



NEWS

www.chrs.org

April 2011

The 2011 Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour From Lincoln Park to the Old Naval Hospital Saturday and Sunday, May 7 and 8, 2011

By Paul Cromwell

House selections have been made for the 54th annual Capitol Hill House and Garden Tour. The fourteen stops on the Tour are located between 8th and 12th Streets, SE below East Capitol Street to Pennsylvania Avenue. Within the tour area parameters there is a good mixture of both frame and brick homes from the last half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, a few blocks of pre-war row house developments and a small number of post-war houses. The Tour route has been designed to encourage walking. The entire route is one mile in length, making a shuttle service unnecessary.

The Tour features an interesting mixture of places to visit. The offerings include houses and gardens, a condominium, a carriage house, a pair of stables now being used for commercial purposes, and the Old Naval Hospital, which is in the process of being developed as the Hill Center

(www.oldnavalhospitalfoundation.org). With a single exception, the structures on the Tour date from the 1850s to 1913. They include four-floor brick homes as well as frame houses without basements that were constructed before the wide adoption of central heating systems at the end of the nineteenth century.

There is one condominium on the Tour that was developed within a late nineteenth century church and sports modern ironwork, and a Barrett Linde home with a garden and garage built in the early 1960s.

This year's Tour features one separate garden fronting a home on a corner lot and five homes with deep gardens. By Tour weekend, the beginnings of an extensive rain garden will be under development on the grounds of the Old Naval Hospital.

Members of CHRS are entitled to buy four discounted tickets for the House Tour by ordering prior to

April 10. You may use the single page form located on page 9. Members purchasing additional tickets and non-members pay \$25 per ticket in advance and \$30 on Tour weekend. If you can, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution by becoming an Individual Sponsor.

Those who wish to volunteer as house docents on the weekend of the Tour should contact Dori Fengler at dorifengler@yahoo.com. Further information is on the CHRS web site at www.chrs.org. ★

Send us your email address

Join the CHRS e-mail list and be the first to know about CHRS events and issues on the Hill. Sign up through www.chrs.org, or send an e-mail to CapHRS@aol.com with the subject line "Join CHRS Event List." CHRS never shares addresses.

Also in this issue

ARTICLES

March Preservation Café.....	3
Historic Preservation Briefs.....	4
<i>Beyond the Boundaries</i> Results.....	5
Rosedale Architectural Survey.....	6
Zoning Briefs.....	8
Anacostia River Cleanup.....	11

COLUMNS

President's Column.....	2
Looking Back on Capitol Hill.....	10
CHRS Supporters.....	10

LOOKING AHEAD

April Preservation Café.....	2
Tour Tickets Order Form.....	9
Mark Your Calendar.....	12

President's Column: 54th Annual House and Garden Tour!

By Beth Purcell

After much hard work by the House and Garden Tour Committee, we have a great line-up of fascinating houses and gardens for this year's House and Garden Tour. The Tour features houses in Southeast from East Capitol Street south to Pennsylvania Avenue, between 8th

and 12th Streets. This compact area will make it easy for participants to see all the houses.

Please join us and have a wonderful time. Tickets go on sale at Eastern Market starting the weekend of April 16 & 17. Tickets can also be purchased at www.chrs.org. ★

April 20 Preservation Café Will Be House History Research: Part 2

CHRS's April 20 Preservation Café will feature the second installment of a two-part series on house history research by local historian Matthew Gilmore. While the first session in February addressed researching the construction and history of a house itself, the April session will focus on learning about the people who have previously lived in a home. Mr. Gilmore will discuss how to research who used to live in your house, as well as how to find some historic demographic information about your neighborhood through city directory and census records. (An article about researching your house's construction history, from the February Preservation Café, is the lead story in the March 2011 issue of *CHRS News*, www.chrs.org.) The combined information from the two sessions provides a primer for the novice house history researcher.

Mr. Gilmore has been giving local history workshops since

1995, drawing on his experience as a reference librarian in the Washingtonian Division of the DC Public Library. Since leaving the library he has authored or co-authored four books, the most recent on Foggy Bottom (published in November 2010). He has edited H-DC (www.h-net.org/~dclist) since 2000, and is also an editorial board member and erstwhile guest editor of and contributor to the Historical Society of Washington DC's journal, *Washington History*. In addition, he serves on the program committee for the annual conference on Washington, DC studies.

Researching the History of Your House: Part 2 will be held Wednesday, April 20, from 6:30 to 7:15 pm downstairs at Ebenezers Coffeehouse at 2nd and F Streets, NE. Preservation Cafés are free, accessible, and open to the public; no reservation is necessary. ★

Capitol Hill Restoration Society (CHRS)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Beth Purcell
1st Vice President.....Michelle Carroll
2nd Vice PresidentMonte Edwards
SecretaryLisa Wilson
TreasurerSharon Weiss
At LargeDonna Hanousek
At LargeShauna Holmes
At LargeCatherine Davis
At LargeChuck Burger
At LargeDonna Barbisch
At LargeJanet Quigley
Immediate Past PresidentDick Wolf

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Donna Hanousek, *Beyond The Boundaries*
Paul Cromwell, *Budget & Administration*
Dick Wolf, *City Planning*
Barbara Eck, *Communications*
Elizabeth Nelson, *Community Relations*
Beth Purcell, *Environment*
Larry Pearl, *Grants*
Nancy Metzger, *Historic Preservation*
Paul Cromwell, *House & Garden Tour*
Vacant, *Membership*
Gary Peterson, *Zoning*

NEWSLETTER

Lisa Dale Jones and Kelly Vielmo, editors
Jean Kohanek, design & layout

WEBMASTERS

Donna Breslin and Paul Cromwell

OFFICE MANAGER

Gloria Junge

To reach any of the above, please contact the Society offices at (202) 543-0425 or via e-mail: CapHRS@aol.com.

www.CHRS.org

Celebrating more than 50 years helping to preserve and protect Capitol Hill's residential character, the Society is the largest civic association on Capitol Hill, and one of the largest in the District of Columbia. From the beginning, the Society has played a key role in maintaining the diverse, residential character of our neighborhood. With your participation, we will continue to do so for many years to come.

To start or renew a CHRS membership:

- ★ On the web at www.CHRS.org
- ★ Call (202) 543-0425; choose option 2
- ★ Pick up a form at one of our meetings

Starting at just \$25 per year for a single membership, it's a great deal.

Valuable Information Flowed at *Roofs 102* Preservation Café

By Shauna Holmes

At the March Preservation Café, *Roofs 102*, speaker David Lindeman used dozens of wonderful slides to show the audience parts of roofs that are seldom seen by homeowners, as well as to illustrate common problems and their solutions. Mr. Lindeman, head of L&M Contracting in DC, has been working on roofs for over 30 years and returned in March with a follow-up to *Roofs 101*, which he presented at the November 2009 Preservation Café. While he focused in *Roofs 101* on the main roof itself, particularly the low-sloped kind on many Capitol Hill row houses, his focus in *Roofs 102* was on other housetop components associated with roofs, such as the mansards, towers, porches, bays, built-in gutters, and decorative sheet metal that also top homes on the Hill.

Mr. Lindeman started by clarifying that what we on Capitol Hill are accustomed to calling mansards are really, in most cases, actually decorative pent roofs that typically enclose little to no usable attic space, whereas a true mansard "is a steeply sloped roof extending down from a flat roof that provides a large attic space." At the bottoms of our pent roofs are built-in gutters that are supported by a wooden framework called "lookouts" that look from the outside like protruding rafters but are really stuck into the exterior masonry. The wooden framework is usually covered on the outside by a decorative sheet metal cornice, with the gutter having a tin lining that should extend up under the pent roof's slates or tiles to keep water out.



IMAGES COURTESY DAVID LINDEMAN

House with a typical pent roof.

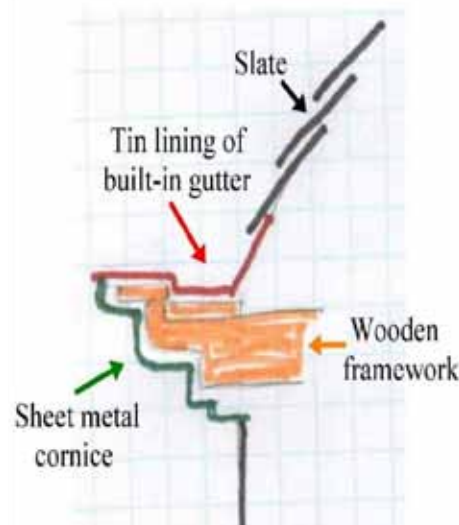


Diagram of a built-in gutter.

When such gutters leak, the water will seek the lowest point by following the slope of the interior ceiling. Therefore a leak may actually be some distance from where

Continued on page 8

Historic Preservation Briefs

By Nancy Metzger

Historic Preservation Committee at Work in 2010

It seems as if every organization likes to measure productivity, so one measure for the Capitol Hill Restoration Society might be that the Society's Historic Preservation Committee considered 50 cases during 2010. (The total is usually higher but this past year there were no cases for January, March and August.) The Committee considers all cases in the Capitol Hill Historic District that are filed with the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) for review. There are many, many other cases (windows, doors, repairs, fences, etc.) that are handled at the staff level and do not require Board action at its monthly meeting so the Historic Preservation Committee typically does not see those.

While many of the 50 cases involved fairly routine rear additions, basement entrances and public space issues, there were also a number of significant cases, such as:

- Rehabilitation of a long-vacant neighborhood eyesore (514 Third Street, NE) by the DC Department of Housing and Community Development for a two-unit dwelling;
- Security upgrades at the Marine Commandant's House at 8th and G Streets, SE (now underway underneath the white material that wraps the building);
- A proposed alteration at Union Station that led to an initial consulting meeting under Federal review regulations (Section 106);
- Proposed addition and site alterations at the 1820s Watterston House property, 224 Second Street, SE, a DC landmark

building, home of the third Librarian of Congress;

- Informal review and conversation with Library of Congress/Architect of the Capitol staff for the Scholars Residence at Sixth and East Capitol Streets, SE;
- Proposed addition to the 1850s Tungal-Hartley Shotgun House at 1229 E Street, SE; and
- Proposed restoration, rehabilitation, new construction and site plan for the 1795 Maples House at 619 D Street, SE (formerly Friendship House).

The Historic Preservation Committee meets monthly to consider proposals for alteration, demolition and new construction within the historic district. The committee, like the Historic Preservation Office staff and Historic Preservation Review Board, bases its deliberations on guidance provided in the city's Historic Preservation law, the Secretary of Interior Standards, past decisions of the committee and the HPRB, and Historic Preservation Office and CHRS Guidelines. The Committee's comments are forwarded to the Historic Preservation Office and the HPRB, Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and other neighborhood organizations, as well as involved applicants, architects, and neighbors. In addition to the work mentioned above with HPRB cases, the Committee also sponsors the Preservation Café series under the leadership of Shauna Holmes.

Present active members of the Committee and their professional backgrounds are: Judith Capen (architect); James Dean (designer); Donna Hanousek (historic

preservation); Shauna Holmes (retired, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Section 106 cases); Laura Jeffords (urban planning and architecture); Marisa Lewis (administrator); Steve Morris (urban planning and historic preservation); Jonathan Sager (architectural historian); Mike Singer (architectural writer); Robert Weinstein (architect); and Nancy Metzger (history), chairperson.

Society Testifies At Council Oversight Hearings

Every year, prior to the budget cycle, the DC Council holds hearings concerning the performance of agencies and departments. It is an opportunity for residents and organizations to ask questions, praise good programs and staff, or highlight problems. It's also an opportunity for the same agencies to highlight their successful programs and gaps in funding. (Who knew, for example, that the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs could only send 5-7 inspectors out into the field on any given day? The result, apparently, of the decision to require increased training for inspectors, some of whom did not comply with the requirements and were fired. Soon after that DCRA faced a hiring freeze because of DC budget issues.)

CHRS Board members testified at a number of oversight hearings, helping to draw attention to issues important to the Capitol Hill community, including:

- The importance of the Historic Homeowners Grant program and requesting continued funding (at Historic Preservation Office hearing);
- Concerns about lack of transparency in the

implementation of the Fair Housing Act and problems with issuance of demolition and raze permits (at the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs hearing). Mark O'Donnell, a Capitol Hill resident, and ANCs 6-A and 6-B also testified about the Fair Housing Act issues;

- Lack of action by the Deputy Mayor's Office for Planning and Economic Development at Reservation 13 and the continued serious neglect of Anne Archibold Hall, which needs extensive repairs due to water infiltration, etc.; and
- Planning issues that need to be undertaken regarding the trolley system and confirmation of city policy requiring utilities to repair historic alleys in like materials after a cut has been made by the District Department of Transportation (DDOT).

DDOT Confirms Historic Alley Repair Policy

About two weeks after the testimony about the repair problems in historic alleys, CHRS was copied on an e-mail from DDOT's Reginald Bazile to utilities (PEPCO, Washington Gas, DC Water) and DDOT staff confirming the policy of in-kind restoration of historic streets, alleys, and sidewalks.

In the e-mail Bazile, DDOT's point man on utility infractions and enforcement, wrote:

"This restoration issue has captured the attention of Council Member Wells and DDOT. I am writing to ask that you remind your crews and contractors of their obligation to complete in-kind restoration of historic right-of-way. When crews are working on historic alleys, streets, or sidewalks, care should be taken to a) remove original brick/paving at the start of the

project and b) restore brick/paving once the project has been completed.

"When DDOT's inspectors discover locations where utilities have failed to complete restorations in-kind, they will issue NOV's [Notices of Violation] and I will support them in the prosecution of those NOV's.

"I know that there are some cases where parts of an alley or road may feature historic paving while other parts do not. To avoid confusion, I encourage you to

contact SIOD [System Inspection Oversight Division] (645-7050) prior to excavation, so that the BEFORE condition of the project area can be documented, including photos."

CHRS suggests that residents with questions about work in progress should call 311 to report problems. This will also help DDOT to better track requests. ★

Beyond the Boundaries Survey Results Ready

By Donna Hanousek

The survey of the buildings beyond the boundaries of the Capitol Hill Historic District is now complete and ready for the community to use. CHRS wishes to once again thank the many volunteers who either photographed properties or filled out survey forms (or both) to assist in this effort. Basic building information, along with a photograph, is now available for each building surveyed.

First, if you are interested in reading and viewing the PowerPoint presentations on the results of the three surveys—Northeast Capitol Hill, Southeast Capitol Hill, and Rosedale and Far Northeast Capitol Hill—you can find them on our website under *Beyond the Boundaries*. You are welcome to download the presentations and distribute them as you wish.

Second, if you are looking for the construction details for your own home, or a specific building of interest, contact the CHRS office (see below) and make arrangements to have the report on your property emailed to you (or we can download and print it out for you, if that is your preference). We have reports on individual properties located in the following area: from 2nd Street to 15th Street, NE, between F and H Streets, NE; from 15th to 19th Streets, NE, between Benning Road and East Capitol Street, NE; and from 13th to 19th Streets, SE, between G Street SE and East Capitol Street, SE. Note that there are also properties in the northeast where the historic district boundary cuts in between East Capitol Street and F Street NE, so check out our website for Southeast and Northeast Survey Maps that show every Square surveyed.

Finally, if you wish to do a larger project using the database, or have questions, please contact CapHRS@aol.com.

From Rosedale to East Capitol Street, NE: EHT Traceries' Architectural Survey

By Donna Hanousek

On March 8, 2011, about 25 neighbors gathered at the Rosedale Recreation Center to learn about the historical development of their neighborhood. EHT Traceries presented the results of their building survey in a very informative and eye-catching PowerPoint show. The presentation marks the end of a multi-year effort to survey the buildings of the neighborhoods just outside the boundaries of Capitol Hill. These building surveys produced individual records for each building that include information such as year of construction, architectural style, original owner, names of architect and builder, materials used, and building dimensions. This was the third and final presentation of survey results. This presentation, titled "From Rosedale to East Capitol Street, NE," as well as the presentation for the two previous surveys, "Capitol Hill Northeast" and the "Capitol Hill Southeast," can be found on our website under *Beyond the Boundaries*.

Boundaries

The boundaries of this survey were 15th Street (to the west), 19th Street (to the east), Benning Road (to the north), and East Capitol Street (to the south). The survey was divided into two phases: the first phase, Rosedale, studied the resources from the north side of C Street northward to Benning Road; the second phase, called Far Northeast Capitol Hill, covered the area from the south side of C Street to the north side of East Capitol Street, NE.

Initial Development

The Rosedale/Far Northeast Capitol Hill area was slower to develop—their oldest extant (existing) building dating to 1880—than their neighboring greater Capitol Hill area where development began in the 1850s and 1860s, due to its more rural character and lack of city services. By 1897, development in the area was spurred by the extension of the Metropolitan Railroad Company's streetcar line down East Capitol Street to its new car barn at 14th Street.

Unique Origin of Rosedale

The Rosedale neighborhood was originally part of the Rosedale and Isherwood estates.

What sets Rosedale apart from the rest of greater Capitol Hill area is that its land area was not part of the original 1791 L'Enfant Plan.¹ Consequently, the grid plan did not extend into Rosedale. Rosedale's squares were laid out on a diagonal. Rosedale does not exhibit the H- and I-shaped alley pattern common to the rest of Capitol Hill, which begins to be visible south of C Street, NE.

The northeast section of the city that contained Rosedale was originally part of Washington County.



1903 Baist Map depicting Rosedale and Isherwood subdivisions.



1516 Gales Street, NE.

Washington County became absorbed into the District in 1871; however, Washington County continued to exist as an administrative unit until

¹ According to footnote #1 in "The Plan of the City of Washington," which is the National Historic Landmark Nomination for the L'Enfant Plan, prepared by Judy Robinson, "Florida Avenue does not actually reach the Anacostia because of a jog in the boundary resulting from an early arrangement. Landowner Benjamin Stoddert [the first Secretary of the Navy] was allowed to retain ownership of a parcel on which there was a natural spring, in exchange for his agreement to pave Georgetown's main street with stone paving. The boundary detour along 15th and C Streets, NE, excluded this parcel."



1500 Block of D Street, NE.

1895. This explained why the 1877 ban on wood-frame construction did not prevent wood buildings in Rosedale, which contains numerous wood-frame vernacular dwellings (many with some Italianate details) clustered on 16th Street, Gales Street, Kramer Street, and Rosedale Street. EHT Traceries noted, "...a collection of late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century wood-frame buildings in numbers not seen in Far Northeast Capitol Hill, anywhere else in the *Beyond the Boundaries* survey area, or anywhere else in Washington, DC for that matter."

Twentieth Century

The survey area primarily developed in the early 20th century. EHT Traceries noted that "...only 115 buildings were constructed in Rosedale and 15 buildings in Far Northeast Capitol Hill between 1880 and 1899." The 20th century introduced the Classical Revival style to the survey area. These two-bay brick dwellings ranged from flat fronts to canted full bays to canted oriels. By the mid-1920s, the daylight form began enjoying popularity in the survey area—as it had a decade earlier in neighboring greater Capitol Hill. The daylighters in the survey area

were in the Colonial Revival style, with Craftsman influences, such as exposed rafters and overhanging roofs, along with false mansard roof fronts. In the late 1920s until the 1940s, new construction replaced the false mansard with varied stepped and gabled parapets, as exemplified by the row at 1809-1813 Gales Street, NE designed by George T. Santmyers. Santmyers, then one of the most prolific architects in the District, designed 468 of the 1,249 properties in the survey area. And in Rosedale alone, he is responsible for 42% of the extant building stock.

Non-Residential Development

Overwhelmingly, the primary resources in the survey area were domestic (residential).

However, there were other types of buildings in the survey area, too.

One especially noteworthy building in the survey area is the East Capitol Street Car Barn. This high-style building was designed by prominent architect Waddy B. Wood and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural merit and historical significance. Another noteworthy building was the now demolished Rosedale Recreation Center. In 1912, a

pool was planned for the site to serve the Rosedale neighborhood as well as the greater Northeast community. Originally a pool only for white children, integration only came to the Rosedale Pool in 1953, after years of protests. A new recreation center, to be completed in 2011, is currently under construction and expected to be a focal point in the neighborhood.

EHT Traceries also reported on the commercial, educational, and religious buildings of the survey area (for details, please view the presentation on our website).

EHT Traceries' Recommendation

EHT Traceries found that the overall survey area's later development pattern and high proportion of Santmyer's buildings, as well as Rosedale's exclusion from the L'Enfant Plan and its large collection of wooden houses, sets this area apart from its neighbors, giving it a development history distinctly its own.

Their survey of Rosedale and Far Northeast Capitol Hill was limited to the extant architecture. EHT Traceries recommends a further study of the overall historic context (general history of the area) in order to determine potential historic boundaries. Their preliminary findings suggest that one or separate historic districts in Rosedale and Far Northeast Capitol Hill would likely meet the criteria for historic significance, should the neighborhood wish to pursue historic designation in the future. (Read their complete recommendations in the presentation on our website.) ★

To learn how you can make use of the survey results for your neighborhood, see "Survey Results" box on page 5. More photos from the survey are on the CHRS website under *Beyond the Boundaries*, www.chrs.org.

Zoning Briefs

By Gary Peterson

At a meeting held on March 10, 2011, the Zoning Committee unanimously approved the following cases:

#18185 The case involves the application of Douglas Foster for a special exception to allow a one story addition to an existing single-family row dwelling not meeting the lot occupancy requirements and open court provisions in the R-4 zone at 308 G Street, SE.

#18188 The case involves the application of Noreen Clancy and Kris Carter for a special exception to allow a second floor rear addition to an existing single-family row dwelling not meeting the lot occupancy requirements and open court provisions in the R-4 zone at 1613 E Street, SE.

#18202 The case involves the application of Christine Melekian for a special exception to allow a rear addition and roof deck to an existing single-family row dwelling not meeting court provisions in the R-4 zone at 808 9th Street, NE.

There will not be an April meeting of the Committee. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, May 12, 2011, at 7:30 pm. If you have any zoning questions, please contact Gary Peterson at pgaryl@comcast.net or 547-7969. ★

Preservation Café, *continued from page 3*

the water shows up in the house. Waterlogged lookouts not only can become rotted, but can also wick moisture into the exterior walls and sometimes further inside the house. The best way to prevent such leaks is to ensure that the gutter's tin lining fully wraps up under the roof's tiles or slates.

Other roof elements, including towers, porches, and bays, can also have built-in gutters that could require similar repairs, so Mr. Lindeman illustrated the repair processes and described how they varied in each case. For instance, cutting pieces or laying brick to fit around a circular tower or turret is more labor-intensive and complex than replacing straight components, and a number of cornices also include decorative modillions, dentils, and brackets in need of repair.

When having a built-in gutter repaired, the homeowner should try to reuse the decorative metal cornice if at all possible, since it's the most expensive part to replace. Only one company in the United States, the W.F. Norman Corporation in Nevada, Missouri, still makes architectural sheet metal ornaments from historic molds. Other rooftop ornamental metal features include pier caps, which sit atop brick piers that are often found in combination with pent roofs and are sometimes in need of repair. Mr. Lindeman recommends letting replacement galvanized metal features age for a while before painting them.

Occasionally some slate or tile on a pent roof or turret will need to be replaced or relined to fix a leak. While turrets are among the most distinctive and gracious features found in Capitol Hill architecture, if their slate coverings need to be replaced, the work can be expensive and painstaking, as each piece is distinctively shaped and must be

hand cut and carefully positioned. In other instances, a leak might occur where a flat roof joins slate, particularly if flashing hasn't gone under the slate.

Mr. Lindeman cautioned homeowners seeking roof repairs to ensure that laborers who carry out the work use necessary ropes, harnesses, and other safety equipment. Enforcement of workplace safety laws now extends to homeowners who use contractors, and the onus is on the homeowner to ensure workers at his or her house are taking appropriate safety measures. ★

54TH ANNUAL

HOUSE & GARDEN TOUR

MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND  MAY 7-8, 2011

Individual Donations and Ticket Order Form

Tax-Deductible Contributions

All will be listed in the Tour brochure if received by April 1.

- President's Circle** (> \$1,000 to \$5,000, 12 complimentary tickets. Gift less \$240 is tax deductible)
- Benefactor** (\$1,000, 8 complimentary tickets, \$840 deductible)
- Patron** (\$500, 4 complimentary tickets, \$420 deductible)
- Sponsor** (\$250, 2 complimentary tickets, \$210 deductible)
- Contributor** (\$100, completely deductible)
- Funder** (\$50, completely deductible)

My/our name(s) should be listed as follows: _____

Member Tour Tickets

For tickets only, mail or fax with full payment by April 10.

_____ Member Tour tickets @ \$20.00 each (limit 4 per household)

_____ Additional Tour tickets @ \$25.00 each

Payment Information

Sum of contribution and tickets. *Your cancelled check or credit card statement will be your receipt.*

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ payable to CHRS, Inc.

Please bill my credit card \$ _____ Mastercard Visa

Number: _____ Expiration: _____

Signature: _____

Tickets will be mailed approximately two weeks before the Tour.

CHRS
P.O. Box 15264
Washington, DC 20003-0264
Phone/Fax: (202) 543-0425
www.chrs.org

Looking Back on Capitol Hill

By Nancy Metzger

On Sunday, April 10, the Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church at 4th and Independence Avenue, SE, will begin the run-up to its 2014 Sesquicentennial celebration with a special worship service at 11:00 am. Everyone is, of course, invited (see <http://capitolhillpreschurch150.org> for more details). This seems like an appropriate time to look back at the beginning years of the church for a glimpse at Capitol Hill and its residents during the Civil War years.

At the dedication in February 1865 of a small frame chapel, the Daily National Intelligencer reported that the new chapel was "the only Presbyterian church organization in the section of the city including the Capitol and the navy yard, comprising more than a third of the territory of the city and with a population amounting to at least 15,000 people." The chapel was built on land purchased by the congregation during their first year, under the leadership of the pastor, Rev. John Chester. The article notes: "The chapel is located on Fourth street east near Pennsylvania Avenue, is within two squares of the new and elegant public school edifice [Wallach School at the Hine site], which is so creditable to the public spirit of the city, about the same distance from the Capitol, and in the immediate neighborhood of the land purchased by a Philadelphia company, and upon which a large number of dwelling-houses are to be erected [likely referring to Philadelphia Row in the 100 block of 11th Street, SE]. These statements show the good sense which guided in selecting a location...." The church lot measured 90' x 96' and was purchased for \$2,200; the frame chapel cost about \$4,000.

There is much more to the story of the Capitol Hill Presbyterian Church, which will be covered in another "Looking Back" but this is a good time to introduce Mrs. Anna Hitz, a member of the congregation, and her life during the Civil War, which was recounted by Rev. Chester at her funeral service in 1883.

"Mrs. Hitz constitutes a historic figure in the annals of our nation. Her services to the sick in the hospitals, during the late war, have attracted such attention that her life is placed, among other women of national reputation, in the book entitled, *The Women of the War.*" Rev. Chester went on to recount how Anna and her husband John came from Switzerland attempting to reestablish family fortunes, but first had to endure the deaths of three of their children soon after arriving in the US. At first they lived for a while in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County, where John was engaged in mining ventures. In 1853 John was appointed Consul General of Switzerland. The 1865 City Directory shows Anna Hitz, widow of John, living near Third and A Streets SE with other family members nearby. Son John Jr. also served as the Swiss Consul General.

Rev. Chester continues: "Civil war had in the meantime set in, and among the first women found busy in visiting the sick and wounded in the hospitals in this city was Mrs. Hitz. ... She did not, however, depend on the organized charities, but drew largely from her own funds. Among the troops which arrived in Washington just before the battle of Bull Run, were the 12th and 25th New York regiments. They were quartered on Capitol Hill near Mrs. Hitz's home. They arrived wet and weary, their commissary department

in an inadequate condition to supply their immediate wants. Mrs. Hitz at once went to work to supply them; stripping her house of all the eatables it contained, calling in help from her neighbors, fitting up large boilers to give them a warm drink of coffee, and adding to it what 'The Boys in Blue' well appreciated, kind words of greeting and encouragement from her motherly lips...I myself, remember in 1865 seeing a regiment halt in front of her house, as they passed through the city, and she at once emptied every eatable she could lay hold of into their hands, taking even the preserves from her pantry and the dinner from her table." ★

Welcome CHRS Supporters

We thank the following new members, patrons, and sponsors.

NEW MEMBERS

Joseph & Doriann Fengler
Margaret McCulloch
Andrew & Kimberly Myers
Brad Garrett & Elisa Poteat

PATRONS

Michael & Ann Grace
Adam Prather (new member)

SPONSORS

Denny Lane & Naoko Aoki
James Skiles & Lynne Church

SILVER SPONSORS

Suzanne Hazard
David & Marcia Morgan

Anacostia River Cleanup Status: Kenilworth, Washington Gas, and Poplar Point Contaminant Sites

By Beth Purcell

The DC Environmental Network held a meeting on February 23, 2011 for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Park Service (NPS) to update the community on cleaning up three contamination sites: Kenilworth landfill, Washington Gas, and Poplar Point. These sites are contaminated by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) (made in the U.S. between 1930 and 1977, used in paint, plastics, etc.), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and heavy metals. In addition, sediments in the river near these sites may also contain these contaminants. Exposure to contaminants can result from surface soil, groundwater, or airborne dust.

The Washington Gas site, 4.2 acres on the west side of the Anacostia River, near the historic boathouses south of Barney Circle, was a coal-tar facility for years. Known or suspected contaminants include benzene, ethylene, toluene, xylenes, and coal tar. (See Final Environmental Impact Statement, 11th Street Bridges, § 6.13.2, www.ddot.dc.gov.) In 2006, removal of contaminated soil began. NPS, the DC government and Washington Gas are negotiating a consent decree for the cleanup. It is believed that contaminants flowed into the sediment; this is under study.

The DC government operated a landfill at Kenilworth for many years, ending in the early 1970s. Kenilworth is on the east side of the river, southeast of the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens. It is unknown if the sediment is contaminated. NPS and the DC government will soon conduct a feasibility study on how to fix the problem.

Poplar Point was a naval air station in the 1940s and also a DC government nursery (using herbicides and pesticides). Poplar Point is currently an NPS site that may be transferred to the DC government. A contaminant study is planned.

The Anacostia River water column and sediment contain PCBs. (Final Environmental Impact Statement, 11th Street Bridges, § 6.6.4-5.) For this reason, there is a concern that fish in the river may also contain PCBs. Some people catch and eat fish from the Anacostia River, but eating PCB-contaminated fish has been linked to liver harm and digestive tract, nervous system, and memory problems. The Department of the Interior, National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration and the Anacostia Riverkeeper are conducting a “subsistence fishing” study. When the study is complete, fish advisories may need to be updated and any dangers from eating fish from the Anacostia River will need to be widely publicized. ✪

Additional Resources

<http://oehha.ca.gov/fish/pcb/>
www.webmd.com/food-recipes/news/20010608/tainted-fish-can-cause-memory-problems



Capitol Hill Restoration Society
420 Tenth Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003

Mark Your Calendar!

APRIL

4 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, nancymetzger@verizon.net, 546-1034.

5 Tuesday, 6:45-8:30 pm
Special Membership Meeting—Historic Preservation Review Process for Hine School Development Site. Maury Elementary School multipurpose room, 13th St. & Constitution Avenue, NE (entrance on 13th Street); free, open to the public, no reservations needed. Details: CapHRS@aol.com.

9 Saturday, 8:30 am–noon
Anacostia River Earth Day Cleanup. Kingman Island as well as other locations. Details: swendel@anacostiaws.org, (301) 699-6204.

16 Saturday, 10 am–3pm
Frager's Spring Convention, Eastern Market, North Hall. Details: Apollo@fragersdc.com, 460-8583.

19 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Beth Purcell, eap1@mindspring.com, 622-4303.

20 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Preservation Café, "Researching the History of Your House" featuring Matthew Gilmore (Part 2 of a two-part series). Ebenezers Coffeehouse, 2nd & F Streets, NE, downstairs; free, open to the public, no reservations needed. Details: Shauna Holmes, shaunaholmes@yahoo.com, 546-5211.

MAY

2 Monday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Historic Preservation Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Nancy Metzger, nancymetzger@verizon.net, 546-1034.

12 Thursday, 7:30 pm
CHRS Zoning Committee, Kirby House, 420 10th Street, SE, first floor. Details: Gary Peterson, PGaryl@aol.com, 547-7969.

17 Tuesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Board of Directors, Capitol Hill Townhomes, 750 6th Street, SE, second floor. Details: Beth Purcell, eap1@mindspring.com, 622-4303.

18 Wednesday, 6:30 pm
CHRS Preservation Café: "Urban Vegetable Gardening" with Pat Taylor, King's Court Community Garden Coordinator. Ebenezers Coffeehouse, 2nd & F Streets, NE, downstairs. Free, accessible, open to the public; no reservation needed. Details: Shauna Holmes, shaunaholmes@yahoo.com, 546-5211.