

Winter 2002

The Woman's Club of Kensington and the Community

(Editor's Note: The local street cars were one of many community matters that drew the attention of the members of Woman's Club of Kensington not long after its beginnings over a century ago. The stories below come from Half a Century of Club Life: 1899-1949 by Anna H. Farrell, presented here courtesy of the Woman's Club of Kensington.)

In January 1903, Mrs. Armstrong called attention to the lack of protection [from cold weather] by "vestibules or otherwise for the motormen and conductors on the Chevy Chase car line" and the Corresponding Secretary was instructed to communicate with their congressman to ascertain what steps might be taken to relieve this condition.

She reported that the matter had been agitated by other parties without success, it being held that Washington winters were not severe enough to warrant the expense the change would cause. Incidentally, attention was called to the fact that Baltimore winters could not be much more severe than Washington's and that Baltimore cars were vestibuled....

In February 1904, Mrs. Armstrong was still concerned about the shivering motormen and conductors and a committee waited on Mrs. Sperry of Washington, who reported that her club had been promised that all new cars thereafter would have vestibules and that one company had already acquired some....

Once more [in 1905] the street cars claimed their attention. This time it was the condition of the Kensington trolley car and of the waiting room at Chevy Chase Lake. But the president of the Capitol Traction Company was thanked for putting a stove in the waiting room. Some of us who have come later have shared with them the ups and downs and the rattles and shakes of that old Kensington car.