

GUIDE TO PRIMARY & SECONDARY SOURCES ON THE SUBURBANIZATION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

FINDING AID

Chevy Chase Historical Society & CCHS Archive & Research Center

(Located on Lower Level of the Chevy Chase Library)

8005 Connecticut Avenue

Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Telephone: (301) 656-6141

Website: www.chevychasehistory.org

Name of archive/collection/records: Archive and Research Center

Date Range of archive/collection/records: 1890s-present

Language of archive/collection/records: English

Background Information: The Chevy Chase Historical Society (CCHS) was founded in 1981 as a non-profit volunteer organization. CCHS's mission is to collect, record, interpret and share materials relating to the history of Chevy Chase, Maryland as one of America's first streetcar suburbs. The organization provides resources for historical research and sponsors a variety of programs and activities to foster knowledge and appreciation of the community's history.

In 2002, the CCHS archives were moved from a board member's house to a room on the lower level of the Chevy Chase Library. In addition to maintaining the Archive and Research Center, CCHS presents free public lectures twice a year and organizes local tours and other events related to Chevy Chase history

Summary and scope of archive/collection/records: The CCHS Archive holds more than 15,000 entries in the catalog and is searchable via PastPerfect on our website and in person at the Archive and Research Center. The collections are organized in four main categories: Archives, Photography, Objects, and Library. In addition to the materials in our formal catalog and digital database, we maintain Research Files, a large vertical file organized by name, place and subject. These research files include newspaper clippings as well as photocopies and research notes. Sources for these materials include local newspapers, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the National Geographic Society, the Montgomery County Historical Society, the Chevy Chase Club, the Historical Society of Washington, DC, and private holdings.

The collections cover the early development of Chevy Chase, MD as a streetcar suburb including: the purchase of agricultural land by Francis Newlands and the Chevy Chase Land Company (CCLC); the subdivision of this land as residential property; and the construction of a streetcar line along the extension of Connecticut Avenue in the District of Columbia. The archives also have some materials related to CCLC development along Connecticut Avenue in the District of Columbia. Additional materials document the development of local institutions: schools, clubs, and churches, as well as the formation of five municipalities: Chevy Chase Village (Section 2); Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase; The Village of Chevy Chase Section 5; The Town of Chevy Chase (Section 4); and the Village of Martin's Additions to Chevy Chase. Thus, the geographical scope of our collections is generally based on the early subdivisions as platted by CCLC or other developers on adjacent property, such as Harry Martin and the Sonnemann family, but also includes other property owned by CCLC, such as the area near the former amusement park, Chevy Chase Lake, which was located at the point where the B & O Railroad intersected the Rock Creek Railway.

Special Collections: Special collections include:

- a. **The CCHS Oral History Project Collection** – Has more than 100 transcribed oral history interviews with Chevy Chase residents
- b. **The CCHS Map Collection** – Has more than 400 maps in the collection, including bound atlases as well as street, plat and subdivision maps.
- c. **The CCHS Architectural and Engineering Plan Collection** – Among the most treasured holdings are architectural plans by noted architects such as Leon Dessez and early drawings and plans by Nathan Barrett, landscape architect.
- d. **The Julie Rude Thomas Collection of Chevy Chase History** – This collection includes a variety of documents donated by long-time Chevy Chase resident and former CCHS board member Julie Rude Thomas. Of special interest are a collection of early postcards, including those produced by Chevy Chase resident Minnie Brooks. The collection also includes yearbooks, promotional materials, scrapbooks and ephemera related to Chevy Chase Junior College, formerly known as Chevy Chase Seminary, and now the National 4-H Conference Center.
- e. **The CCHS House History Collection** – The house history files cover more than 300 homes and are arranged by street, ranging from Aspen Street to Woodside Place. Some have just a few documents, but more than fifty include copies of deeds and detailed information about former owners and occupants.
- f. **The Photography Collection** -- Has over 10,000 photographs of people, places and events in Chevy Chase from the 1890s to the present. These include images of the local landscape at different moments in history, showing agricultural fields, old streets, and historic houses. Family photographs provide historical information about everyday life, as well as the celebration of special events – graduations, weddings, special awards, etc. Photographs from local churches, clubs and schools document community activity. CCHS has received generous donations of photographs from many current and former residents, but we are particularly grateful for the donations of the late Robert A. Truax, noted local historian.
- g. **The Object Collection** – The object collection includes a variety of artifacts: milk bottles from Chestnut Farms, police badges, spikes from the streetcar tracks, as well as several paintings by Chevy Chase residents.
- h. **The Library Collection** – To provide context for understanding all the documents, photographs and objects in our archive, we maintain a research library of books, pamphlets, magazines, DVDs and videos about Chevy Chase and Chevy Chase residents. These items are available for use at the Archive and Research Center.

Format of materials in archive/collection/records: Paper, Digital Records, Maps, Photographs; Paintings; Artifacts

Suburbanization Subject Terms within archive/collection/records: Biographical Records; Civic/Community Organizations; Commercial Real Estate Development; Corporate Records; Education; Government; Land Development; Land Development; Maps/Atlas/Street Maps; Political Organizations; Residential Real Estate Development; Transportation: Streetcar, Automobile, Light Rail, Bike; Zoning Ordinances.

Access and Use:

Open: Tuesdays: 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. By appointment only.

Copies: \$0.15 per page. There are additional user fees for the reproduction of historic photographs.

Admission: Free

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