



# The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia

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

**The District's Oldest Civic Organization –  
Founded December 7, 1865 – Our 154<sup>th</sup> Year!**

**Bulletin #154  
March 2019**

## *Farewell John Gill...*



John W. Gill served as AOI's Vice-President from 2006 until 2011. He had been a member of the AOI for decades. A decorated WWII air combat gunner, John continued his family's real estate business in Georgetown, served as the President of historic Oak Hill Cemetery and was instrumental in...

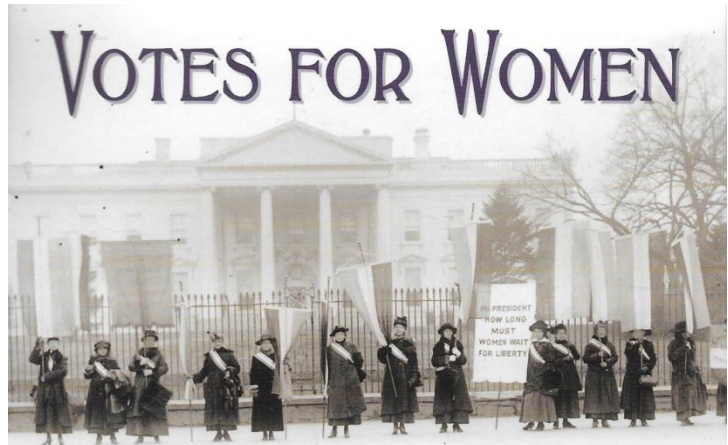


...motivating the AOI to get the pieces of antique fire apparatus we'd been caring for out of storage and eventually into the possession of the Friendship Fire Association's Museum at Eng. 3 on New Jersey Avenue, N.W.

*Thank You John for your years of service and guidance. You will be missed.*

## March's Luncheon Event:

**"Suffragists in Washington, D.C."  
Rebecca Boggs Roberts**



*Please join us...*

Friday, **March 15**, at the **Capitol Skyline Hotel** (free Parking) 10 I ("eye") Street, SW. (Metro Rail to Navy Yard Station), Social Time (cash bar) 11:45 a.m., Luncheon served at 12:30 p.m.

**(\$35 per person** - please make your check payable to "AOI" and have it completed prior to arrival or bring exact payment).

Reservations are a must! Otherwise your food preference may be unavailable. RSVP to our voice mail **202-342-1865**, not later than noon **Tues., March 12, 2019. This voice mail box number is the only means to make a reservation.** Late reservations make planning very difficult for us and **failure by you to cancel prior to Noon on Thurs., 3/14, will result in you being charged.** Please be prepared to leave your name, the number in your party, your guest's names for name tags, your meal preferences (***Grilled Salmon with Kang Pao sauce, Grilled Skyline Chicken Breast, Grilled Black Angus Flank Steak, or Braised Ratatouille of Vegetables***) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or a last-minute event cancellation.

## Future Meetings...



The AOI's 154<sup>th</sup> Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

April 19, 2019 – Kim Williams “Lost Farms & Estates of D.C.”

May 17, 2019 – Garrett Peck, “The Great War In America”

June 21, 2019 – Patsy Fletcher, “African American Recreation”

Sept. 21, 2019 – “AOI's Future” a membership charrette

NOTE: All meeting subjects and speakers have been invited to appear, but nevertheless are tentative. If our published RSVP line (202-342-1865) is not answering or appears out-of-order, please call 202-342-1638.

Remember: No luncheon meetings July/August nor December/January

Note: The Board of Directors meets at the Heurich House Museum at 10 a.m. on the Monday immediately prior to a scheduled luncheon meeting.

Be Advised: In case of inclement weather call AOI at 202-342-1865 for last minute information.

## If You Were Not At Our Last Meeting...

[Draft minutes of our last meeting for approval at the March 15, 2019 luncheon.]

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia (AOI) held the first luncheon meeting of its 154<sup>th</sup> year at the Capitol Skyline Hotel at Noon Friday, February 15, 2019 with 80 members and guests present. **President Jan Evans** welcomed the attendees, gave a brief preview of coming topics and, again, thanked **Vice-President Bill Brown** and turned the business meeting over to him. He called for approval of the notes of the November meeting, which were printed in the current newsletter. With no further corrections or additions, upon a motion made by **Randy Clarke** and seconded by **Patricia Clark**, the notes were approved and their reading waived.

**New Members:** There were 7 member applications for consideration: **Katheryn “Kitty” Hempstone\*** (Jan Evans recruited her); **Judith Block\* (Judy Hubbard); William Xanten (Judith Block)\*; Philip Branton (via website, pathologist trained at Walter Reed); Kurt G.F. Helfrich (via WAMU-FM story from November, archivist); Elaine Newman\* (via Kate Dell); and, Ane Powers (unknown how she heard about us) \* present today!** The new members were enthusiastically voted in upon a motion by **Carl Cole** and **Judy Hubbard**.

Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented her Report:

## RECAP OF 2018

### Finances

- Income from Dues covers our basic membership expenses, such as the Newsletter and Telephone. Donations help us meet other expenses, such as Grants
- Thanks to your renewals and generous donations, we met our Budget again last year

### Average Meeting Attendance

- The average attendance at our luncheon meetings was 64

## Membership

- 305 members renewed last year and 20 new people joined our association for a total membership of 325

## 2019 YEAR-TO-DATE

### New Year's Day Brunch

- Once again, the annual New Year's Day Brunch was very festive and social.
- 49 members and guests attended
- Plan to join us next year!

### Membership Renewals

- Within the five weeks of our Membership Renewal letter, 209 have renewed. That's 64%!
- If you haven't renewed, please do so as soon as possible.

Vice-President Brown welcomed everyone on the Officers' & Directors' behalf and in addition to spouses and family members: **Dan & Nancy Mattausch had with them George Dick; Dino Bonaldo was Linda Ingram's guest; Stuart Anderson was Juliette Smith's guest; Mary Gerace was Patricia Clark's guest ; Bill Wilbpret was Mary Pett's guest; Brenda Pascal had with her Gwen Zuaires, a retuning guest; and, Jean Lockard had with her 4 guests: Glen Small, Kim Small, Beryl West and Dick West.**

Brief Announcements: Vice-President Brown called to everyone's attention the passing of past AOI Vice-President **John W. Gill**. John was a well-known realtor in Georgetown, was President of Oak Hill Cemetery and was the primary force behind AOI's diligent efforts to get the antique fire apparatus entrusted to its care out of storage and eventually into the possession of the Friendship Fire Association's Fire Museum at Eng. 3 on New Jersey Avenue. John's funeral is scheduled for March 2 at St. Alban's Church. Bill also called attention to the passing of long time member **Patrick Sheehy**. While Patrick had not attended many luncheons, he had participated in AOI's past field trips, was an avid Washingtonian and lover of history according to his partner Jerry Wnuck who expressed his appreciation to the AOI for the note of condolence sent

upon Patrick's death. Bill availed himself of the opportunity to point out to everyone AOI's "In Memoriam" page on our web site: [aoidc.org](http://aoidc.org).

Bill also spoke briefly on member/author Anthony Pitch and a non-fiction novel he wrote in 2016 entitled, "The Last Lynching: How a Gruesome Mass Murder Rocked a Small Georgia Town." This is noteworthy because the U.S. Court of Appeals just this past week ruled in favor of Tony's pro-bono attorney Joseph Bell's suit against the U.S. Justice Department to unseal Grand Jury testimony related to the case which they had been seeking for years. It will be interesting if those unsealed records reveal sufficient information for a "Part II" to Tony's book. Fascinating!

**Nelson Rimensnyder** challenged the audience with some history trivia questions:

Q: Effort underway to rename a DC public School?

A: Wilson – **Kate Dell** provided the answer.

Q: A new name (rather than New Columbia)

proposed for D.C.? A: Washington, Douglas Commonwealth – **Bill Turner** knew the answer.

Q: In 1946 the Senators turned down a prospective

player? A: Fidel Castro – **Maggie Hobbs** provided the answer.

Q: In 1783, what two states offered up land for

D.C.? A: Maryland and Virginia – Jean Lockhart's guest **Dick West** knew the answer.

Q: The Capitol Garage stood in the 1300 block of

N.Y. Avenue until demolished. What was the capacity of the garage? A: 1,200 vehicles – Juliet Smith's guest **Stuart Anderson** provided the answer.

**The Day's Speaker:** Today's guest speaker, Stewart Stevens, talked about his book, "The White House Chandeliers: My Experiences while Working for Seven U.S. Presidents." Mr. Stevens was aided by his daughter Lynetta Stevens, who helped write the book. Unlike most AOI speakers on D.C. history, Mr. Stevens provided a personal, ground-up account of his 34 years as a vital part of the White House housekeeping staff, with responsibility for washing all the building's windows and cleaning and polishing all the chandeliers throughout its 132 rooms. Mr. Stevens' tenure spanned the period from Richard Nixon to George W. Bush. Lynetta Stevens described her father's origins in a poor neighborhood in D.C.'s Ward Seven, where poverty and racism restricted opportunities, before he joined the army and saw duty in Heidelberg, Germany. With a growing family to support, the speaker said he was happy to have the overtime generated by his White House duties, which often lasted from 6:00 AM until after midnight. Mr. Stevens regaled the audience with incidents unique to his experiences at the White House, among them the fact that each East Room's three chandelier had 7,200 pieces and required from 18-24 hours to clean and polish, using a mixture of ammonia and hot water before being polished with a chamois cloth. Mr. Stevens noted that although the White House windows went up and down, bullet-proof glass outside them was extended from the second to the first floor after a flurry of gunfire from a passing car hit the building. Mr. Stevens described an unusual incident while on the way to the next-door Treasury Building to cash a check, when he picked up an envelope in a hallway. Along

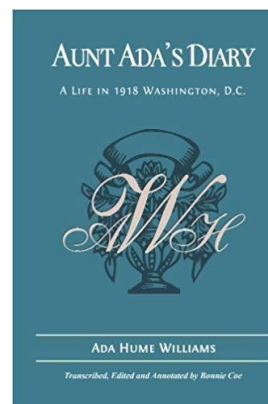
with a number of signed papers, the envelope contained a Treasury check in the amount of \$14,856,000! Turning the check in at the Treasury, Mr. Stevens said that the astounded officials praised his honesty and promised appreciation. Hoping against hope for a "finder's fee," Mr. Stevens had to settle for a \$50 check and a letter of appreciation several months later. Mr. Stevens praised the warmth of the Presidents he served and paid special tribute to Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton for their friendship.

The next AOI luncheon program will be Friday, March 15, 2019 when Rebecca Boggs Roberts will speak on her book, "Suffragists in Washington, D.C."

*Respectfully submitted by John P. Richardson, Secretary*

### ***D.C. in 1918...***

Member Doris Wiedmann recommends, "Aunt Ada's Diary" the memories of a young teacher at McKinley High School in 1918. Doris says that it's a quick read and includes transportation matters, the latest movies, friends, vacation and a love affair. Ada Coe was still teaching at McKinley in 1955 when Doris attended. The book is available on Amazon Kindle and paperback.



***Thank you!*** to everyone who has already returned their 2019 membership renewal form. As this newsletter went to press, nearly 2/3 of members had already mailed in their renewals. Please don't let your renewal form sit around and become forgotten. We don't want to lose you when we update our membership rolls in June. And, "Thank You!" to everyone who made additional donations in support of our causes.

AOI's Newsletters are printed and distributed by:



AOI's web address is: [aoidc.org](http://aoidc.org) and our email address is: [aioifdc@gmail.com](mailto:aioifdc@gmail.com). You may also follow us on Facebook at: [www.facebook.com/www.aioifdc.org](http://www.facebook.com/www.aioifdc.org) which may contain more timely events and calls-to-action than our web site.

*Address Correction Requested*

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants  
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**Officers:**

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Jim Embrey 571-436-7774

**Past President:**

A.L. Wheeler

Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

The Historical Society of Washington, DC and its Kiplinger Research Library are now closed while the Carnegie Library undergoes restoration by Apple, due for completion in spring 2019. For information about programs and exhibits, check:

<http://www.dchistory.org>

or call 202-249-3955 for further information.

**Directors:**

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Jessica Hodge 301-704-5133  
Thomas Neale 202-333-6946  
Gary Scott 202-544-4862



The Heurich House Museum is the former home of the Historical Society of Washington and served as AOI's headquarters from 1956 until 2003.