

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia

The District's Oldest Historic Organization – Founded December 7, 1865 – Our 158th Year!

Welcoming Young & Old Alike to Join in Remembering the Past and Working for an Even Better Future

March 2023 / Bulletin 172

Join us for the next AOI of DC Luncheon Event!

**Thursday,
March 16, 2023**

celebrating

Women's History Month
*Featuring a Conversation with
WNDC Past President
(and Eleanor Roosevelt's
Great-Granddaughter)
Anna Fierst*

**11:30am
Lunch & Program**

Woman's National Democratic Club
1526 New Hampshire Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20036

*(One block north of Dupont Circle Metro
& \$10 Validated Parking available
diagonally across from club at 11 Dupont
Circle - beware: steep incline)*

Email RSVP to ricmarino@msn.com with your name, names of any guests, and choice of salmon, flank steak, or vegetarian meal. The 3-course lunch is \$40.00 per person. In addition to paying by cash, check or card at the door, you can now pay in advance by Zelle using aioifdc@gmail.com. Please add "March Luncheon" in the comment line. In addition, AOI members can now RSVP and pay for themselves and their guests by credit card via the **Members Only** portal on our website – <https://www.aoidc.org/401/login.php?redirect=/members-only-portal.html>, password: 1865.

From Our February Luncheon ...

Our first luncheon meeting of 2023 featured good food, good conversation, a great program, and a even a few new faces. AOI treasurer and membership chair Carolyn Michell announced three new and two returning AOI members since our November meeting: **Ed** and **Carole Kaminski**, reinstated as associate members; **Jim Davis**, who found us via geneological research; **Ellen Spencer**, who joined after being a guest at our New Year's Day brunch; and **Carol Groves**, who heard about AOI from member Richard Stamm. In addition to our regular passage of last meeting's minutes and the treasurer's report, members also approved several by-laws amendment (see page 3).

Apropos of recent discussion on potential changes to the 1910 Building Height Act, AOI historian Nelson Rimensnyder's monthly trivia question asked about the city's first iteration of a height limit in 1791 (40 ft., per George Washington).

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Above/Right: In spite of rainy weather, AOI welcomed a packed turnout of 69 members and guests for our February lunch, business meeting and program presentation, the first of the new year.



Above: AOI President Cindi Gueli with lunch speakers John deFerrari and Peter Sefton.





2023 Board of Directors

Officers:

- Cindy Gueli, President
- John Edwards, Vice-President
- Ric Marino, Secretary
- Carolyn Michell, Treasurer
- Nelson Rimensnyder, Historian

Past-Presidents:

- Thomas Neale
- Bill Brown
- Jan A.K. Evans

Directors:

- Ned Rich
- Marcia Rock, Program Chair
- Gary Scott

The Board of Directors meets at the Women’s National Democratic Club at 10 a.m. on the Tuesday of the week prior to a scheduled luncheon meeting.

Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

Website: www.aoidc.org

E-mail: aioifdc@gmail.com

Twitter: [@AOIofDC](https://twitter.com/AOIofDC)

YouTube: [@theaioifdc](https://www.youtube.com/@theaioifdc)

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/www.aioifdc.org, which may contain more timely events and calls-to-action than our web site.

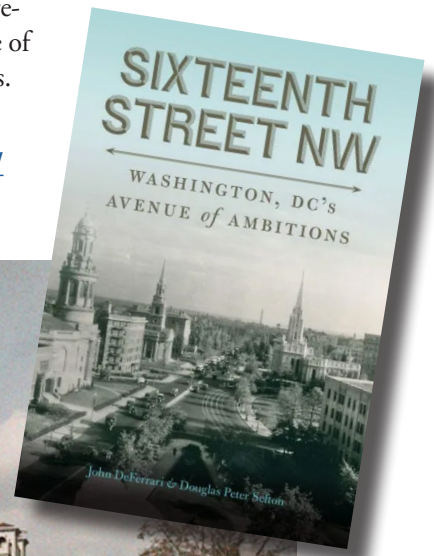
AOI’s Newsletters are printed and distributed by:



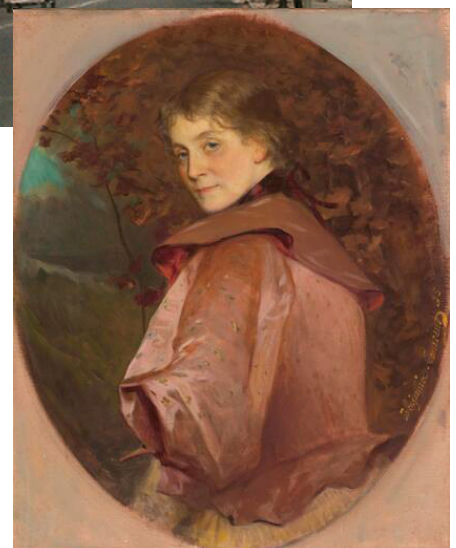
From Our February Luncheon, continued from page 1

Our featured luncheon speakers, **John deFerrari** and **Peter Sefton**, treated us to a taste of their latest book, *Sixteenth Street NW: Washington, DC’s Avenue of Ambitions*. While the book takes in the full sweep and history of the historic street from the White House to the Maryland border, our presentation focused on one particular stretch north from Meridian Hill, and the particularly colorful Washington doyenne largely responsible for creating it, socialite and activist Mary Foote Henderson. Dominating the capital’s early 20th-century development from her “castle” just north of Boundary Street (aka Florida Avenue), Henderson and her favored architect, George Oakley Totten, built and inspired a stretch of elegant mansions defining the city’s emerging cosmopolitan character and importance, many of which still grace the street today. Beyond the glittering facades, however, was a darker story as well, including how Henderson’s vision for an “Avenue of the Presidents” had no room for the hitherto largely African-American working-class neighborhood on Meridian Hill, which was predictably eradicated to make way for speculative mansions and what is now Meridian Hill/Malcom X Park. Though leaving an indelible architectural mark on our cityscape, the development’s callous disregard of the existing community is an oft-repeated tale of how such ambition often also has tragic consequences.

To view the video of the full February luncheon meeting, click on the website at www.aoidc.org/aoi-luncheon-recordings.html.



Above: Boundary Castle (arch. Eugene Gardner / T.F. Schneider / George Oakley Totten), the anchor of Mary Foote Henderson’s grand ambition for the “Avenue of the Presidents,” reigned over Sixteenth Street NW at the base of Meridian Hill from 1888 until its ultimate demolition in 1949. (National Geographic Images)



Right: Mary Foote Henderson, Sixteenth Street’s doyenne from the 1890s until her death in 1931, as portrayed in an 1895 portrait by Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant.

AOI Business Update ...

At our February meeting, AOI members approved several amendments to our By-Laws (the first since 2007), which were posted in our January newsletter, including:

- ❖ Making board officer terms two-year;
- ❖ Allowing associate members to serve on the board;
- ❖ Clarifying benefits of membership in good standing;
- ❖ Clarifying various position duties for board officers;
- ❖ Updating the board committee structure.

Three additional board seats remain open at this time. The board is currently soliciting interest in those positions, with the intention to nominate candidates to complete the vacant terms at the earliest opportunity. Stay tuned for more news on this in the coming months.

As announced at the February luncheon, the board is also actively looking for a member or associate member interested in helming our Membership Committee. This position would have primary responsibility for keeping our membership rolls up-to-date, receiving new member applications, and coordinating with other board members on prospective member outreach. Please contact a board member if you or someone you know is interested!



Please remember to renew your annual AOI membership if you haven't already! AOI relies primarily on our \$25 member dues for its normal operating expenses, including the printing & mailing of the newsletter, our extensive website resources, and subsidization of the DC meals tax for our monthly luncheons, among other items. At last count, we had 128 renewals – *thank you to all who have renewed* – though that is 20 less than at the same time last year, so we know there are a lot of you out there that still need to respond. Reminders went out to all 2022 members in January, so check your mailbox if you didn't receive one, or go to our website for full information on all the ways you can renew – <https://www.aoidc.org/members-renewal.html>.



As noted at our February luncheon, AOI's immediate Past-President **Tom Neale** is currently recuperating from an unexpected health setback this past December. All reports are that he's doing well – anyone wanting to extend well-wishes for a speedy recovery can contact a board member, and they will make sure it gets passed on to Tom.

Other News ...



Above: Lincoln Memorial Undercroft. (NPS Image)

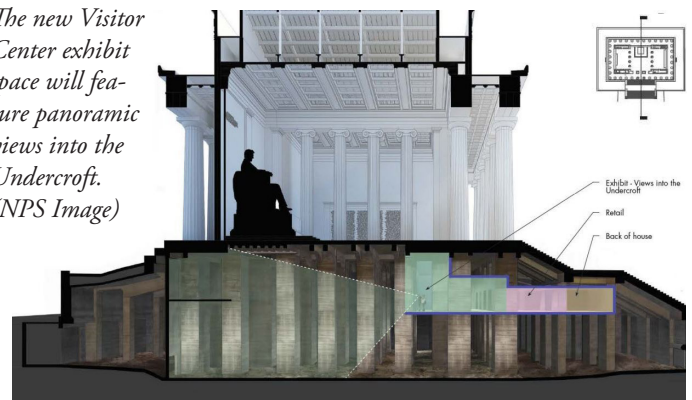
Right: Rendering of Visitor Center exhibits to be installed into the Undercroft. (NPS Image)

The National Park Service has awarded a contract to add an immersive museum beneath the Lincoln Memorial as well as other upgrades to the visitor experience. Construction is expected to begin in March with completion targeted for 2026, in time for the 250th



anniversary of American independence. Floor-to-ceiling glass walls will provide a view of the Undercroft, and an immersive theater presentation will project images of historic events onto the foundations. The nearly \$69 million project, funded by the NPS and the National Park Foundation, will create 15,000 SF of exhibit space that tells a more complete story of the memorial and how its meaning has evolved over the last century.

The new Visitor Center exhibit space will feature panoramic views into the Undercroft. (NPS Image)



In Memoriam ...

It is with great sadness that we note the February passing of AOI member **Alfred Montgomery**. A frequent attendee of our monthly luncheon meetings, as recently as this past November, Alfred will be remembered at a service planned for March 18 at the Howard University chapel.

Address Correction Requested

**The Association of Oldest Inhabitants
of the District of Columbia**

c/o 815 Woodside Parkway
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Mark Your Calendar...

Upcoming AOI meeting dates and tentative speakers:

- Thurs., March 16 – WNDC Centennial, featuring Anna Fierst on Eleanor Roosevelt
- Thurs., April 20 – Diana Parsell on “Eliza Scidmore: Trailblazing Journalist behind Washington’s Cherry Trees”
- Thurs., May 18 – Ray Suarez on Latino Americans - the Washington Experience
- Thurs., June 15 – Martin Moeller, author of “AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, DC”

Remember: No luncheon meetings July/August nor December/January. Be sure to check our [website](#) for speaker updates and/or last-minute changes.

NOTE: All events, meeting subjects and speakers have been invited to appear, but nevertheless are tentative.

BE ADVISED: In case of inclement weather call AOI at 202-342-1865 for last minute recorded information.

SPRING AHEAD!
*Don't be late to the March AOI luncheon -
Remember to move your clocks ahead on
March 12.*



The Whittemore House (1892-94), home of the Women's National Democratic Club, hosts the AOI's monthly luncheon meetings. The National Register property was originally built for Sarah Adams Whittemore, and was purchased by the WNDC in 1927.