified on behalf of Chevy Chase parents.

At the end of the 1969-70 school year, Jacob E. Adams was named principal of Chevy Chase Elementary. He was to preside over a series of changes at the school—changes brought on by forces not within the control of the local community or the school staff, but to which they reacted with energy and care. The results were a new "modern"—and controversial—school building and an equally controversial pairing of Chevy Chase Elementary School with a school in Silver Spring, for the sake of racial balance in the school system.

Major Renovation

Testifying at a January 1971 School Board capital budget hearing, the representative of Chevy Chase Elementary complained that "one of the oldest and most out-of-date schools in the county" was not in the budget for renovation, despite serious needs—for rewiring, partitions, ceilings, and playground repair, among other things. "We are out of patience," he stated, and when the budget failed to include the necessary funds, the PTA Renovations Committee was formed.

The effort took more than five years. It involved many demonstrations of parental interest at School Board hearings; many meetings with county facilities staff members; an effort to understand and utilize the new system whereby the State of Maryland would pay for—and have the final say about—school construction; and visits to new and renovated schools in and out of the county. It involved PTA meeting discussions of the new "open space" school concept that seemed workable for Chevy Chase Elementary, and work sessions in which parents, teachers, and administrators met with architects and county and state officials.

The renovation project cost more than a million dollars, and took two summers and a school year to complete—in which year the children studied in other nearby schools. During the "year of the diaspora," each

grade—students and teachers—was placed in a different school, the administrators kept in touch with all of them, and the PTA held the school community together.

The renovated school building was occupied in the 1975-76 school year. It included a gymnasium, remodeled classroom space, and a much larger library, and it filled in the square grass open space. Neighbors bought the displaced trees and flowering shrubs in a PTA-sponsored fund-raising project.

The new open classroom space was controversial from the start. Teachers soon began marking out the margins of their teaching spaces with moveable chalkboards, ropes, saw horses, and other devices. Parents began to complain about the "echoing opening learning vistas," as one neighbor described them. Before many years, there were walls where there had been open space.

An Integration Plan

By the 1970s, Montgomery County school officials prided themselves on their enlightened policies in the area of school desegregation. They had done away with their separate black and white schools well before the civil rights movement in the 1960s. In the down-county area, they were especially proud of the racially-mixed school in the integrated community of Rosemary Hills in Silver Spring.

By the late 1960s, though, the minority enrollment at this school increased from 10 percent to 53 percent in six years, while the countywide average was only 5 percent. In an effort to reverse this trend, the School Board in 1972 proposed a "model school" plan for Rosemary Hills which would involve busing for integration. The Rosemary Hills community opposed the idea and staunchly defended its neighborhood school. The plan was shelved.

By 1974, however, Rosemary Hills Elementary School's minority enrollment had reached 82 percent, and the PTA and the neighborhood conceded that the school needed a new plan to achieve racial balance.

School officials asked communities in the surrounding school neighborhoods to form "local evaluation committees" to consider what should be done. Their idea was to form a "cluster" of all the surrounding schools and devise a plan whereby students from cluster schools would be bused for kindergarten through second grade to Rosemary Hills, and Rosemary Hills children would be bused to the surrounding schools for third through sixth grades. The local evaluation committees were not enthusiastic. However, at least one committee—for the Chevy Chase Elementary neighborhood—expressed some willingness to work with school officials to integrate their school.

In the closing days of the negotiations, the "cluster" which had been planned to involve at least five or more of the dozen area schools was reduced to a "pairing" in which the youngest children from Chevy Chase Elementary School and Larchmont Elementary School in Kensington would be bused to Rosemary Hills, and older children from Rosemary Hills would in turn attend the "paired" schools.

The decision not to spread the responsibility for integrating down-county schools to more of the cluster elementary schools in this original plan proved to be a grievous error.

Going It Alone

In the first year of the new plan—1976—Chevy Chase parents rallied around the new school. More than 95 percent of the eligible Chevy Chase children reported for the K-2 primary school at Rosemary Hills. In the Larchmont community, only about 50 percent of those eligible reported to Rosemary Hills. Within the first few years of the pairing, the enrollment at Larchmont for grades three through six dropped drastically, as parents opted to send their children for all seven years to a neighborhood private school. The School Board had no choice but to close Larchmont. Chevy Chase's new third-through-sixth-grade school remained relatively stable, although parents there, also, began to seek private school alternatives. With a parallel decline in actual numbers of school-age children, enrollment from our neighborhood to Rosemary Hills for kindergarten through grade two and to Chevy Chase for grades three through six began a steady decline.

Demographically, in the next five years the down-county area changed. The school-age population in the predominantly minority community of Rosemary Hills increased dramatically, partly because of the construction of many large apartment complexes which were included in the Rosemary Hills school district. In Chevy Chase and Kensington, as in the rest of the western down-county areas, the number of majority school age children dramatically declined. Also, the highly-touted private schools gained in popularity. Thus, the racial balance at Rosemary Hills Primary School and also at Chevy Chase Elementary began to shift again. In the early 1980s, the minority percentage at Rosemary Hills

was rising from 65 percent to 70 percent and at Chevy Chase Elementary from 35 percent to 40 percent.

During these first five years of the "pairing," Chevy Chase parents who chose to send their children to public school were as active in their support at the Rosemary Hills site as they had been at their neighborhood school on Rosemary Street. They successfully led a fund-raising campaign which put thousands of dollars worth of playground equipment at Rosemary Hills, and they contributed heavily to improve the school library. They served as PTA leaders and volunteered regularly in the classrooms. They continuously pressed school officials for extra support for resources, diagnostic teachers, and materials for this special school.

A Losing Battle

By 1980, however, there was significant personnel turnover. Some of the new teachers were selected from the "teacher surplus" list, instead of being handpicked, and were overwhelmed by the diversity of the school. Some of the promised special support was not forthcoming.

In 1980, PTA officers, including representatives from all three communities—Chevy Chase, Kensington, and Rosemary Hills—testified that there was great concern about the racial imbalance, which was 15 percent above the county average—well over the point at which School Board guidelines required remedial action. There was concern about the teacher turnover, discipline, and academics, and about the need for special resources to serve "special needs" students and non-English speaking students.

Parent volunteers put much effort into recruiting students from Chevy Chase and Kensington back into the public schools, with open houses and special brochures and personal tours. But in spite of the immense effort, the number of parents from those communities who chose public school for their children decreased significantly each year. Many parents simply felt that their children were not getting the quality education they required from the "paired" schools. As parents withdrew their children, there was a clear perception of instability in the schools.

In 1981, the School Board, faced with declining school enrollments throughout the down-county area and pressed for new money for school facilities and programs in the rapidly-growing up-county area, decided to close numerous schools as a cost-saving measure. In the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster, they decided to return all elementary schools to the K-6 structure and to close Rollingwood Elementary, Lynbrook Elementary, and Rosemary Hills Primary School.

The decision to close Rosemary Hills was appealed to the State Board of Education, and the State Board reversed the decision less than two weeks before the opening of school in the fall of 1981. The County quickly made a new decision. They closed North Chevy Chase, Rollingwood, and Lynbrook, and merged those school communities into K-6 schools at Rosemary Hills and Chevy Chase. Needless to say, the cluster schools were in an uproar and it was clear that this decision, too, would necessitate further scrutiny and would be appealed. So many closures county-wide in one year caused the appearance, if not the reality, of true chaos in the Montgomery County public schools, most especially in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster.

The results in the fall 1981 School Board election were dramatic. Conservative School Board members were defeated and a new liberal majority took office, with one firm commitment—to reconsider the decision involving the Bethesda-Chevy Chase cluster schools. The Board asked superintendent Edward Andrews to prepare new alternatives.

Agonizing Choices

In Chevy Chase in 1981, the reinstated K-6 school attracted many more students than expected. Two kindergarten classes had to be added. Chevy Chase parents saw that for whatever reason, the return to the seven-grade structure had become a magnet for attracting Chevy Chase neighborhood parents back from private schools into the public school fold.

By the time Superintendent Andrews announced his recommendations, one of which was to return to the "K-2/3-6 pairing," many Chevy Chase parents wanted more than ever to defend the new K-6 structure for all cluster schools. Throughout the 1981-82 school year, the debate over the alternatives continued. Parents within the school were divided and the parents in all cluster schools were pitted against one another. North Chevy Chase, Rollingwood, and Lynbrook were closed; Rock Creek Forest, Bethesda, Somerset, Westbrook, and Chevy Chase were struggling for survival. Because of the court's order, only Rosemary Hills was certain to remain open.

The fray focused on whether there should be a return to the original "pairing" which was considered by many a "failed experiment" or whether to allow the cluster to have K-6 schools throughout. The new School Board chose to adopt Superintendent Andrews' recommenda-

tion that reinstated the original pairing but with some significant changes. They called for the *reopening* of North Chevy Chase to serve grades three through six only and assigned North Chevy Chase's younger children to Rosemary Hills. Since Rollingwood and Lynbrook Elementary Schools had also been closed, their K-2 children were assigned to Rosemary Hills, also.

This time the Chevy Chase parents, joined by the Rollingwood parents, appealed the decision. Needless to say, it was a complex mess. The local press chose to sensationalize the struggle, and the School Board took the politically popular stance of chastising Chevy Chase parents as well.

Chevy Chase parents, who had sent their children to Rosemary Hills, who had worked for the success of the school, who had supported the integration effort, and who had served in the PTA and as volunteers in the school, were caught in the middle—between their desire to cooperate with integration and their concern for their children's education. It was important to them that their public school attract more children back into the system. The return to the K-6 structure appeared to be achieving that goal. Other area parents defended the return to the pairing, and there was a great struggle within the school community. However, both sides strongly supported an integrated school—a fact that seemed to be overlooked by the media and ignored by the politicians.

Appeal

Parents of entering kindergarteners were particularly strong in opposing a return to the pairing. Literally hundreds of Chevy Chase and Rollingwood parents appealed the School Board's decision on the basis that the alternative chosen would overcrowd Rosemary Hills and underutilize the other schools involved, especially the Chevy Chase facility which had the largest capacity and was the newest in the cluster. In order for the "pairing" to work, the School Board had added children from three more school neighborhoods—Rollingwood, Lynbrook, and North Chevy Chase.

The appellants felt that either the Rosemary Hills facility would be overcrowded if those neighborhoods participated, or these three neighborhoods would suffer the same loss to private schools that Larchmont and Chevy Chase had encountered. They proposed a new plan that Rosemary Hills be made an "early childhood learning center" with Headstart, kindergarten, and first grade, and that Chevy Chase Elementary and North Chevy Chase Elementary house grades two through six. The merits of this proposal were never given serious consideration by school officials, and the appeal was denied.

The Town of Chevy Chase participated as an appellant in this suit as it had earlier in the appeal of the closure of Leland Junior High School. The town participated in the hearings before the School Board, and supported the position of the Chevy Chase Elementary School PTA—always strongly supporting the continuation of integration. However, when the plan was finally implemented, they embraced the new Rosemary Hills Primary School and promoted it as the "neighborhood" school.

Success

In the first year of the reinstated "pairing," Rosemary Hills was given tremendous support by the School Board and the school officials. An outstanding new principal and "only the best" handpicked teachers were selected. An assistant principal, curriculum coordinator, counselor, nurse, and many diagnostic teachers were assigned to the school. The facility was repainted and provided with many "extras." And, in fact, Chevy Chase parents who had appealed the decision were right—there was immediate overcrowding! Many came from out of the district for the all-day kindergarten and the magnet program. Temporary classrooms were brought in and the School Board immediately approved a $3.5 million renovation project.

Within all the neighborhoods involved, there were still a lot of hurt feelings and many who were skeptical of a school system which had changed school assignments so radically in just ten years. To their credit, school officials sought meetings with parents to ascertain what the problems were in the first pairing, and they attempted to remedy these problems, real and perceived. Although few students from the Town, Chevy Chase Village, or Rollingwood attended Rosemary Hills that first year, there has been a steady increase each year since. As the perception of stability in the cluster increased, more families began returning to the public school system.

William Duvall, Marion Holland,
Jean Dinwoodey Linehan, Jane Lawton

BETHESDA-CHEVY CHASE HIGH SCHOOL

While Washington is often looked upon as an area of transients, with residents coming and going, particularly in the suburbs, many families in our town have sent two generations to Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School.

The high school began in 1926 when the ninth grade was added to an eight-grade school on Wilson Lane in the semi-rural community of Bethesda. In 1928, with more grades added, it moved to a new building in the Leland section of Chevy Chase where the community center stands today. At that time, there were only two other high schools in southern Montgomery County—Rockville and Takoma-Silver Spring. The first graduating class in 1929 had 12 members from Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Somerset, and Kensington.

The original two-story building on the Leland site fronted on 44th Street, with the main entrance and administration in the middle and classrooms extending on either side to Willow Lane and Elm Street. Behind this wing was a facility which included a gymnasium and auditorium. When the huge folding doors behind the stage were opened, spectators could sit in the auditorium and watch basketball and other indoor events in the gymnasium. Below the gym at the Elm Street end were areas for vocational courses such as mechanical drawing, wood and sheet metal work, and automotive repair. Outdoor activities were conducted at the east end of the property.

As population increased in the area, B-CC outgrew that school building. A new one was built on the old Watkins farm and opened in 1936, at about the time East-West Highway was completed, linking Bethesda with Silver Spring.

Only three high school grades were moved to the new school building. The Leland site became a junior high school, with grades 7, 8, and 9. In 1963, a new five-story junior high building was constructed at the east end of the site. It was designed for 800 students, with 28 classrooms, a gymnasium, and a cafeteria. The earlier structure was demolished, and an area for outdoor activities—including tennis courts for the neighborhood—was established in that space. In 1979, the 9th grade was moved to B-CC, and at the end of the 1980-81 school year the school was closed because of declining enrollment. The student body was merged into what became Westland Intermediate School at 5501 Massachusetts Avenue. The Leland building was razed in 1988 to make way for the new Leland Community Center.

Over the years, as professionals and government officials filled the area and sent their children to B-CC, the high school earned a national reputation for academic excellence which it maintains today.

During World War II, students were trained to do civilian jobs for companies short-staffed by the war effort. Students also helped the Red Cross and grew a victory garden on the school's front lawn. After the war, at the instigation of Principal Thomas Pyle and a few B-CC teachers, Montgomery College opened at B-CC in September 1946 with nearly 200 students, many of them returning servicemen. Their classes were held in the

Homes on 44th Street and the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School were new in 1929.
PHOTO BY M. AND R.B. WARREN; COURTESY, MRS. WILLIAM C. O'BRIEN

evening at B-CC until the College moved to its Takoma Park campus in 1950.

Over the years, B-CC has had more than its share of Merit Scholars and Rhodes Scholars. Its graduates have gone to all the best colleges all over the country and have won many thousands of dollars of scholarship money. Its faculty has been outstanding. Its more than 30 sports teams—the Battlin' Barons and Baronettes—have more than held their own. Its school spirit has rarely wavered. And the school has changed in recent years—remarkably.

Leland Junior High School's Elm Street entrance in June 1981
PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

B-CC has become cosmopolitan, and as buildings have been added so have innovative programs to deal with a diverse student body. With changing demographics, B-CC had become by 1989 an urban school with about 40% minority enrollment.

While most of these students are blacks or Hispanics born in this country, a growing number are either the children of diplomats and other foreign nationals working here or refugees from such countries as El Salvador, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

The flags of more than 60 nations hang in the B-CC halls, in honor of almost 300 students. And nearly 100 foreign and American students belong to the school's international club.

There is a special intensive program that gives English language training to students of limited English proficiency. Teachers in the program provide a supportive environment that fosters academic achievement as well as sound study skills, and thus helps these students move into the mainstream.

There are now 11 advanced placement courses at B–CC, and courses are given in French, German, Spanish, Latin, Russian, and Chinese. Very few high schools in the country give courses in Russian or Chinese. And B-CC was one of 30 schools throughout the United States chosen to be the first ever to participate in a Soviet-American student exchange. In 1989, when the program began, 11 students from B-CC went to study at Moscow School #45 for four weeks, after 15 Soviet students spent three weeks studying at B-CC.

There are dozens of student clubs and organizations including S.A.D.D.—Students Against Drunk Driving—and S.H.O.P.—Students Helping Other People. The school's Recreation Club, under the enthusiastic guidance of History teacher Ed Mullaney, draws all segments of the student body into a myriad of activities and is one of only two such clubs in Montgomery County affiliated with the County Recreation Department. B-CC student publications have won national awards. B-CC music groups have traveled as far as England and New England, New Orleans and Montreal, to perform. And some of the school's brightest students have won the Superbowl of the TV program "It's Academic"—emerging first among secondary schools in the Washington-Baltimore area five times in 12 years in this battle of wits and knowledge.

Despite its variety, despite the fact that many of its students have lost as much as five years of schooling because of disruption in such home countries as Vietnam, the vast majority of B-CC graduates—currently 85%—continue school after they get their diplomas. Principal Nancy Powell attributes this high percentage to the school's inspiring tradition of academic excellence and achievement.

A school publication sums up B-CC as follows: "A comprehensive public senior high school, B-CC has a long tradition of challenging academics and innovative programs. A professional staff of 113 aided by 57 supporting services personnel teaches an international student body that strongly identifies with the local community." The description is headlined: "TRADITION, DIVERSITY, EXCELLENCE."

John Linehan

THE ELM STREET PARK

For many years, the Elm Street, Oakridge and Lynn Civic Association (EOL), though technically in Section Eight, was the fighting edge of Chevy Chase Section Four. It was there that the action began, as high rise development threatened on the west from Wisconsin Avenue, and from the north beyond the B&O tracks. In our own backyards, we fought to keep the muddy runoff from big building construction from turning our stream, Coquelin Run, into a swirling torrent of erosion. In our front yards, we fought to keep Elm Street and Oakridge from being widened to major thoroughfares. And in between, we fought to save all the houses and grounds between B-CC High School and Leland Junior High School from being leveled for a common sports field and playground serving both schools.

None of us will forget the "Last Leaf Upon the Tree" garden party in the late 1960s, at which residents along the proposed right-of-way for Project 80 demonstrated what would happen to their trees and gardens if the required 50 feet on either side were carved away to make room for a 60-inch water pipeline from Bethesda to Silver Spring. All the trees were decorated with tombstone signs, e.g. "This Elm, sprouted in 1920, will die if Project 80 comes this way." TV and press had a field day. EOL won.

But the big onslaught from commercial development came after the erection of the Air Rights Building on Wisconsin Avenue astride the B&O, when it was discovered that the developers had purchased a long thin strip of land on the south side of the tracks as far down as 44th Street, with the intention of continuing buildings and a roadway in that direction some day. The residents, who had used that ground unchallenged for 20-30 years for gardens, badminton courts, and tree houses, brought adverse possession (squatter's rights) suits against the developer and won the land.

In the meantime, on the west along Wisconsin Avenue, houses were deteriorating as commerce crowded in. The idea for a park to cut off the residential from the business area came from Marjorie Sonnenfeldt of Thornapple Street in Chevy Chase Section Four, who made the suggestion as a member of the advisory committee to the B-CC Master Plan. It was put on the map as a floating symbol by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The suggestion was activated on March 9, 1972, when EOL president Nicholas Read showed slides of the deteriorating neighborhood at the Montgomery County Council's Capital Improvement hearings, and persuaded the council to vote initial funds for a park.

Between 1973 and 1975, the Capital Improvement Budget included $2,000 to design the park and $48,000 to develop it. No estimate was put on the cost of acquiring the land and the houses that were on it. Nick Read wrote to Dickran Hovsepian, then president of the County Council, asking for an early starting date. He pointed out, "the longer you wait, the higher prices will go," a prophecy that turned out to be only too true.

There were delays. The Board of Education came into the picture and turned the park around. Instead of the park's paralleling Wisconsin, the designers were persuaded to run it down between Willow and Elm toward Leland Junior High School, the idea being to develop a park that could become an extension of the school and thus provide more area for school recreation. This unfortunately would have cut the neighborhood in half rather than buffering it from the business district.

Meantime, there had been an upswing in real estate values, and each of the 12 homes that had to be demolished to make way for the park went up 25 percent or more in price. EOL had voted to oppose efforts to take property from any resident owner at less than fair value—defined as the amount required to buy a similar home of equivalent size and quality in the same or a similar neighborhood. A persuasive point in EOL's argument was that the school plan would have taken one more home. EOL won. The park was turned back around.

But scarcely had that threat been overcome when the park changed shape again. Early in 1974 the County Executive impounded funds to cut the park in half and limit it to the side along 47th Street, leaving the side along 46th in the hands of the private owners, one of whom was even then negotiating with developers to build town houses there.

More meetings were held. More testimony was given. By a 5 to 1 vote, the County Council overrode the County Executive.

It wasn't long until the park was in jeopardy once more, when the State Board of Public Works withdrew all funds for urban parks. But the Park and Planning Commission vowed that work would go forward! In December 1974, the first house was demolished, and by 1978 all 12 houses were gone and the land was vacant.

Then a threat came from the Department of Transportation, which wanted to use the vacant land as a parking

lot. EOL turned this down. So did the Park and Planning Commission; but they ran no chances, and without waiting for a final park design, they planted grass and put in temporary park benches and tables to discourage any takeovers.

In 1976, the Bethesda Sector Plan was approved, and the park became official. EOL, under the leadership of Presidents Dean Cress and later Erwin Vollmer, negotiated the annexation of Section Eight into Chevy Chase Section Four, which then appointed its own park committee, with EOL continuing in a supportive role.

With inflation, the cost to design and develop the park had gone from $50,000 to $165,000, not including $811,000 spent for the purchase and demolition of the houses. It was the most expensive park, per square foot, in Montgomery County. But today, Park and Planning says it is the best-used urban park in the County. It is used by office workers from the business district as well as by the neighborhood. And it certainly fulfills its purpose—which is to cut off commercial expansion from Wisconsin Avenue.

Even as late as 1979, there were problems. At one point, the County Council disallowed the Park and Planning Commission's request for more maintenance crews, and M-NCPPC said it could not provide maintenance for the new park. The Town of Chevy Chase came to the rescue and offered to take care of it.

Finally, in June 1980, just eight years from the start, when abandonment hearings were to close off Elm Street, some residents of Leland Street, who had been putting up a fight to close off Leland in order to eliminate traffic between Wisconsin and East-West Highway, tried to stop proceedings until Leland could be closed as well. They were unsuccessful, and upper Elm became part of the park.

On May 2, 1981, the Elm Street Urban Park was dedicated with speeches and ceremony. John Kimball was master of ceremonies. Both Dr. Royce Hanson and Norman Christeller, the former chairman and the chairman of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, were there. Nicholas and Dallas Read presented a bronze sculpture "Girl with Hoop," done by their daughter Jenny Read, for a centerpiece.

Dallas Johnson Read

Jenny Read's "Girl With Hoop" in Elm Street Park

PHOTO BY LAURA RIVERS

ZIMMERMAN BROTHERS' PARK

Zimmerman Brothers' Park was conceived by candlelight with the approval of a drift of fireflies. The fireflies were right, the woods would be an ideal place to set out the overflow of azalea and other cuttings from my cold frames.

Once I had hung my lantern on the bough, support flowed in from the community. Even donations had been forthcoming. One autumn I naturalized a thousand bulbs. The next spring the family living nearest the park sent me a check. Winters , the principal of the local high school, offered me the use of windows with southern exposure for wintering tender plants.

I was never lacking volunteers from nature study classes to help me weed and transplant. Dry spells were never a problem with neighbors ready with hoses, and the vandals were kept at bay by my friends on Maple Avenue.

Best of all, the Park and Planning Commission let me putter in its greenhouse, where I was allowed to tend to plants brought in from as far as Stoke Poges in England, where Thomas Grey wrote his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard."

A letter greeted me one afternoon. It was from the White House. Even though it had been a full six years since I had sneaked out the gate past a White House guard with a sprig of boxwood in my pocket, I opened the letter apprehensively. But it said:

I was in Africa when my brother wrote telling me town officials had decided to name my floral playground Zimmerman Brothers' Park and had a bronze plaque cast to that effect. I hurried home for the dedication. The Park and Planning Commission hauled in a large boulder on which to affix the plaque.

But of all the promises and mementos, the one I most prized was a letter from the Park and Planning Commission promising to care for the park if I ever left Washington. In a few years, I did just that.

I remember taking a last look at the plaque while hearing geese winging their way overhead. We all flew on.

Fred L. Zimmerman

In 1986, the Town of Chevy Chase assumed ownership of Zimmerman Park and since then has maintained it consistent with Mr. Zimmerman's plan.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 9, 1970

Dear Messrs. Zimmerman:

It was with great pleasure that I recently learned of your splendid efforts to improve the quality of life in our area. I understand that you have held parties for underprivileged children at your home on many occasions and that you have undertaken the landscaping of certain public property in your neighborhood, with gratifying success. I want to commend you for your excellent community spirit and send you my best wishes for the continued success of your efforts.

Sincerely,

Richard Nixon

Mr. Carl D. Zimmerman
Mr. Fred L. Zimmerman
7605 Maple Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20015

PLACES OF WORSHIP

Presbyterian mission services were probably the first religious services to be held in southern Montgomery County. They began in 1723 in the Cabin John and Potomac areas. A "preaching station," the Captain John Meeting House, was constructed on Falls Road in the 1740s. The Presbyterian congregation prospered, and in 1820 moved to the Rockville Pike north of Cedar Lane. There they built the Bethesda Meeting House, which became a focal point for the community and is now listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. In 1926 the **Bethesda Presbyterian Church** moved to its present location, 7611 Clarendon Road.

St. John's Episcopal Church, Norwood Parish, Wisconsin Avenue and Bradley Lane, was the first church to be established in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. "Cottage" services were initiated in nearby homes in 1873. A year later, a frame chapel was erected. The Parish Hall added in 1902 created an "L." This entire complex was destroyed by fire in 1914. A Gothic (stone) church served the congregation from 1915 to 1947. The current red brick colonial church was completed in 1948. Ten years later, the education building was dedicated. For more than 70 years, St. John's has been our town's good neighbor to the west, and has allowed the town to use its facilities.

Chevy Chase United Methodist Church, 7001 Connecticut Avenue, is right across "The Avenue" from our town. For 77 years it has been a center for community activities. To name a few, it has provided meeting rooms for all age groups, from Cub Scouts to the Fossils retired men's club. It assists with the Meals on Wheels program. A nursery school was established there in 1967. The Chinese Methodist and the Ghanaian congregations hold services in the Methodist chapel. In 1912 the first segment of the property, including a small brown-shingled church, was purchased from the Baptist Church. The first sanctuary of the present stone complex was dedicated in 1935. Phillips Hall was consecrated in 1954 and the education building was opened in 1961.

All Saints' Episcopal Church was the first of four churches to grace the Chevy Chase Circle area. It was established in 1897 on the west side of the circle. Services were instituted in a little school house where the present rectory now stands. A new church was formally occupied in December 1901. The Kingan Chapel was completed in 1914. The present complex of buildings was completed in 1953.

Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church on the east side of the circle was officially organized in January 1908. The first meetings were held in the library north of the circle. Funds were raised for the building of a small frame stucco church, and the first services at the present site were held on Christmas day of 1910. Services in the existing sanctuary began in April 1924. The first church school building was dedicated in 1932 and the current building in 1958.

Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, 6001 Western Avenue, was organized by the Catholics of Chevy Chase in 1909. They built a small pebble-dash church in 1911. The present Gothic parish church was dedicated in 1927. The Blessed Sacrament School began classes in September 1923. The church has participated in many community activities, including the sponsorship of Boy Scout Troop 90 for more than 60 years.

Chevy Chase Baptist Church, 5671 Western Avenue, was the fourth to be built in the Chevy Chase Circle area. The church was organized in 1906, originally located on Connecticut Avenue, one mile north of the circle. That property was sold to the Chevy Chase Methodist Church in 1912 and members of the Baptist congregation worshipped in other churches for more than a decade. In 1923 services resumed and were held in the Chevy Chase (Avalon) Theatre. The present property, one block west of the circle, was purchased the next year. On Christmas day of that year, the first service was held in the new chapel. The present sanctuary, the Clark Chapel, was completed in 1949 and the matching red brick education building ten years later.

Our Lady of Lourdes, East-West Highway and Pearl Street, is on corner property purchased by the newly-created parish in 1926. It included a handsome 1880s home which had once served as a summer residence for the Chinese Embassy. This was converted into a church and rectory. The parish soon outgrew the structure, and in 1930 a small white church was transported to the Bethesda site from southeast Washington. A new church, school, and convent was completed in 1941. The existing church and addition to the school was dedicated in 1951.

Christ Lutheran Church of Bethesda, 8011 Old Georgetown Road, held its first service in the State Theater (later the Baronet) in December 1934. Four years later, the congregation, which included many Chevy Chase residents, moved to its first church home, the Garrett Mansion on Old Georgetown Road. The education building was dedicated in 1955 and the existing church was completed in 1956.

Between 1940 and 1980, the number of religious fa-

cilities steadily increased in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. New congregations were established here and others relocated from the District of Columbia. Many were denominations new to suburban Maryland.

Among the best attended of these churches and synagogues are:

Chevy Chase Church of Christ Scientist, 7901 Connecticut Avenue

Ohr Kodesh Synagogue (Conservative), 8402 Freyman Drive

Beth El Synagogue (Conservative), 8215 Old Georgetown Road

Temple Sinai Synagogue (Reform), 3100 Military Road, D.C.

Temple Shalom Synagogue (Reform) 8401 Grubb Road

North Chevy Chase Christian Church, 8814 Kensington Parkway

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon), Chevy Chase Ward and Rama Latinia (Spanish Speaking) Ward, 5460 Western Avenue

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon), Kensington, Rockville, and Rock Creek Wards, 10000 Stoneybrook Drive

William Duvall

SHOPPING IN THE CHEVY CHASE AREA

What a difference a day, a year, or a decade makes! Shopping and shopping districts in this area have changed so much that it is difficult to write about them or find many records of the changes.

In the early days, since there were zoning restrictions against businesses in the new suburb, the Chevy Chase Land Company provided freight service for its customers. It had an electric car which made two trips a day from a freight station at 18th and U Streets in the District of Columbia to Chevy Chase Lake. Washington merchants delivered all kinds of merchandise ordered by residents, from pins to medicine and household goods, to the freight station. From there it was taken on the freight car and left in boxes at various corners on Connecticut Avenue. This service was maintained for about a dozen years until automobiles became the way to travel.

Until suburban shopping malls and department store chains began to develop in the 1950s, residents of Chevy Chase went "downtown" to do most of their shopping. This northwest D.C. commercial area was roughly bounded by Pennsylvania and New York Avenues between 7th and 15th Streets. Shoppers usually traveled by street car, and by bus after the tracks were removed.

There were major department stores such as Woodward & Lothrop, the Hecht Co., Kann's, Lansburgh's, and Palais Royal and specialty stores such as Garfinckel's, Frank R. Jelleff, and Raleigh Haberdasher. Each store had its own trucks with uniformed drivers which made two or three trips per week to deliver customers' purchases.

Days spent downtown shopping, having lunch, and attending a movie and stage show were special events. One especially looked forward to the Christmas holiday season when the stores and their outside display windows were beautifully decorated.

The Shops of Old Bethesda

The closest shopping district to the Town of Chevy Chase was on Wisconsin Avenue from Bradley Boulevard to East-West Highway. This Bethesda area was commercially developed well before World War II. The first traffic light in Bethesda was installed in July 1930 at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and East-West Highway, and this was followed by a "Buy in Bethesda" campaign to attract businesses to the area.

Community Paint and Hardware was one of the first buildings on Wisconsin Avenue. The front portion was built in 1880, and a brick structure was added in the rear in 1941. It was first operated by the Wilson family, and from 1922 to 1931 was called Bradley's Hardware Store. During the 1920s, the Bethesda Post Office was located in the building.

The Broadhurst family operated the store as Community Paint and Hardware from 1931 to February 1986, when its life came to an end to make way for a high-rise building. Five brothers and numerous other family members participated in its operation over this period.

Homeowners from Chevy Chase, Bethesda, and surrounding areas came in for "hard to find" items such as

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Homeowners from Chevy Chase, Bethesda, and surrounding areas came in for "hard to find" items such as

replacement parts for older furnaces, faucets, windows, door locks, and plumbing fixtures. These components were usually kept in stock along with a bit of soft-spoken advice as to how they might be installed.

There was a country store atmosphere about the interior, spiced by the aroma of paint, turpentine, and fertilizer. Seed, feed, and nails were displayed in open bins ready to be weighed and bagged. Rope of various diameters was stored on spools in the basement and pulled up through holes in the floor to be cut to customers' specifications. And iron pipe and copper tubing were cut to order.

It was a sad day when this friendly era and atmosphere that the Bethesda and Chevy Chase homeowners had come to know and love came to an end. The rear of the building has been razed. But the front portion was put on the historic preservation list.

Another old landmark is the Montgomery Farm Women's Cooperative Market at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Willow Lane. This unique market opened in its present location in December 1932, and helped farm people from upper Montgomery County eke out an income during the days of the Depression. Old-timers say that it first operated under a tent. It is open for business on Wednesdays and Saturdays and often so crowded that it is difficult to take care of everyone.

The demand for really fresh vegetables and home-cooked products is great. The farm women get up as early as 2:00 a.m. to prepare special dishes and transport them to the market; some customers shop as early as 5:30 in the morning. The vendors shut down their booths when they are sold out, sometimes well before noon.

On a walk through the market, one sees displays of cakes, cookies, bread, and rolls. Some booths contain potato salad, baked beans, and relishes. Eggs, poultry, country hams, and sausages can be found. And flowers and hand-made boutique items are also available. It is truly a breath of country air amidst the skyscrapers.

Since 1979, the Market has been listed in the County's Master Plan of Historic Places, which means that there must be a permit from the Historic Preservation Commission before it can be demolished. However, the property tax bill has been increasing rapidly, and this makes it very difficult to keep operating.

Fortuna's shoe and leather repair shop is another of the old stand-bys. It was started by Joseph Fortuna in 1943 in the 7200 block on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue. When they were forced to move in 1984 to make way for a new high-rise, they relocated in a little shop on Elm Street.

Robert Eastham's Exxon Station on the northwest corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Leland Street is a thriving and well-run service station. His father opened the station in 1929 and ran it until 1957 when he became ill and turned it over to his son. They shared the short block with a Mobil station until 1983 when Eastham acquired the Mobil station and enlarged his.

Another landmark store in this area is the Butler-Flynn paint store on the southeast corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Leland Street. The shop was opened in January 1947 in space that had been a tire shop and a grocery.

Several stores and offices have occupied the area on Leland Street east of Wisconsin Avenue. J.R. Enright's appliance store has been there many years and is still in operation. High's was a very busy and popular store where one could find milk and other necessities in a hurry. It has been greatly missed since it was within walking distance of many homes.

On the northeast corner of Wisconsin and Leland, there was a small and neighborly shopping center, the Leland shopping center, which had such stores as Sherwin-Williams Paint Store, Lakeview Market, Siebert's Yard Goods store, Eleanore's Gift Shop, The Treasure of the Pirates, Mrs. Roberts' Center Book Store, Whittlesey's Drug Store, and Jean Matou's dress shop. There was also the Montgomery County Thrift Shop, which still remains. The shopping center was there until the Ford Building was constructed about 1975.

Brooks Photographer opened in the 7200 block of Wisconsin Avenue in the early 1950s and moved to its present location near the police station in 1960. Blackistone Florist has long been next to Brooks.

Lowen's toy store is also a well-known establishment. It had to move in 1984 from its location of about 20 years on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue to a temporary location on Elm Street. After the Gateway Building was opened in 1986, Lowen's moved back to Wisconsin Avenue in a new three-level store.

The construction of the Gateway Building displaced such stores as Woolworth's, Mazor Furniture, and Bromwell's. Mazor's previously had been Sears, Palais Royal, and a Woodward and Lothrop Budget Store.

The Air Rights Building, the first of the high-rises, was constructed in the mid 1960s with its second and third buildings built in 1970 and 1980. These all contain many kinds of shops and businesses. However, the major changes in Bethesda began in 1976, when the Montgomery County Planning Board adopted its long-range plans for the central business district based on the future opening of the Metro Red Line.

The Bethesda Hyatt Regency, an office building, and the Bethesda Metro Station opened in late 1984, displacing a Peoples Drug Store, some small specialty stores, and a movie theatre built in 1934, known first as the State, then the Hiser, then the Baronet. The Post Office was left in its old location. Across Montgomery Avenue was Steuart Day's Gulf Station which remains as a Chevron station.

At East-West Highway, the main landmarks were the Bank of Bethesda (now Crestar) and the Hot Shoppes restaurant. This restaurant was opened in 1941. Gifford's ice cream parlor a block north on Wisconsin Avenue was a favorite place of Chevy Chase residents for 25 or 30 years until the firm went out of business.

Over the years, there have been many other kinds of shops and services occupying buildings in the Wisconsin Avenue corridor. To name a few, there have been Jelleff's, A&P grocery, Safeway grocery, Carrier Drug Store, China Closet, Bernard's Camera Shop, C&P Telephone Co., Peoples Hardware, Sloane's Furniture, Virga's Furniture, and several restaurants, banks, and rug stores.

At the present time, shops also extend out Wisconsin Avenue almost to National Institutes of Health and Bethesda Naval Hospital, and out Old Georgetown Road.

Down Near the Circle

Another shopping area that was developed in the early 1920s was in the District on the west side of Connecticut Avenue in Chevy Chase, D.C., from just south of the Circle to Livingston Street. By 1927 it had close to 30 businesses, including the first shopping mall in the community, the Chevy Chase Arcade.

In the old days, the children in the area enjoyed Saturday afternoon serials at the Chevy Chase Theatre. There were two fine bakeries, Columbia Home Bakery and Avignone Frères. Later Schupp's Bakery was well patronized by people from many areas.

Haskins Novelty Shop was very popular with the school children, who could find almost anything they wanted there. The Chevy Chase Supply, a small Safeway, and another independent grocery were popular with the housewives, and later Magruder's became popular with those in the area and also outside.

There were also a gas station, barber shop, beauty parlor, cobbler, tailor, liquor stores, Peoples Drug Store, and another pharmacy in the area. The Chevy Chase branch library was on Livingston Street until it moved to its new building on Connecticut.

The east side of Connecticut Avenue remained undeveloped commercially because of zoning until 1958, when the National Bank of Washington was given permission to build a branch. The E.V. Brown Elementary School was the only non-residential building on that side. Later Esso and Safeway also received permission to build, and in 1973 a shopping center was built next to the Esso station, now Exxon.

As time went on, other shops were opened to serve the various needs and desires of the area residents, including a fur shop, lamp shop, hardware, paint store, book store, deli, seafood store, and restaurants.

Farther Afield

Another nearby shopping area was developed in the Friendship Heights area at Wisconsin and Western Avenues, a corner that was relatively undeveloped until the late 1940s. The Silver Fox restaurant was on the southwest corner, a Hot Shoppes restaurant on the northwest corner, and a Howard Johnson restaurant on the northeast corner, along with the street car terminal.

In 1950, Woodward and Lothrop opened its first branch store where the Hot Shoppes had been. Shortly after that, in 1952, after many years of legal work, the Chevy Chase Center was built by the Chevy Chase Land Company just north of the Howard Johnson restaurant. By 1969 it had offices and 22 stores, including Raleigh Haberdasher, Rich's Shoes, R. Harris Jewelers, Giant Food, McIntyre Hardware, Tweeds 'n Things, Camalier and Buckley, and Ambassador Travel.

In 1961, Saks Fifth Avenue was built north of the Chevy Chase Center, with the stipulation that Chevy Chase Village could regulate its architecture and landscaping. The store was opened in 1964, and this realized a Chevy Chase Land Company plan to bring important New York stores to the area. Lord and Taylor had been built on the District side of Western Avenue in the late 1950s.

When the Metro subway system came to Bethesda in the early 1980s, the Chevy Chase Metro building replaced the Howard Johnson restaurant, and Mazza Gallerie, with Neiman-Marcus its main occupant, was built in D.C. on the southwest corner of Wisconsin and Western.

At the same time, many fine New York shops were opened across from Saks on Wisconsin Avenue.

A small shopping area also developed on Brookville Road in the early 1920s with a pharmacy, grocery store, gas station, and later a beauty parlor. There was also the Brook Farm Tea House, which was designed to occupy the barn built on the original farm. Through the years

that property has changed hands many times and still remains a small French restaurant.

In the Chevy Chase Lake area, Thomas W. Perry was established in 1911. In the early days they received their materials by train, and they have continued to supply the area with lumber, hardware, and fuel oil ever since.

Nearby is a small shopping center in which Chevy Chase Supermarket and Packett's Lake Pharmacy opened in the 1950s to cater to Chevy Chase residents. There are also other small shops, banks, gas stations, and a restaurant.

A welcome addition to the shopping in the area was the opening of the Bradley Shopping Center in 1953. The present stores, which were there when it opened, are Bradley Drugs, Bruce Variety, and Strosnider's Hardware, which was then in the place where the Deli is now. Strosnider's moved into its present location in 1966 when the Acme Grocery closed. Kaye-Robin gift shop moved in a couple of years later, and there have also been barber and beauty shops, cleaners, bakeries, a shoe store, and a ladies' shop.

The Safeway and Peoples Drug Store on Arlington and Bradley were built in the late 1950s and the Giant up Arlington Road in the 1960s. The Giant opened its pharmacy in the middle 1980s in the space which had previously been the A&P grocery. At about this same time, all the new and trendy shops of Bethesda Row were opened along Bethesda Avenue. There are also gas stations and automobile dealers and parts shops in the area.

Besides these fairly local shopping areas, Chevy Chase residents have a number of fine shopping malls within a few miles, including Montgomery Mall, White Flint, and Wheaton Plaza.

There are so many stores in the area that you can get almost anything you want without going far. Quite a change from the days when the electric railway delivered merchandise to boxes on the corner!

Vera Hough

THE TUDOR SHOPPING CENTER

The Leland Community of homes designed and built by M. and R.B. Warren was served by one of the first planned shopping centers in the area. The Warrens owned land west to Wisconsin Avenue, and they believed that it was important as a part of their development to provide convenient retail services closer to home.

Therefore, in the late 1920s, they established a new commercial zone and constructed 12 stores on Wisconsin Avenue between Walsh and Leland Streets. The stores were in a Tudor style and, according to the Warrens' sales brochure, were "so designed as to harmonize with the artistic English and colonial architecture of the community." The Warrens dedicated a much wider right of way and paved the avenue in front of their stores. This was the first widening of Wisconsin Avenue to accommodate commercial establishments.

Initially, the tenants for the neighborhood center were interviewed and carefully selected to "conscientiously serve" the residents of Leland. Since their beginning, the stores have changed hands many times, offering a variety of grocery stores, restaurants, beauty parlors and barber shops, toys and hats, a pool room, auto services, laundromat, paint and wallpaper and oriental rugs.

Today, the Tudor Shopping Center, as it has been called, remains one of the last enclaves of small service-oriented retail businesses in urban Bethesda. It is presently on the list for study by the Commission for Historic Preservation. Whether it is selected or not, its value as one of the first planned shopping centers and the only one adjoining our town is clear.

Jane Lawton

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Connecticut Avenue Trolley Car Line

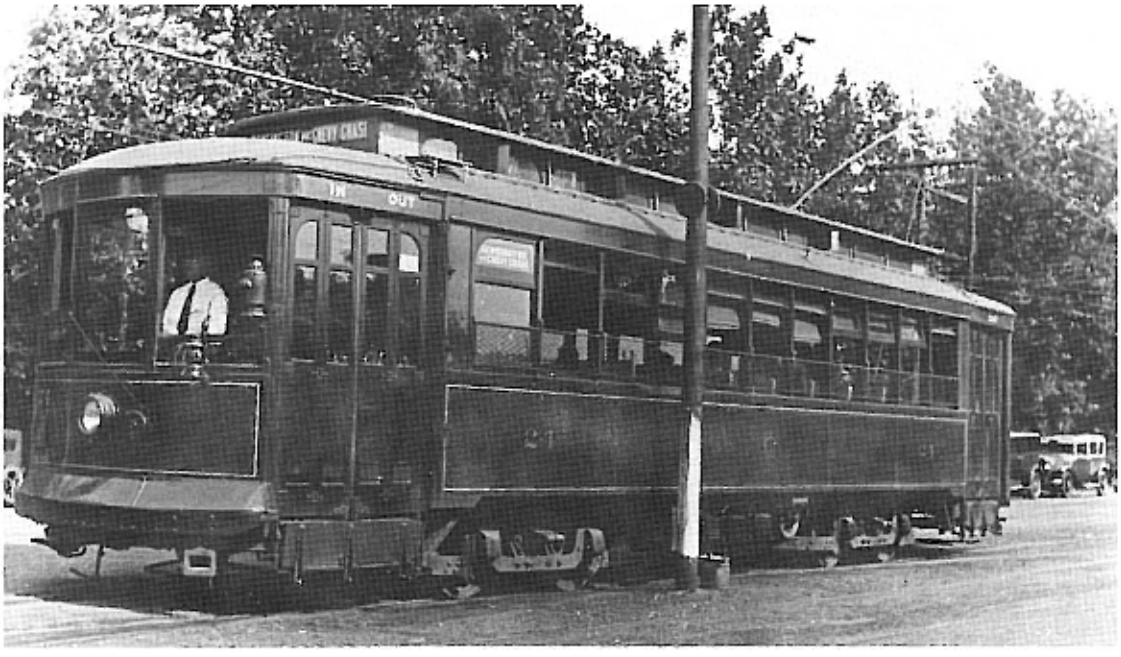
On a dark Hallowe'en night in the late 1920s, three young people waited at the Rosemary Street car stop on the west side of Connecticut Avenue. A dim headlight appeared as Capital Traction Company car number 20 southbound from Chevy Chase Lake lumbered closer. The trio walked toward the track as if to board, and the sturdy 44-seat car ground to a halt. Suddenly it was plunged into darkness and the motors were silenced. Accomplices had approached the car from the rear and lowered the trolley pole from the overhead electric wire, cutting off the power. Gales of laughter and the sound of pounding feet were heard as the pranksters fled the scene. The motorman grumbled impatiently and gripped the unresponsive controls at the front end of the car. The conductor cursed as he groped for the manual control of the rear door. He then stepped down to the pavement, and reset the trolley pole. A moment later the dark green car resumed its run to Chevy Chase Circle and downtown Washington.

Trolley cars on Connecticut Avenue provided a lifeline for the residents of Chevy Chase, Maryland. Before the streets were paved and automobiles prevailed, the trolleys served as the main means of transportation for people going to work, school, and other activities. An electric freight car made trips downtown with lists of homeowners' needs and returned with groceries, medicine, ice, and other household items.

Leroy King states in his *100 Years of Capital Traction* that the Rock Creek Railway built the District of Columbia portion of the line, and the Chevy Chase Land Company continued it into Maryland as a part of its real estate development plan. Trolley service began in 1892 on a right-of-way which later became Connecticut Avenue. In 1895 these companies were merged with others to form the Capital Traction Company.

This was a first-class passenger operation with a double track line in the middle of the Avenue all the way. The cars went south from our town, around the Chevy Chase Circle and continued on Connecticut Avenue to Calvert Street. They then went east on a high steel trestle over the Rock Creek Valley to 18th Street and continued to 7th Street and Florida Avenue. Over the years, destinations changed beyond this point, but they were always to locations in downtown Northwest Washington.

Cars continued north beyond our town limits to the junction of Connecticut Avenue and the B&O Georgetown Branch. This destination was Chevy Chase Lake where there was a loop for the trolleys to turn around for their trip back to Washington. On the west side of the avenue there was a passenger waiting station. On the east side, where the B. F. Saul building now stands, there was a large car storage barn and an electric power generating plant. North of this point, a single track wound through the farms and woods for 2½ miles to Kensington. The Kensington line, under changing management, operated from 1895 to 1935.



Capital Traction trolley car 24 at Chevy Chase Lake circa 1934

COURTESY, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ARA MESROBIAN COLLECTION

Wisconsin Avenue Trolley Car Line

During its peak years, the Wisconsin Avenue line ran from 5th and F Streets in downtown Washington through Georgetown and Bethesda to Rockville. It was authorized as the Tenallytown and Rockville Railroad by the Maryland Assembly in 1890.

According to Leroy King's *100 Years of Capital Traction*, the track ran along Wisconsin Avenue and then continued on Old Georgetown Road to Alta Vista near Cedar Lane. There was an amusement park at this location. In 1900, service was extended to Rockville on a straight line through the fields and woods west of the Georgetown Preparatory School. The track then ran on what is now Route 355 and continued to Rockville. In 1902 it became part of the area-wide Washington Railway and Electric Company. This union made it possible to run through cars to downtown Washington.

Handsome suburban cars with 48 seats served the public from 1908 to 1935. The Maryland portion of the line was abandoned in 1935, and busses replaced the trolleys. In 1984, after an absence of 49 years, rail passenger service was restored to the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area. The Red Line of the Metro Subway between the Tenleytown and Bethesda stations follows the route of the former trolley track.

Westbound B&O freight passes under the East-West Highway in 1969.

PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

The Baltimore and Ohio Georgetown Branch

In railroad terms, the Georgetown Branch has always been "freight only." It has transported building materials for the construction of private homes, apartment buildings, and offices. It has moved coal and oil for heating and brought in paving materials for streets.

The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad constructed two miles of track from its main line west of Silver Spring to Chevy Chase Lake in 1892, the same year the trolley line from D.C. reached that destination. Building supplies were unloaded at the site now occupied by Thos. W. Perry, Inc. The development of Chevy Chase helped make the railroad profitable.

The Georgetown Branch terminated at Chevy Chase Lake for 17 years. In 1909 and 1910, nine additional miles of track were completed through Bethesda and Dalecarlia and continued down the Potomac River to Georgetown. H. H. Harwood, Jr., in his book, *The Impossible Challenge*, comments that the branch was an attempt by the B&O to cross the Potomac and gain access to Virginia in competition with other railroads.

During the 1960s and 1970s, business began to decline on the Georgetown Branch. The railroad discontinued operations on the entire branch in 1985. Montgomery County purchased the right of way from the CSX Transportation Company in 1988 for a hiker-biker trail and a proposed trolley line.

William Duvall

THE NATIONAL 4-H CENTER

The site of the present 4-H Center was first developed in the early 1890s, when the Chevy Chase Land Company built a frame structure, the Spring Hotel, on it. The hotel was not a success. While it was full during the summer months, it was practically vacant during the rest of the year. It was modified slightly and became the Chevy Chase Inn; however, even with the changes it was still vacant much of the time.

In 1903 it became the Chevy Chase College for Young Ladies. At that time, a brick veneer was added completely covering the white colonial wood building. The name was changed in 1927 and it became the Chevy Chase Junior College. The present Turner Hall, originally the Muhse Science Hall, was completed in 1949 near the southwest corner of the main building. The present Warren Hall near the northeast corner was originally Scudder House, the school president's residence. The junior college closed in 1950.

The National 4-H Foundation purchased the property in 1951, but immediately leased it to the Department of the Army to house the Operations Research Office of the Johns Hopkins University for work relating to the Korean War. It was returned to the Foundation in 1958.

Further modifications were made to the main building, Smith Hall, when it was reoccupied in 1959. Two wings were rebuilt. Two large new buildings bracketing Warren Hall were also built. These buildings and W.K. Kellogg, McCormick, and Firestone Halls were all connected by underground passages and above-ground colonnades. In 1976 the main building except for the rear wings was demolished and a look-alike but much larger structure, renamed J.C. Penney Hall, was erected as the centerpiece of the complex. The complex now has an overnight capacity for 650 occupants, 30 conference rooms, plus dining and banquet facilities. The Center is the scene of many national and international conferences.

Linscott Hall

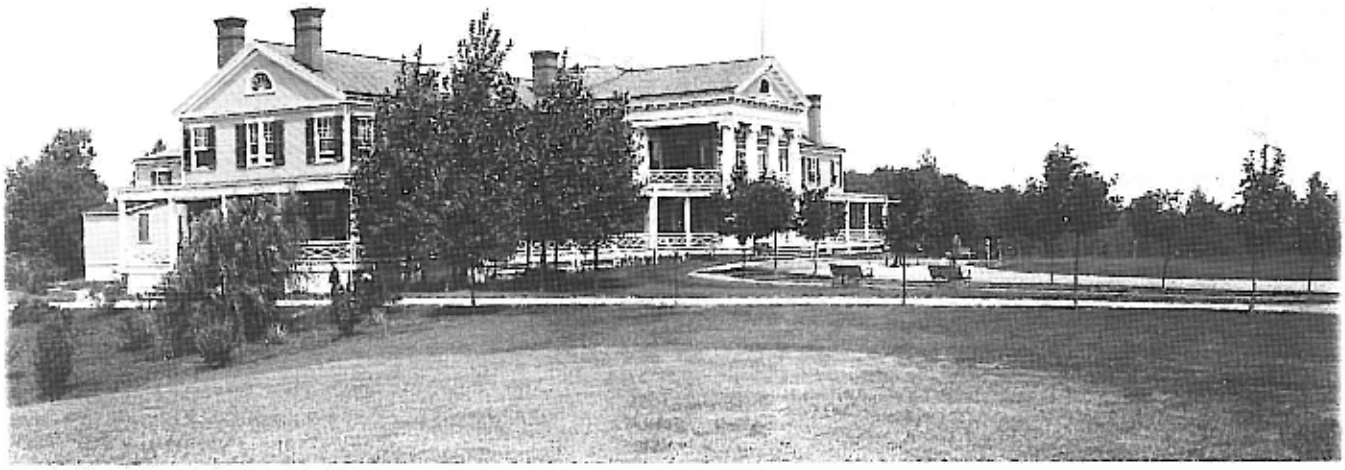
The National 4-H Program

4-H is an out-of-school educational program that helps young people develop new skills, explore possible career choices, and serve their communities. The four H's stand for head, heart, hands, and health. Their slogan is "Learn by Doing." Young people participate in agricultural projects such as raising livestock and poultry, growing crops, and canning. City youngsters receive instruction in home improvement, computers, automobile care and safety, clothing, gardening in limited space, physical fitness, and drug abuse.

In the United States the movement began in the early 1900s. Federal, state, and county governments contribute to 4-H work. The state land grant universities and Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture supply educational materials for 4-H members and help organize national and state events. There are about 166,000 local units. Each year about 4.7 million youths primarily 9-19 years of age participate and 300,000 attend camps. Approximately 622,500 volunteers serve as instructors and leaders.

The National 4-H Council is a not-for-profit educational organization that uses private resources to help expand and strengthen the 4-H program.

Information for this article was furnished by the National 4-H Center.



Chevy Chase College for Young Ladies on Connecticut Avenue, Circa 1908 COURTESY, NATIONAL 4-H CENTER

CHEVY CHASE CLUB

Our southern neighbor the Chevy Chase Club occupies 190 acres of land bordered by Bradley Lane, Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase Village, and Wisconsin Avenue. Most of this area is an 18-hole golf course framed by a narrow strip of woods. There are many kinds of gardens in the club grounds, including a rose garden, an herb garden, and an English border garden. In the woods, an arboretum of many thousands of trees, are a wildflower walk and a bird sanctuary.

This extensive landscape, once tobacco fields cleared from wilderness, has been gradually shaped by an organization now almost 100 years old. Its history begins in 1885 with the founding of the Dumblane Club, devoted to foxhunting and steeplechase, on the Dumblane farm north of Nebraska Avenue at Tenallytown. In 1892 this club moved to Belmont, a 100-acre farm northwest of Chevy Chase Circle, which Arthur J. Goldsborough had sold to the Chevy Chase Land Company. Senator Francis G. Newlands, Land Company founder, and a group of members of the downtown Metropolitan Club were then considering forming a family club outside the crowded city. A year later, the Dumblane Club joined the newly organized Chevy Chase Club and Hunt, with 82 members and the support of the Land Company, which leased to the new club a 9.6-acre tract along the west side of Connecticut Avenue south from Bradley Lane, including the Bradley farm house. In 1894 this tract was still remote from the city, until then reached across open country, on the Georgetown-Rockville Pike, by horse, carriage, bicycle, or the still-rare automobile. The newly-built Connecticut Avenue with its electric trolley now provided an easy, reliable, and enjoyable journey for city dwellers.

In 1895 the combined Hunt moved from Belmont to stables and kennels on the new grounds (on the site of the present garage), where it remained until disbanded in 1912. At that time, carriage-driving, horse shows, steeple chase, fox hunts, and polo games all ceased. It was the end of the era of the horse in an increasingly urban area.

The Bradley farmhouse became the Chevy Chase Clubhouse, for 16 ensuing years undergoing a series of alterations and additions: ballroom, kitchen, bedrooms, dining rooms, tap and smoking rooms, and enclosed porches. A separate shingled bungalow was added as a dormitory at the north end of the present range of buildings.

Meanwhile a six-hole course for the new game of golf was laid out to the east of the farmhouse. According to the source of this article, John M. Lynham's *The Chevy Chase Club, A History 1885-1957*: "The first tee was on the west side of Connecticut Avenue in front of the Old Clubhouse, and from there the golfers drove across Connecticut Avenue with its car tracks and overhead trolley [wires] to the first green on the other side. The next four holes were played over the open fields of the Chevy Chase Land Company and the sixth and last hole was played back across Connecticut Avenue from a tee about . . . at #1 Quincy Street, to a green on the site of the [future] Bungalow." A year later, this course was supplanted by a new nine-hole course to the west of the farmhouse, expanded to 18 holes in 1898. Tennis, squash, baseball, and croquet courts were added, and in 1905 four bowling alleys.

The 9.6-acre grounds were filling up, so between 1903 and 1908, the club bought several parcels of land, enlarging the grounds to their present size and shape. Donald J. Ross designed a new 18-hole golf course, often revised since.

In 1911, the year the Columbia Country Club opened just to the north of then Section Four, the Chevy Chase Club built an entirely new clubhouse, designed by Henri de Sibour, which is the core of the present main building. The porte cochère was added in 1914; the gazebo at the trolley stop on Connecticut Avenue in 1915; and the present stone retaining wall in 1931. The original clubhouse became a dormitory, then was redesigned and greatly enlarged to its present form in 1926 by the architect Waddy Wood. He also enlarged the main building and added a tennis house at the west end of the new swimming pool. Extensive planting of gardens and trees in the following years created the main lines of the present landscape.

With another building campaign, beginning in 1960, the club replaced the old bungalow with the present north wing of pool dressing rooms, constructed an entirely new winter sports center on the site of the old bowling alleys, with paddle tennis courts, and ice skating rink, and enlarged the wings of the main clubhouse, thereby establishing the Chevy Chase Club as it looks today.

Eleanor Ford

COLUMBIA COUNTRY CLUB

Columbia Country Club, whose main buildings are located on the northwest corner of Connecticut Avenue and East-West Highway, had its origin at a downtown Washington, D.C., meeting of nine men on the night of September 29, 1898. It was incorporated nearly a year later on August 1, 1899, when twenty charter members agreed "to associate ourselves together for educational, literary and scientific purposes and for mutual improvement." The initiation fee was $2.00.

The first location of the club was on the east side of Georgia Avenue just south of Harvard Street. A short time later, the club was moved farther out on the west side of Georgia Avenue, where a rough nine-hole course was laid out. Since the area was still farmland, ropes were placed around the greens to keep the local cows off the grass. Here the club was able to rent the land for $50.00 a month. One of the hazards on that course was Illinois Avenue, which at that time was just a deep ditch with an unpaved road at the bottom. The course had another unique feature in that the first three holes formed a triangle with the clubhouse at one apex. Members were known to play the three holes indefinitely with frequent increasingly hilarious stops at the clubhouse. In 1908 the Chevy Chase Land Company made an offer to the club and Columbia moved to its present location. After over two years of grading and building, the club was formally opened on January 1, 1911.

Although Columbia Country Club is basically a golf club and has hosted many local and national tournaments, it also has many other facilities for its roughly 1,000 members. In addition to the nine- and eighteen-hole courses, there are putting greens, tennis and platform tennis courts, swimming pools, and bowling alleys. In the main clubhouse, there are a large ballroom, a dining room, a family grill, party rooms, and a large lounge.

Linscott Hall

Columbia Country Club in 1911

COURTESY, CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHEVY CHASE RECREATION ASSOCIATION

The Chevy Chase Recreation Association, a private swim and tennis club with membership open to all residents of Chevy Chase, is west of Connecticut Avenue on a five acre piece of land near the Beltway.

The Association was founded in the late 1950s by a group of Chevy Chase residents led by John Thurston of Aspen Street who was with the Department of Agriculture. They wanted a swimming pool, and a potential site on Brookeville Road had to be abandoned. The present site was found by Thurston and Ray Jager of Meadow Lane, a realtor who served for a long time as Town Manager for Section Four. The recreation facility was organized and subscribed to by many residents of our town, whose task of raising money was small compared to that of clearing the area of strange bushes, trees, and vines.

It seems that in 1910 the world renowned botanist, Dr. David Fairchild, joined the Department of Agriculture and bought a number of acres north of Jones Bridge Road, including the CCRA site. There he built a Japanese-Victorian style house, after beginning to grow exotic trees and plants he had gathered from all over the globe. He is credited with arranging the importation of the Japanese cherry trees at the Tidal Basin in Washington and on Connecticut Avenue north of Chevy Chase Circle. His one mistake was the introduction, from the Far East, of the now infamous kudzu vine to combat soil erosion. It rapidly covered nearly everything in the southeastern states, much to the chagrin of farmers, cattlemen, and homeowners. Mrs. Fairchild's father, Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, had a one-room workshop on the property.

In 1927, the CCRA site was sold to Dr. E.A. Merritt, a prominent local radiologist, who also had a great interest in plants. And after his death, when his widow moved into an apartment, she eventually began leasing the house and two acres to a good friend, Bertha Belt, so that Mrs. Belt could expand an outdoor nursery school she had founded in 1933 at her home on Meadow Lane.

Mrs. Merritt sold the property to CCRA and took back a hefty mortgage, after being assured by Thurston and Jager that the Association would continue to lease the house at a moderate rate to the nursery school—as it does today.

The house, called "In the Woods," is still in the woods. And surrounded by beautiful trees nearby are a big and a little pool designed by former Meadow Lane resident Stanley Arthur for CCRA, as well as a bath house, four tennis courts, and extensive parking.

Linscott Hall

WOMAN'S CLUB OF CHEVY CHASE

The Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, Maryland, Inc., celebrated its 75th Anniversary on October 1, 1988. The brainchild of three Chevy Chase residents, it originally had 14 members pledged "to promote the welfare of the community and of the state of Maryland." The first president elected under the new constitution was Mrs. George F. Mikkelson. Her husband was a builder in our area, and long-time Chevy Chase residents still speak with pride of "Mikkelson-built" homes. Several of these are on Beechwood Drive. The Junior Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, formed as part of the club, is now a separate entity.

In its early years, the club met at a number of places, including Chevy Chase Elementary School. It moved to its present handsome white brick clubhouse at 7931 Connecticut Avenue in 1938. The land for the clubhouse had been purchased the year before for 25 cents per square foot.

The club's activities achieve three goals. They enrich the lives of its members, benefit the residents of the Chevy Chase community, and, in a number of instances, benefit a much larger community.

In the first category are the section meetings for members that include classes in various arts and crafts, such as painting and jewelry making. There are also sections dedicated to learning or improving proficiency in a foreign language, studying international relations, and reviewing books. Members also present plays regularly, give luncheons, play bridge, and engage in many other activities.

It could be said that the lives of club members are also enriched by the great number of projects through which club members influence and benefit the Chevy Chase community.

In the health field, the club has sponsored pre-school vision testing, free clinics for vision and hearing tests, and community health fairs. They have furnished rooms at Suburban Hospital, Children's Hospital, and the Hillcrest Children's Center. In the 1950s, the club established a sickroom loan closet. Items such as walkers and wheel chairs are donated to the closet and are loaned without charge to members of the community.

The club gives annual music and art scholarships to students in the community. Club members have also been active in service to Chevy Chase Elementary School and in establishing its library.

Seniors are assisted by the club's participation in the Over 60 Counseling and Employment Service and by their sponsorship of a Senior Arts and Crafts Show.

The clubhouse is also the scene of an annual antiques show. Other community service organizations may use the clubhouse without charge. Private individuals and groups may, for a fee, rent the club and its spacious kitchen for social events such as wedding receptions.

Special projects of the club have included support for establishment of a Juvenile Court in Rockville, a central school library, and the serving of hot lunches in schools. Since 1943, club members have provided gifts and tray favors on Christmas Eve to patients at the Bethesda Naval Hospital.

Over a period of 75 years, club members have given about $250,000 for charities and $125,000 for scholarships.

The influence of the club has also been felt in a broader arena. During World War II, members did volunteer work as motor mechanics, Red Cross workers, air craft spotters, and blood donors. The club sold $75,000 worth of war stamps and bonds, and an airplane was named in its honor.

At the request of the Montgomery County Association for the Visually Handicapped, club members developed the "Easy-See" Cookbook in 1964. It is still being distributed without charge, locally and nationally, to those with limited vision.

Individual club sections often have their own projects. For example, the International Affairs section sponsors two children in Latin America.

Life magazine featured the club in its June 3, 1946, issue and again in 1980. More recently, the governor of Maryland proclaimed October 1988 "The Woman's Club of Chevy Chase, Maryland, Month."

Suzanne S. Patch

THE CHEVY CHASE THEATRE

At the outset, the front wall of the new building was decorated with wrought iron letters 12 inches high. They proclaimed "Chevy Chase Theatre." It opened in 1922. Located on Connecticut Avenue south of the Chevy Chase Circle, it was within easy walking distance of a growing number of local movie goers.

The silent black-and-white films added a new dimension to the entertainment scene. There was no competition from television and very little from radio. An organist expertly accompanied the mood of the movie with music—sad, happy, or sinister. In 1928, the "talkies" arrived and the sound tracks phased out the organ.

Over the years, all the best films were shown. They opened downtown and took as long as two months to reach our neighborhood.

Evening performances were for adults and families, but Saturday matinees were for the kids. They were usually scheduled for 2:00 p.m., but on special occasions there were also morning shows—some of them fund-raisers for the Chevy Chase Elementary PTA. A long line of expectant young patrons waited outside well in advance of film time. After purchasing a 15-cent ticket and selecting a seat, there was a second wait. The house lights finally dimmed to a thunderous roar of approval. A comedy, usually featuring Laurel and Hardy or Our Gang, got things off to a fast start. This was followed by a chapter of the current serial. You had to come back the next week to see the hero escape from his impossible predicament. The feature film was high adventure, frequently a western. Many viewers brought their own toy pistols and fired volleys when the bad guys appeared on screen. This practice became so disruptive that guns had to be checked in the lobby.

In 1930, the theatre was renamed the Avalon. Then in 1970, the upstairs area of the building, where many local students had studied piano with Madame Tamara Dimetrieff, was converted into a second theater. In an era of theater complexes, Avalon 1 and 2 was the obvious new designation.

William Duvall

The Chevy Chase Theatre, later the Avalon, opened in 1922. COURTESY, THEATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CHEVY CHASE CIRCLE

Even though the Chevy Chase Circle is similar to the many circles designed by Pierre L'Enfant in the early planning for the District, it was a much later development. Following the purchase of farmland by the Chevy Chase Land Company, it was planned at first that Connecticut Avenue in the District be continued in a straight line into Maryland, intersecting Wisconsin Avenue to the west. When it became apparent that the land could not be acquired, it was decided that Connecticut should go directly north. To ease expected traffic at the "gate" to the development, where several streets intersected, a traffic circle was constructed, half in the District and half in Maryland. After some negotiations, the Maryland half was ceded to the federal government and the circle became the responsibility of the D.C. Buildings and Parks Commission.

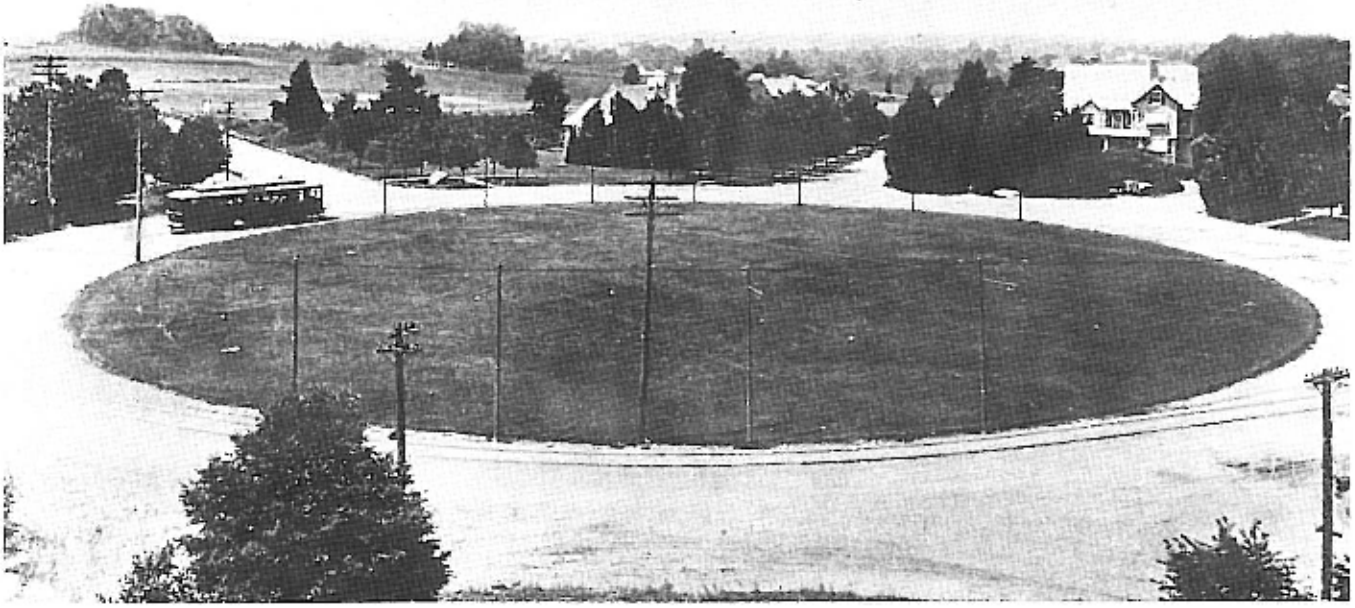
The first two houses constructed in the development were those of Senator Newlands on the northeast side of the circle and Mr. Stellwagen on the northwest, providing an impressive entry into the development. Both houses were probably designed by Leon Dessez, the Chevy Chase Land Company's architect for many years. Mr. and Mrs. Dessez lived in the Stellwagen house initially and the nearby grassy circle provided a convenient and pleasant pasture for their cow.

After the traffic circle was completed, with the road and trolley line tracks circling the 200-foot diameter grassy area, it remained unchanged for several years. The first action of any note was a 1918 ceremony at which the Girl and Boy Scouts of the District raised a flag from a pole placed in the center.

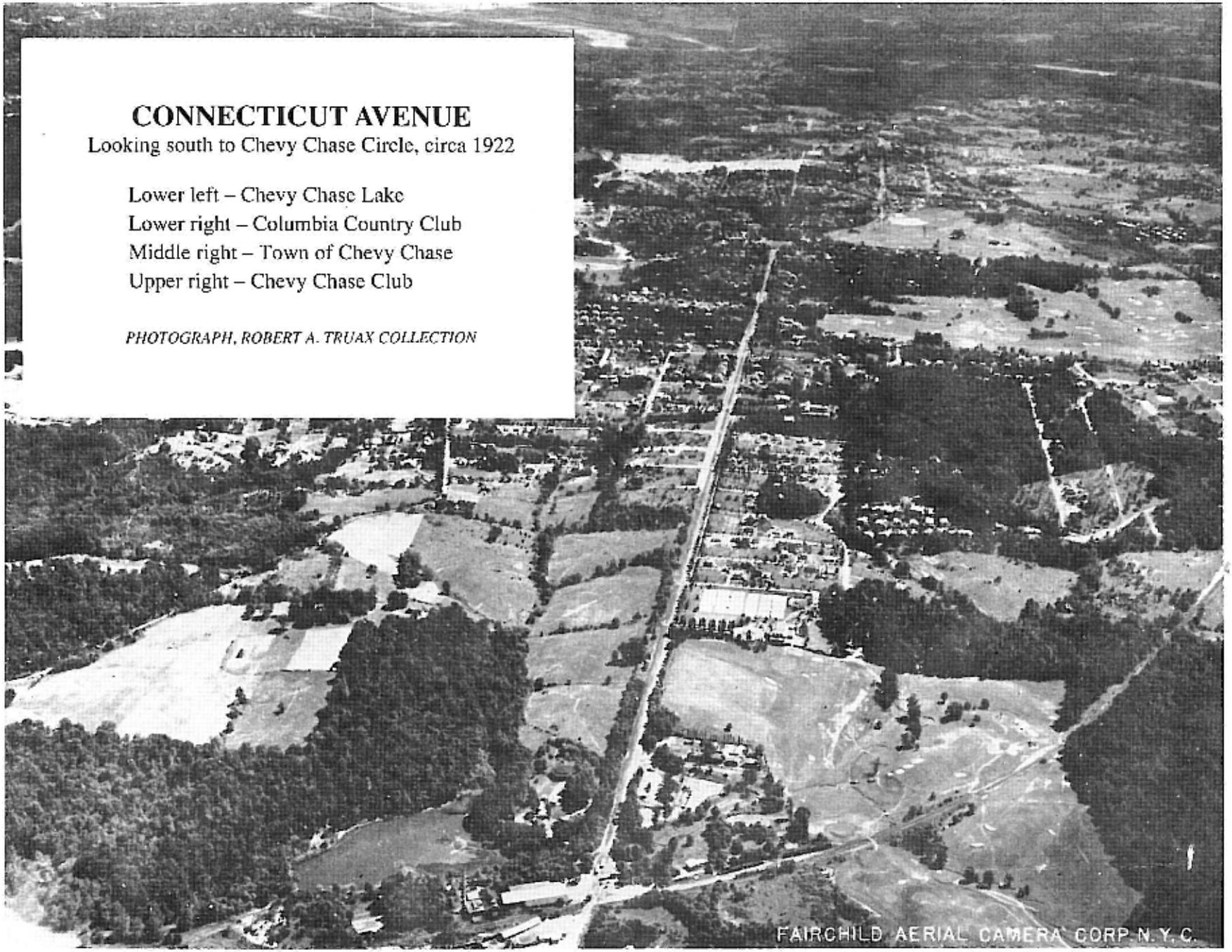
Beginning in 1927, there were many suggestions about making the circle area more attractive. Thirty-two willow oaks were planted just inside the roadway. In 1932, the U.S. Congress, at the urging of the Garden Clubs of America, directed the D.C. Buildings and Parks Commission to build a memorial to Senator Newlands. The result was an ornamental basin approximately 75 feet in diameter, a stone balustrade around the basin, a fountain in the center, walks leading to and around the basin, benches, and flower beds. A large part of the $11,000 cost was donated by Senator Newlands' widow.

The circle has changed little since then, although the trolley tracks have been removed and traffic around the circle has greatly increased. Even though the fountain, stone balustrade, benches, azalea gardens, and willow oaks have all suffered from neglect, it is still a pleasant place to sit on a sunny day, provided one has the courage to cross the speeding traffic to reach the benches within the circle.

Linscott Hall



Looking west at Chevy Chase Circle in 1910. PHOTO BY MRS. MINNIE E. BROOKE; COURTESY, MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



CONNECTICUT AVENUE

Looking south to Chevy Chase Circle, circa 1922

Lower left – Chevy Chase Lake
Lower right – Columbia Country Club
Middle right – Town of Chevy Chase
Upper right – Chevy Chase Club

PHOTOGRAPH, ROBERT A. TRUAX COLLECTION

CHEVY CHASE LAKE

The name and location of "Chevy Chase Lake" is fading from the collective memory of local residents. For some 60 years, "The Lake" meant the general area 1.8 miles north of the District Line which included the junction of the trolley line and the Baltimore and Ohio Georgetown Branch, several business establishments, an amusement park, and a swimming pool. It served as a geographic reference point; the term "The Lake" enjoyed the same significance as the term "The Circle."

The body of water, the actual lake, began 40 yards east of Connecticut Avenue. Its northern boundary is now Chevy Chase Lake Drive. The lake was created by the construction of a small dam across Coquelin Run in the early 1890s. Its purpose was to impound a supply of water for the electric generating plant. The lake was no more than 160 yards wide by 240 yards long.

As viewed from the high elevation of its west end near Connecticut Avenue, the lake was a place of great natural charm. Here the Chevy Chase Land Company built a first-class amusement park. It proved to be another successful venture to promote their real estate program. Many of the park's visitors rode the trolley line from downtown Washington and could not help being impressed by the fine homes that were being built.

Edith Claude Jarvis in her article, *Old Chevy Chase Village*, recalls that the park featured a merry-go-round, horse back riding, bowling, a shooting gallery, and boating on the lake. During warm evenings, the park became a profusion of soft-colored lights. Concerts were given by military bands from a seashell-shaped bandstand. People of all ages danced to popular bands of the day in a large dance pavilion. It is said that dancers Irene and Vernon Castle introduced the "Cake Walk" at Chevy Chase Lake.

When viewed from the dam at the low east end, the lake was not a pleasant setting. The surrounding banks and swamps were choked with underbrush, and the water was so muddy it was unfit for swimming. Young

Boating on Chevy Chase Lake, circa 1920

COURTESY, MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

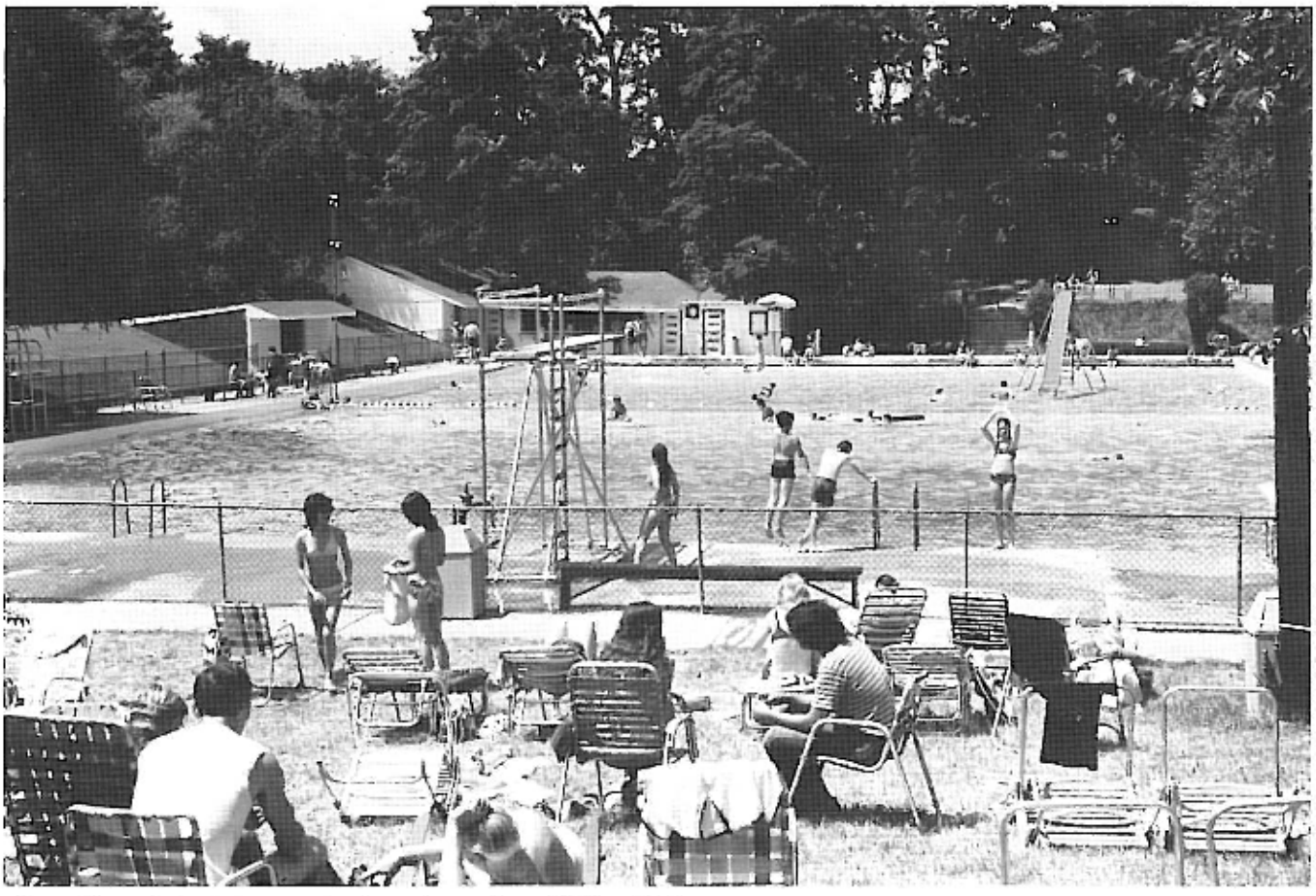
daytime visitors came from nearby homes and found it to be a place of high adventure. The lake was frozen during much of the winter and provided an informal ice skating rink. It was best during the summer. As people approached, turtles hurried down the banks to safety and frogs plopped into the water. Small fish rippled the surface and tadpoles abounded along the shore. Snakes of questionable species sunned themselves and were viewed from a prudent distance. Pieces of wood were pushed out from the shore and became warships of fancy to be bombarded with an artillery barrage of stones.

To the parents of these young explorers, the lake was a source of continuing despair. Children came home with muddy shoes and wet clothes. Frequently colds, poison ivy, and insect bites were the negative results of such outings, but they continued.

The lake was drained about 1930. Today much of the site is unoccupied except for a large condominium which fronts on Connecticut Avenue. The terrain has changed little except for the growth of huge trees and dense underbrush.

The Chevy Chase Lake Swimming Pool was of a slightly later period. It was located on the west side of Connecticut Avenue across from the amusement park site. The *Washington Star* of June 21, 1972, states that it opened in 1925 as a public pool but in its later years became a private swimming club and survived until 1972.

William Duvall



Chevy Chase Lake Swimming Pool was in use from 1925 to 1972. PHOTO BY TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

THE ABRAHAM BRADLEY FARM

When Abraham Bradley, a distinguished citizen and native of Philadelphia, was appointed Assistant Postmaster General by President Madison in 1800, he and his family moved to Washington, D.C. The purpose was to move the federal post office from Philadelphia to the new center of government and make arrangements for all ten of his employees. During the War of 1812, when he realized the vulnerability of the federal government and his property to British attack, Bradley purchased the old Belt farmhouse and property some ten miles north of the White House. This 218-acre tract, now the site of the Chevy Chase Club, was originally part of the 560-acre grant, called Chevy Chase, deeded to Joseph Belt in 1725.

In addition to building his brick home on what is now Oliver Street, Colonel Belt in the late 1740s had built a large frame house on his tobacco farm about a half mile north of his residence. To reach his tobacco farm, he probably used part of Brookeville Road and then built a road west to the farm and then on to Rockville Pike. This road became known as Jackson Road, now Bradley Lane, and was for several years the main east-west road between Brookeville Road and the Washington-Frederick Road or Wisconsin Avenue.

The only remnants of the old farmhouse are a single beam in one of the main Chevy Chase Club buildings and a nearby chimney with the numerals 1747 on it.

Linscott Hall

The Bradley Farm House was the first home of the Chevy Chase Club. COURTESY, CHEVY CHASE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HAYES MANOR

One of the less well-known but lovely Georgian style mansions in this area is Hayes Manor, located at the end of Manor Road in the Chevy Chase Lake area. The original house was built on some 700 acres, probably purchased from the "Clean Drinking" grant, in 1765 by the Reverend Alexander Williamson. The Reverend Williamson, a friend of William Pitt, then Prime Minister of England, named the mansion Hayes Manor in honor of the Prime Minister's country home. Williamson, a loyal Tory during the American Revolution, suffered financially and socially during that war and was forced to sell off pieces of his property. The property was purchased by James Dunlop from the Reverend Williamson in 1792 and remained in the Dunlop family until 1965. The original house has had two wings added, one in 1899 and the other in 1908. The present estate is about ten acres.

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Linscott Hall

ROSSDHU CASTLE

There used to be a castle right here in Chevy Chase. It was located on East Woodbine Street near Beach Drive, and stood on a hilltop overlooking Rock Creek Park.

The *Washington Post*, February 1, 1975, stated that it was a replica of the 12th century, Scottish ancestral castle of Clan Colquhoun on Loch Lomond. Built of masonry and concrete studded with stones brought over from Scotland, it boasted a huge ballroom, turrets, gun emplacements, and countless rooms filled with priceless antiques.

The castle was the result of extensive planning by Clarence C. Calhoun and his wife Daisy Breaux Calhoun. He was a Captain in the Kentucky State Guard and a lawyer by profession. His wife was socially prominent and successful in many literary and artistic endeavors. Construction of the castle was completed in 1927. It was, however, the victim of rapidly changing times. During the Great Depression, the family suffered financial reversals and lived in the gatehouse for several years. In the early 1930s, the castle was converted into a posh nightclub and in 1937 to a 30-unit apartment house. Captain Calhoun died in 1938. After World War II, the area was zoned for single family dwellings. This action led to the demolition of the castle in 1957 and the subdivision of most of the property.

Today all that remains of the castle on Woodbine Street are the turreted five-bedroom gatehouse and the small moat or pond in front. The surrounding community bears the name "Braemar" after the Scottish town near the site of the original castle. Recent occupants of the gatehouse have experienced unexplained, ghostly happenings as if some long-lost soul from the Scottish or Chevy Chase castle had at last found refuge on the premises.

William Duvall

Rossdhu Castle on East Woodbine Street about 1930

COURTESY, FRANK AND JEANNE BRODLIE

MADONNA OF THE TRAIL

The ten-foot, five-ton, stone statue of a woman and two children, located immediately north of the Bethesda Post Office on Wisconsin Avenue, symbolizes the heroic women who braved the hardships of migration during the opening of the west. It is one of 12 such statues along a trail reaching across the United States from Maryland to California. It was originally dedicated by the Bethesda Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in 1929. For many years, the statue stood immediately south of the post office; however, in the early 1980s it was placed in storage because of extensive construction in the local area. In October 1986, it was placed at its present location and rededicated by the DAR.

The cast stone statues, sculpted by August Leimbach of St. Louis in the early 1920s, are located in Bethesda, Maryland; near Washington, Pennsylvania; in Wheeling, West Virginia.; Springfield, Ohio; Richmond, Indiana; Vandalia, Illinois; Lexington, Missouri; Council Grove, Kansas; La Mar, Colorado; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Springdale, Arizona; and Upland, California.

Linscott Hall

This information was provided by Mrs. Elva Crawford of the Washington Chapter, DAR.

CHANGES IN LOCAL STREET NAMES

Present	Past
Bradley Lane	Jackson Road
Leland Street	County Road (west of Maple Avenue)
	Meadow Lane (1 block west of Connecticut Avenue)
East-West Highway	Cypress Street (from Connecticut Avenue to Meadow Lane)
Stanford Street	Elm Street
Oakridge Avenue	Elm Street
Hillcrest Place	Spruce Street (from Bradley Lane to Rosemary Street Circle)
Thornapple Street	Chestnut Street (from Ridgewood Avenue west to dead end)
Willow Lane	Bethesda Street (from 46th Street to Wisconsin Avenue)
Tarrytown Road	Maple Avenue (north end)
Wisconsin Avenue	Georgetown-Rockville Turnpike

Note: In 1930 Valley Place from Rosemary Street to Beechwood Drive was permanently closed due to the expansion of the Chevy Chase School facilities.

MADONNA OF THE TRAIL

The ten-foot, five-ton, stone statue of a woman and two children, located immediately north of the Bethesda Post Office on Wisconsin Avenue, symbolizes the heroic women who braved the hardships of migration during the opening of the west. It is one of 12 such statues along a trail reaching across the United States from Maryland to California. It was originally dedicated by the Bethesda Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) in 1929. For many years, the statue stood immediately south of the post office; however, in the early 1980s it was placed in storage because of extensive construction in the local area. In October 1986, it was placed at its present location and rededicated by the DAR.

The cast stone statues, sculpted by August Leimbach of St. Louis in the early 1920s, are located in Bethesda, Maryland; near Washington, Pennsylvania; in Wheeling, West Virginia.; Springfield, Ohio; Richmond, Indiana; Vandalia, Illinois; Lexington, Missouri; Council Grove, Kansas; La Mar, Colorado; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Springdale, Arizona; and Upland, California.

Linscott Hall

This information was provided by Mrs. Elva Crawford of the Washington Chapter, DAR.

CHANGES IN LOCAL STREET NAMES

Present	Past
Bradley Lane	Jackson Road
Leland Street	County Road (west of Maple Avenue)
	Meadow Lane (1 block west of Connecticut Avenue)
East-West Highway	Cypress Street (from Connecticut Avenue to Meadow Lane)
Stanford Street	Elm Street
Oakridge Avenue	Elm Street
Hillcrest Place	Spruce Street (from Bradley Lane to Rosemary Street Circle)
Thornapple Street	Chestnut Street (from Ridgewood Avenue west to dead end)
Willow Lane	Bethesda Street (from 46th Street to Wisconsin Avenue)
Tarrytown Road	Maple Avenue (north end)
Wisconsin Avenue	Georgetown-Rockville Turnpike

Note: In 1930 Valley Place from Rosemary Street to Beechwood Drive was permanently closed due to the expansion of the Chevy Chase School facilities.

THE LELAND COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER

By far the most ambitious and creative long-term project ever undertaken by the Town of Chevy Chase was the financing and construction of the Leland Community Recreation Center. The center, which opened in the spring of 1989, incorporates a Montgomery County recreation center, the offices of the Town of Chevy Chase, a child care facility, an outdoor park, and a sizeable parking area. This cooperative project among the town, the county, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission may appear simple and straightforward, but the story of its evolution could not be more complex.

The decision to close Leland Junior High School in 1981 by the Montgomery County Board of Education was very upsetting for our community. Long before appeals against that decision proved unsuccessful, townspeople began to wonder about the future for this closed school site. The 3.7 acres, bounded by Elm Street, Willow Lane, 44th Street, and Oakridge Lane, had been in continuous use for a school since their original dedication by the developers of the subdivision. Monroe and R.B. Warren gave this land, 22 lots in their new "Leland Community," to the County Board of Education. The first Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School was built there in 1928. The building became a junior high in 1936, and a completely new junior high building was substituted for the old one in 1963. For almost 60 years, neighboring residents had been hosts to school buses, school children, and school activities. Now the school was closing and the Board of Education would transfer ownership of the site to Montgomery County. On Elm Street, Willow, 44th, and Oakridge, there was particular concern about its future.

First Reactions

Members of the Town Council asked Dallas Read, a resident of Elm Street, to do a study into possible re-uses which would be compatible with the neighborhood. Mrs. Read recommended a mixed-use facility, similar to the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria, to house working artists, classes for the community, and offices for some nonprofit organizations. This proposal was applauded by some and strongly opposed by others. Some residents feared that such a facility would have a negative impact on the single-family residential zoning and increase commercial intrusion and traffic.

In 1982, a group was organized by Marie and Ken Gaarder and others to support some kind of mixed use in a renovated building. This group hoped to put together a multi-service community center that would have mostly public users but would not rule out the possibility of participation by private nonprofit organizations. The group eventually incorporated with the legal help of Roger and Cathy Titus, and named themselves the Leland Community Center Corporation.

At this time, the process for disposal of closed school properties in the county was essentially in the hands of the County Executive, with the concurrence, if money was spent, of the County Council. There was no requirement for citizen input about re-use.

County officials began to talk to possible tenants for the Leland building. Among the applicants were commercial and biomedical research entities. Townspeople were alarmed that the county might accept a "commercial" tenant. The County Attorney published an opinion that stated that since the county itself was the owner of closed school properties and the county was a "permitted use" in any zone, then a tenant, whether or not of the type allowed in the zoning, could lease a facility and be "allowed" under the county's "permitted zoning." The town, of course, opposed this interpretation.

Members of the Leland Community Center group circulated information about the county's activities and aroused the sentiment of townspeople against such action. They gathered petitions to press the Town Council to take a more aggressive role in the process of deciding what was to happen to the Leland site.

A Key Election

Issues in the town election in 1982 focused on the Leland re-use situation. A town survey about this time showed that 63 percent of those responding favored the town itself taking control of the site. Councilwoman Carol Blum was one of the leaders of the Leland Corporation, and Councilwoman Anne Bushart was also sympathetic to the group's position. Another member of the Leland group, Jane Lawton, ran for the Town Council, campaigning that the council should become more directly involved in the re-use issues, and was elected. The council began to engage itself more deeply in the county's process. It hired a zoning attorney to rebut the County Attorney's opinion with regard to allowable

uses of closed schools. After further consideration, the County Attorney backed away from his previous position and amended his opinion. His second memo "revised" the prior opinion, stating that "a private tenant leasing a surplus school site as a private user must comply with the provisions of Montgomery County's Zoning Ordinance."

In August 1982, the school closure became final, and by this time the Board of Education had closed 40 schools in the down-county area. The County Council still wanted a formal role in the re-use process, and began to look at legislation and administrative procedures that might give it more power.

In the meantime, within the Town of Chevy Chase, several other groups formed and began to lobby the Town Council to support their proposals for re-use of the site. One that had considerable support was the Oakridge Housing Corporation (Oakridge Lane Associates). This corporation supported restoring the land to its original lots for single-family housing or cluster housing. Another was an idea put forth by Elm Street resident Jack Kimball to convert the existing building to housing for the elderly. Still others favored renovating the school building and renting it to a private school. Because of the town's need for open space, a large number of residents supported clearing the site completely for outdoor recreation uses and green space.

The Town Becomes Involved

In the summer of 1982, Town Council Chairman Haig Ellian sent a letter to County Executive Charles Gilchrist on behalf of the Town Council, advising him that "the town would like to acquire the Leland site." This gave weight to those who supported a "public use" above all other uses. The council made it clear that it was only interested in public uses which were "compatible" with the surrounding neighborhood and that it was willing to consider a use in cooperation with the county.

The Town Council met with the County Executive and representatives of all the agencies associated with the disposal of closed-school sites. This meeting took place in the fall of 1982 and was very important because it formally established the town's involvement in the re-use decision for Leland. One of the stumbling blocks from the county's viewpoint was that Leland had an outstanding debt of over $500,000, since the public bonds for its construction had not yet been paid off. It was clear that if the town acquired the site, it would have to start its ownership with full repayment of that debt to the state.

To ascertain more clearly what the true cost of acquisition might be, the Town Council appointed a task force to evaluate the condition of the building and the cost of its renovation or demolition. This committee included Council Chairman Bill Wildhack and an architect, a builder, and a financial adviser who were residents of the town. The task force members visited the site and made some estimates about renovation. They obtained information about code enforcement requirements for a renovated building and sought a professional estimate for the demolition. This information was presented to the Town Council.

The Leland Committee

At the same time, the Town Council officially appointed a working committee of townspeople to investigate the possibilities for the Leland site and make a recommendation to the council. Resident Joan Berman chaired the committee, and Jane Lawton served as the council liaison. The new Town Leland Committee evaluated the findings of the task force and the work of others who supported various ideas for the site, and interviewed many possible users. The members also met with various county agencies to determine what the status of the property was from the county's point of view, and whether there were county needs to be met.

In October 1983, this committee formally recommended to the Town Council that the council should seek to acquire the property to provide outdoor recreation facilities with the possibility of adding a building with town offices and meeting rooms in the future. This was a fully-developed proposal supported by cost data and implementation plans. It was adopted by the Town Council and formally presented to the County Executive for response.

The next month, the Town Council sent a letter to the chairman of the Interagency Committee on Closed Schools for Montgomery County, setting forth the position of the town in seeking "support in a cooperative effort" in finding an appropriate future use of the site. It noted that the town has "no parks or playing fields except for the black top and small field at the Chevy Chase Elementary School," and that the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission "has declared our area badly in need of open space."

In April 1984, the Town Council passed legislation to amend the Town Charter to increase borrowing authority in hopes that the County Executive would move quickly to accept the town's offer. It also sent a letter to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning

Commission requesting "Open Space" money for the project and pledging $40,000 in matching funds from the town's budget.

Shortly after the circulation in the county of the town's proposal, County Councilman David Scull introduced new "closed school" legislation. This provided that the County Council could recommend new zoning for closed school sites—including all residential, some commercial, some industrial, and "special exception" uses—without having to go through the normally-required rezoning process. This legislation, adopted in March 1984, gave the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, as planning advisors, and the County Council new roles in all school re-use decisions. The legislation was not aimed at Leland alone, but would give the County Council authority in the disposal of the sites of about 40 recently-closed schools.

The Town's Leland Committee quickly converted itself to a lobbying group and requested a waiver for the town from this new process, since negotiations were already in progress to acquire the Leland site. Planning Commission Chairman Norman Christeller and County Executive Charles Gilchrist both supported the town's request for this waiver, and the Leland site was specifically exempted from the new legislation, as were several other schools with re-use contracts in progress. Much later, this legislation was ruled to be illegal because it effectively bypassed county zoning requirements.

A County Task Force

In spite of the waiver, the County Executive now had to contend politically with the interest of the County Council in these re-use matters. Therefore, in early 1984, he appointed a county task force to make a recommendation about the best re-use for the Leland site. This task force included two representatives from the Town Council, staff of the County Department of Recreation, the Interagency Coordinating Committee, the Board of Education, the County Council, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and a top official of the County Executive's office. At the request of the Town Council, the Town's Leland Committee could also send representatives. This county task force met about every two weeks for a year and was charged with the goal of determining the best possible re-use for the Leland site, with or without the existing building. They were also to look at the possibility of "downsizing" the existing building.

The Town's Leland Committee continued working with and reporting to the town during this time. It had new co-chairs, Jean Linehan and Cathy Wolf, both of whom served on the now expanded county re-use task force, as did Leland Committee members Carey Rivers, John Gross, and Jack Kimball.

Choices

After six months of investigating and information gathering, the task force came up with fully-developed alternatives and compared their cost effectiveness. It also considered what were the highest needs for county services in the down-county area. In general, the alternatives included: renovating the existing building for a mixed use, with an emphasis on providing much-needed recreational programming; renovating the existing facility for housing; "downsizing" the existing building and constructing a new facility for recreational programming, town offices, child care, and a park; or taking down the existing building and providing open space and a park.

One crucial consideration in evaluating these proposals was the cost of upgrading the existing building to meet fire and building codes if it were to be used by persons of all ages for a variety of activities. The cost of renovation to accommodate a "mixed use" was much higher than anticipated and higher than the cost of demolishing the school and building a new center. And that was obvious long before asbestos was ruled to be a hazard, adding the cost of its removal. Needless to say, the least expensive alternative was use of the site as a park.

In October 1984, the Leland Site Re-use Task Force unanimously recommended that the site should be developed for a new down-county recreation center, and that the old building should be replaced with a new smaller facility especially designed for recreation, town offices, and child care. The outdoor space would be developed to provide a park and off-street parking.

The findings and recommendations of the task force were presented to the County Executive and County Council and to the town residents, who were enthusiastic. Data gathered by the county agency representatives on the task force strengthened the proposal. The down-county area of 100,000 citizens had a severe deficiency in recreational programming and open space. The only county facility, the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Recreation Center on Walsh Street, was 8,000 square feet, had no regulation-sized gym, no parking, no outdoor space, and no meeting room, and was itself in need of over

$300,000 in renovations. In recent years, this center had had to limit itself to senior citizen programming because of its physical limitations. The census data showed this was an area of young families as well as older residents, and there was a desperate need for community services, especially child care. The proposed center could provide those services and would return a bit of green space as well.

Task force members were enthusiastic; the County Executive was supportive; and the Park and Planning Commission was eager to embrace the proposal. Other surrounding communities, whose residents would benefit from a recreation center, were supportive. The County Council, however, was slow to act.

This was one of those times when it seemed that County Council members were very reluctant to spend for services in the "affluent" down-county area of Bethesda-Chevy Chase. County officials did not want to increase their debt for fear of losing their AAA bond rating. But the proposal to use the Walsh Street Center renovation money for the design of a new center instead had merit. Then an unexpected wrinkle appeared.

Setback

A well-established private school in Northwest Washington, Immaculata, had been sold by an order of nuns to provide for their retirement, and was to be closed. Parents were determined to keep the school alive. And representatives, with the support of town residents who had children at the school, approached the county and the town asking to lease the Leland building.

Task force members were surprised and appalled when the County Council scheduled public hearings on this request without first responding to the task force's unanimous proposal for a new recreation center. The Town Council, also, was in a precarious middle position. Obviously, the private school option was a "compatible" one for the neighborhood and was supported by some townspeople, among whom were parents of students at Immaculata. However, years had been given to the effort to make this site a public resource for everyone. The need for recreation and parkland was critical. To complicate the matter, with the need to stabilize the public schools, many were concerned that an additional neighborhood private school would draw children from nearby Chevy Chase Elementary and B-CC High School.

In addition to these factors, the representatives for Immaculata, who understandably needed a new location, did not seem to have a realistic picture of what it would cost to bring Leland up to code. The building itself had deteriorated badly, and the school's financial proposal seemed unrealistic. Therefore, the Town Council continued to support the public use alternative in its negotiations with the county.

County Council members were divided on the issue. They, too, were heavily lobbied by friends of Immaculata and were eager to help the school relocate in Montgomery County. They were also interested in the possibility of finding a tenant, rather than funding demolition and a new center. The County Council scheduled hearings to consider all these things.

A New Idea and More

The Town Council Chairman, Bill Wildhack, a mortgage banker by profession, had a new idea to bolster the recreation center proposal. Why couldn't the town pay for the construction of a new center under its own bonding authority and arrange a long-term agreement

Leland Community Recreation Center PHOTO BY LAURA RIVERS

where the county repaid the town? This would enable the county to obtain a new facility without increasing its bonded indebtedness. The other members of the Town Council agreed and developed testimony to make this offer at the hearing.

At the County Council hearing, the task force urged the county to consider its proposal seriously and the representatives from Immaculata also presented their request. The town made its financing offer formally and upon hearing it, Councilman Scull, who was not an advocate of the private school option, moved that the Council Council accept the re-use task force proposal for a new recreation center, accept the town's offer to finance construction, and help Immaculata find another location in the county. The County Council approved the motion and finally, the new recreation center was on its way!

This creative arrangement took months to negotiate and implement. There were three equal partners: the county, the town, and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. First, the county had to acquire title to the Leland site from the state. The construction bonds had by now been paid off by the county.

The Park and Planning Commission, which owned the Walsh Street site, would "swap properties" with the county, which owned the Leland site. In the agreement, the Leland site would become a park owned by M-NCPPC; the town would own the facility during construction and would lease the site from the M-NCPPC for $1 a year; and the county would lease the facility from the town for the life of the bonds at a price that would pay their cost. The next two months were the project's "legal phase." A "memo of understanding," lease, sublease, and management and rental agreements were negotiated by attorneys for all sides.

The Town Council, in the meantime, began the process required for the town to float public bonds. The Leland Committee presented the appropriate information to town residents. The council sent official notifications. And the public vote on the bond issue for the Leland Recreation Center was held in the Ohio Room of the National 4-H Center on June 26, 1985.

The vote was overwhelming in favor of the bond issue—178 yes to 4 no. The Town Council chairman and treasurer traveled with bond legal counsel to New York and presented the town's request for its first-ever bond rating, which turned out to be AA from Moody's and A+ from Standard and Poor's. A bond consultant helped market the issue, and all five members of the Council, Bill Wildhack, Jane Lawton, Carol Blum, Carey Rivers, and Mier Wolf, traveled to New York City for the official release of the bonds.

Designs

In November 1985, the county published a request for proposal (RFP) for the design of the new center. Over 70 architects responded to the RFP; five were interviewed; and one was selected. The design phase began, and the county scheduled a formal "charrette" for ideas for the new facility. The design was presented to the town residents in preliminary and final form in the spring and summer of 1986. The legal agreements for the construction phase of the project—management contract, indemnification, and construction agreements—were negotiated. The Town Traffic Committee looked at ways to amend the evening rush hour traffic plan to allow access to the center from the west. The final design was presented to the Park and Planning Commission and to the County Council. The input of residents was considered, and some changes were made, with final presentations in September at a town meeting and in December at a meeting of the Leland Advisory Board, a new county board to advise the Recreation Department on the center.

Early in 1987, the project was put out for bid to contractors. The town requested that the center be officially named the Leland Community Recreation Center to commemorate the original Leland Community. The County Executive agreed and signed documents to that effect. The official groundbreaking ceremony was held on October 17, 1987—the first Community Service Day in the county—and a parade of county officials blessed the project. All three partners were well represented and the Town Council and the Leland Committee were given shovels to break the ground.

Construction

The demolition of the old building, clearing of the site, and actual construction began in late 1987 and continued through the spring of 1989. The Town Council, the town manager, and town residents serving on various committees continued to participate in a variety of ways. There were numerous delays and problems to be solved during construction.

To expedite completion, the town and the Park and Planning Commission separately bid out the landscaping of the site and the installation of the playground areas, which were paid out of "Open Space" funds matched by town monies. Construction delays pre-

Uprooted tree on Blackthorn Street was typical of the damage done by the June 14, 1989 storm.
PHOTO, POTOMAC ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY

vented the 1989 Annual Town Meeting from being held in the new facility, and the grand opening celebration was rescheduled from the planned date of May 6 to June 17, 1989. A special sneak preview party for town residents only was planned for Friday, June 16.

On Wednesday, June 14, the last construction progress meeting was held, and those in attendance breathed a sigh of relief that the building, the landscaping, and the biggest part of the playground were complete. Workers were frenetically finishing the floors, touching up the paint, hanging the fixtures, and trying to locate the flooring for the weight room which was still in transit. Over 600 residents had accepted the invitation to the Sneak Preview.

A Stormy Victory

At 4:35 p.m. on Wednesday, June 14, the skies turned a darker shade of gray and green with an approaching storm. The power cut off, children rushed inside, and within ten minutes the town had experienced the most devastating storm in its history. It was classified by the National Weather Service as a #5 storm (with #6 being the most destructive.) Every street in town was blocked by fallen trees and debris. Roofs and cars were crushed with power lines entangled and hanging like spaghetti above the sidewalks. Seventy town trees, many over 100 years old, were down completely, and another 150 severely damaged. Hundreds of private trees were lost. The town immediately began a "disaster cleanup" with scores of PEPCO contractors, private contractors, and the town's contractors and sub-contractors working long hours with saws and cranes and loaders to clear the streets and power lines. A second storm hit the area on June 15, compounding the problems of homeowners. Remarkably, on Thursday morning the Leland Center was just about the only building in town with power. The air conditioning was running smoothly, the lights were burning brightly, and the ice maker was churning away. The decision was made to proceed with the party plans.

On Friday night, about 600 residents gathered for the preview opening of the new Leland Community Recreation Center against a backdrop of uprooted trees, closed roads, and damaged homes. Many residents had worked in their debris-strewn yards for two long days, and the Leland Center was a welcome respite from the storm. The food was delicious, warm, and plentiful, the band was lively, and the historical photo display reminded us of how far our small town had come in just over 71 years. The joy of the center's completion was marred by the storm's destruction, but residents were pleased to open the center at last, and truly grateful that not one person was injured or killed in this most destructive local storm of our century. The center truly embodied our town's spirit of unity in its first use.

The official opening ceremonies were held on Saturday morning, June 17, 1989, and were well attended by a larger Bethesda-Chevy Chase community and many of the county's dignitaries. Clowns, face-painters, celebrity volleyball, and demonstrations in the weight room, the gym, and on the tennis courts added to the success of the day. By nightfall on Saturday, the town's homes again were silent and dark but the lights at the Leland Community Recreation Center burned brightly.

Jane Lawton

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This book is based largely on primary sources, including maps, city directories, newspapers, photographs, manuscripts, oral histories, neighborhood newsletters, architectural drawings, lectures, a master's thesis, promotional publications of real estate development companies, letters, personal reminiscences, Town of Chevy Chase records, minutes, and building permits, and material compiled by religious, civic, and business associations.

Not all the sources used by individual authors are listed in this bibliography. Additional information on sources is filed in the collections of the Town of Chevy Chase History Committee. Inquiries should be addressed to the Town Office.

For the benefit of those wishing to do further research on local history, an abbreviation after the bibliographic citation indicates the repository of certain original source materials or copies of those materials, as follows:

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