



# The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia

*The District's Oldest Historic Organization – Founded December 7, 1865 – Our 159th Year!*

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

*May 2024 / Bulletin 182*

*Join us for the next AOI of DC Luncheon Event!*

**Thursday,  
May 16, 2024**

*Hidden Alleyways  
of Washington, DC:  
A History  
with  
Kim Prothro Williams*

**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 diagonally across  
from club at 11 Dupont Circle)*

Email RSVP to [ricmarino@msn.com](mailto: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 [aoiofdc@gmail.com](mailto:aoiofdc@gmail.com). Please add "May 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 April Luncheon ...*

April was a busy month for AOI! Included in the many announcements featured at our lunch meeting on April 18:

- ❖ AOI was among many historical and cultural groups participating in the **DC History Conference's History Network** on April 5 at the MLK Jr. Library;
- ❖ AOI's social media posts (FB/Instagram/Threads) are a great avenue to see what we're up to – send any announcements to [aoiofdc@gmail.com](mailto:aoiofdc@gmail.com);
- ❖ Various community opportunities throughout the month, including **Tombs & Tomes Bookfest** at Congressional Cemetery (April 21), the 21<sup>st</sup> annual **Georgetown French Market** (April 26-28), the **DC Chocolate Festival** at the French Embassy (April 27), and the **Georgetown House Tour**, a staple since 1931 (April 20);
- ❖ DC's own official breakfast cereal, **Capitol City Crunch**, will be available for on-line purchase starting this summer (at \$40/box!);
- ❖ Attendees voted in three new members: **Philip Collins**, a retired DC attorney invited by Martha Jewett; **Joseph McCall**, who has lived and worked in DC for over 26 years; and the day's featured speaker, **John Lockwood**. Welcome all!

April's trivia featured two questions: which president sought to move the Executive Mansion to a site in Rock Creek Park? (Andrew Johnson); and statues of which

two figures represent DC among the states in the U.S. Capitol? (Frederick Douglass & Pierre

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*Above: AOI Board members Sherri Sewall & Bill Brown join Rise & Carl Cole at our April lunch.*



*Right: Speaker John Lockwood (center rear) enjoys lunch with other AOI members before his April presentation.*



**2024 Board of Directors**

**Officers:**

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- Bill Brown
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**Directors:**

- Kimberly Bender
- Gary Scott
- Sherri Sewall

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](http://www.aoidc.org)

E-mail: [aioifdc@gmail.com](mailto:aioifdc@gmail.com)

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

Follow us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/www.aioifdc.org](https://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 April Luncheon, continued from page 1*

L’Enfant, authorized by a special bipartisan Congressional agreement 40 years ago).

Our featured speaker, retired National Park Service historian and native Washingtonian **John Lockwood**, discussed the initial days of the Civil War when President Lincoln ordered troops to Washington to protect the Nation’s Capital. Culling material from his book *The Siege of Washington*, co-written with his brother Charles, John told the story of the first precarious days of the war from the perspective of officials and residents trapped in a city surrounded by slave states. With a smattering of volunteer troops barracked in the unfinished Capitol, Washington held its breath to see who would reach the city first – Northern defenders or the rumored Southern forces gathering just across the Potomac.

View the video of the full April luncheon meeting and presentation on the AOI website at [www.aoidc.org/aioi-luncheon-recordings.html](http://www.aoidc.org/aioi-luncheon-recordings.html).

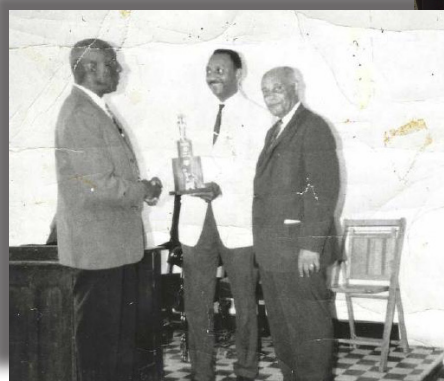


*Left: AOI Secretary Ric Marino with Hulit Taylor and J.R. Springman at the AOI table.*

Budding collectors raided attics and basements to receive expert advice on their DC memorabilia from a variety of area archives at **Collecting DC History** at the Heurich House Museum Garden on April 21, co-sponsored by AOI. Check out the Heurich House [website](#) for links to all the participating organizations.



*Left: Attendee Marion Woodfork Simmons shared this 1968 photo of AOI (Colored) board chairman Sylvester Roy Woodfork, Sr., retiring president Paul V. Brown, and Arthur Brooks, donated to the People’s Archive along with a collection of other AOI(C) records.*



## Other News ...

The cherry blossoms may get all the attention from spring break visitors to Washington, but any local will probably tell you that our azaleas are the true show-stoppers for spring-time display. Nowhere is that showcased better than at the [U.S. National Arboretum](#) in Northeast DC. With this year’s warm, early spring, the slopes of the Arboretum’s



*From red to purple to brilliant white, the Arboretum’s azaleas paint a palette not to be missed.*

Mount Hamilton have dazzled multitudes of visitors over the last month, with the Glenn Dale Hillside being “the most spectacular in terms of its display and variety of azaleas blooming within a short period of time.” Former Arboretum Director Benjamin Y. Morrison is largely responsible for developing the hybrid azalea cultivars we know today, with the Arboretum’s collection of named Glenn Dale hybrids centered at the brick-walled Morrison Garden, completed in 1952. Drives, paths, and hiking trails fan out from there along the surrounding hillsides, allowing visitors unparalleled access to blooms of nearly every size, shape, and color. If you haven’t yet made the trek, don’t fret – many of the azalea hybrids continue to bloom well into May, some even to early June. Pack a picnic and get out there!

*Left: The columns from the Capitol’s original East Portico crown the view from the National Arboretum’s Morrison Garden.*

Prompted by a Letter to the Editor in the Washington Post, AOI webmaster **Bill Brown** posted this to the AOI Facebook page:

Ever since *Washington Post* Obituary Editor Adam Bernstein’s talk to the AOI on Oct. 20, 2022 when he acknowledged the *Post*’s dearth of local “news obituaries,” there have been virtually NO local (DC-DMV) obits. Even the paid obituaries seem to be declining, probably because of their exorbitant rates.

The AOI of DC has, over many years, emphasized the importance of both news and paid obituaries as written legacies of Washingtonian’s lives. It is a shame that future researchers, authors and genealogists will be deprived of this resource. See this “Letter to the Editor” from a Rockville resident who apparently feels the same way...

## In Memoriam ...

AOI notes the passing of member **Seymour Selig** on April 20. A native of Patchogue, NY, Seymour moved to the DC area in 1958, working for over 30 years in the Office of Naval Research. A Korean War veteran, Seymour also notably served as AOI’s Secretary from 1996-2013.

### Death notices at death’s door

First, Robert Thomson, a.k.a. Dr. Gridlock, left The Post. Then, John Kelly took a buyout. And now, the number of death notices in the daily paper has dwindled to a trickle. These three mainstays allowed readers to grasp the flavor of the Washington area without having to read about crime or tragedy.

Take the reminiscence of a Foreign Service officer’s wife who went with her husband to embassies around the world, with their five children in tow, or the notice for a 90-year-old

woman who came to work for the federal government from a small town in the Midwest during World War II. Even tidbits about the departed, such as the observation that one man “was a voracious reader of the Washington Post, keeping issues for weeks and even months to make sure that he read every word from the front to the back page,” have lingered with me.

As an avid reader of them, I mourn the continued dwindling of these tributes to local human beings. That’s a shame, especially given the amount of money The Post charges to place these announcements.

**Betty Lawson Walters, Rockville**

*Address Correction Requested*

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

c/o 815 Woodside Parkway  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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***Mark Your Calendar...***

Upcoming events of interest, AOI meeting dates and tentative speakers:

- Sat. May 4 – DC Preservation League's *Alleyways of DC Walking Tour*, (12:00 - 2:00 PM, \$15-\$25, F St. Terrace & G St. SE)
- Thurs. May 16 – *Hidden Alleyways of Washington, DC: A History*, with Kim Prothro Williams
- Thurs. June 20 – *Under the Ballpark: Lost Landmarks of DC's LGBTQ Community*, with the Rainbow History Project
- Thurs. July 18 – *Memories & Mimosas Brunch: Summer of 1968* (11:00 AM - 2:00 PM)
- Thurs. Oct. 18 – *Oak Hill Cemetery: Georgetown's Garden Cemetery*, with Laura Lavelle, Director of Social Media at Oak Hill Cemetery

*NOTE:* All events, meeting subjects and speakers have been invited to appear, but nevertheless are tentative. Be sure to check our [website](#) for speaker updates and/or last-minute changes.

Regular monthly AOI lunch meetings (Feb.-June, Sept.-Nov.) run from 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM unless otherwise noted.

**EARLY VOTING**  
**MAY 26 - JUNE 2!**  
Primary elections are June 4 for  
DC Council & Delegate to U.S. House



*The Heurich House Museum, host for last month's Collecting DC History event, is also the former home of the Historical Society of Washington and served as AOI's headquarters from 1956-2003.*