



The Association of the 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**

**Bulletin #87
June 5, 2009**

President's Message...

Remembering the past... interpreting the past...

Question: What do the following have in common? Architect A.B. Mullet, prize Brahma fowl, the C&O Canal, a stone mason's steel drill bit, Marcy & Payne's Livery Stable, a mule kick, shoot-outs on Thomas Jefferson Street, a horse-drawn streetcar accident, a stolen banjo, river pirates, a purloined rope of sausages, an outbreak of equine epizootic, a stampede of steers, a case of hydrophobia, a smallpox outbreak, three local doctors, coroner's inquests, the theft of a DC police officer's overcoat, a lady's found purse, the Union Hotel, a smuggled cigarette in a police jail cell, drinking to excess, gambling, speakeasies, prostitution, the 'Stone Jug,' the 'Blue Jug,' a black Mariah, a child saved from drowning in the C&O Canal, industrial accidents, crumbling infrastructures, a suicide at Georgetown College, domestic violence, army deserters, Francis Scott Key's mansion, Henry Foxall's estate, a young man accidentally shooting his brother to death and, most significantly the 'Crime of the Decade' in Georgetown.

Answer: All of the above were documented in the 'Georgetown' section of the *Evening Star* between Jan. 1, 1870 and Dec. 31, 1879.

Question: What do the following have in common? Scipio, NY, a file clerk, the Agriculture Department, the Metropolitan Police Department, the city's 3rd Police District, the C&O Canal, lower Georgetown, a case of 'bigamy,' a steady 'rise through the ranks,' a DC city clerk, a 'lodger,' a 'Red March on Washington,' the DC Police Boy's Club, FDR's four inaugurations, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, Glenwood Cemetery and the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of D.C.

Answer: You'll have to be present at our June luncheon to learn the answers...

Bill Brown

June's Luncheon Event:

Ernest Brown's Washington

A biographical sketch of MPDC Officer Ernest Willis Brown (1874-1966)

**Including glimpses of:
Scandals, Scoundrels & Scallywags: the Seamier Side of
Georgetown**

**Researched, Interpreted & Presented by Bill Brown
(AOI President and no relation to EWB)**

Please join us...

Friday, **June 19th**, at the Channel Inn (free Parking) 650 Water Street, SW. (Maine Avenue via Metro Rail Green to Waterfront Station/SEU, Metro Bus 70 or Downtown Circulator Bus), Social Time (cash bar) 11:45 a.m., Luncheon served at 12:30 p.m. (\$20 per person - please have checks completed and payable to AAOI@), concurrent with our Business Meeting and followed by our Feature Presentation.

Reservations are a must! Otherwise your food preference may be unavailable. RSVP to our new voice mail **202-342-1865**, no later than noon Wed., June 17, 2009.

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., 6/18, may result in you being charged.

Please be prepared to leave your name, the number in your party, your guest's names, your meal preferences (Fish, Seafood Newburg, Chicken, Beef, Veggie Plate or Fruit Plate) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or last-minute cancellation.

Future Meetings...

The AOI's 144th Year B Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

July 4, 2009 – Join AOI members and march in the annual Palisades Fourth of July Parade (10:30, Whitehaven Pkwy. at MacArthur Blvd., NW in front of DCFD Eng. Co. 29)

Sept. 18, 2009 – “They Done Killed Papa Dead!” – Author Anthony Pitch highlights his newest work on the Lincoln Assassination and Member Reminiscences (if time permits)

Oct. 16, 2009 – Historian Dr. Carroll R. Gibbs presents, “Forgotten Soldiers: The District's Black Doughboys of World War I.”

Nov. 20, 2009 – Author/writer Bob Levey presents an update of his “Bob Levey’s Washington” & Annual Election of the AOI’s Board and Officers

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, the AOI follows the closing schedule of the Arlington County Public Schools or call AOI at 202-342-1865 for last minute information.

If You Were Not At Our May 2009 Meeting...

The Association met at the Channel Inn on May 15, 2009. There were 100 members and guests in attendance, with President Bill Brown presiding.

The minutes of the April meeting were printed in the newsletter. A motion to accept was offered by Lee Rogers, seconded by Gill Hill. The motion was approved.

President Brown conducted the business of the membership committee in the absence of membership chairman John Jay Daly. John could not be present as he was recovering from open heart surgery performed only yesterday. Members sent wishes for speedy recovering by signing messages and affixing their greetings.

There are six new applicants for membership. They are: James P. Madigan III (sponsored by Jim Gaffney; Dennis Hubscher (Hollywood MD, who found us through the web site); Laurice G. Redhead (who found us through the Historical Society of Washington); Rosa C. Diggs (sponsored by Laurice Redhead); Delores L. Burton (Shreveport LA, a genealogical researcher who found us through the web site); Anne Sellin (sponsored by Kay Eckles). Several of the new out of town applications came about as a result of inquiries to Bill about relatives and his researching AOI records on their behalf. Carl Cole moved, seconded by Bob Proudley, the acceptance of the applicants for membership. The motion was approved.

President Brown introduced “First Timer” members, guests and their hosts. Bill offered announcements of local events that may be of special interest.

Historian Nelson Rimensnyder mentioned the U.S. Mint's program to issue a series of coins to honor National Park or historic sites in each state, DC and territories. The coins will be quarters. Nelson requested that members indicate their preference for the DC site selection, and provided and collected ballots for this. Nelson

also reported further on his researching of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants (Colored) Inc., formed during the period of segregation in DC, and which went out of existence in the seventies. That organization paralleled AOI in operation and objectives. Nelson reported on the joint meeting of the two groups on July 4th of 1919, held at the Union Engine House (19th and H Sts. NW). Membership in both groups was limited to males only. Nelson is continuing his research into this and will report as appropriate. Bill noted Nelson's contribution in this research, as few current AOI members were aware of AOI (Colored) Inc. A hearty round of applause was rendered for Nelson and his work.

Lee Rogers announced that the DC Fire Department has requested his help in trying to locate the gravesite for Tom, the last DC Fire Department horse, who was buried in 1937, probably at or near Blue Plains. Lee would appreciate any assistance that our members might be able to offer to document this.

Hulit Taylor presented the Treasurer's report. There are 300 members now, with 274 renewals and 26 new members. Income from membership and contributions are ahead of last year. Expenses since the April meeting includes \$500 to George Washington University for the Phil Ogilvie Award, and also the purchase of a lap top computer and projector to be used for presentations by program speakers. The computer will also provide backup for AOI files. Our investment income is \$4,000 less than at this time last year.

Candace Shireman, Curator of Blair House, gave us a superb presentation on a very special location in Washington, of which relatively few people are aware. Blair House is not open to the public. Its mission is to serve the nation as guest house for heads of state visiting the White House, which is done in very discreet and secure fashion. In this role it plays a crucial part in American foreign policy. A visit by a head of state --a president, prime minister, or reigning monarch, conveys an honor for the foreign leader and nation. Thus the Blair House staff is dedicated to ensuring the comfort and courtesy to which the guests are entitled. This is vital to the conduct of American diplomacy. The Blair House today is a complex of the original house built in 1824 and three other townhouses connected to it internally. This complex is larger than

the White House, with 119 rooms and total area of 70,000 square feet. Candace described the history of Blair House and the Blair family. Francis Preston Blair and family came to Washington at President Andrew Jackson's invitation and in 1837 moved into the house that became known as Blair House. He was the most influential member of Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet." Candace mentioned some of the distinguished heads of state who have been guests at Blair House. The list includes Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, Nikita Khrushchev, J. Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Haile Selassie, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Charles, the Shah of Iran, Emperor Akihito and the Empress of Japan, Golda Meir, Nelson Mandela. The talk which Candace presented to us was extremely informative, in regard to both the history and architecture of this site. It was delivered with much wit and humor. It was truly delightful to hear, and drew much enthusiastic comment from the audience.

Respectfully submitted,
Seymour Selig

Please visit us at our web site at <http://www.aoidc.org> or simply AGoogle@ Governor Shepherd and we'll pop-up!

Our e-mail address is: aoi_of_dc@verizon.net

AOI Board Recognizes Its President with Resolution...

“RESOLVED: That the Board of Directors of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants of Washington, D.C., meeting on May 11, 2009, wishes to express its gratitude to President Bill Brown for his testimony at the April 2009 D.C. City Council hearing about municipal support to the Historical Society of Washington; to acknowledge the complexity of the task Mr. Brown undertook in identifying a constructive solution to the issue; and to thank Mr. Brown for his dedication to strengthening and rationalizing the way that the District of Columbia deals with its own history.”

The resolution was offered by AOI Director John P. Richardson thanking President Bill Brown for his efforts concerning D.C. City Council financial support to the Historical Society of Washington.

AOI Resolution on the Occasion of the Centennial of the 1910 Building Height Act...

AOI member Joe Grano encouraged the AOI to take the lead to begin discussions on the history of and possible threats to the hundred-year-old building height limits established for the District of Columbia. Members present at the June 2009 will be asked to vote in support of the resolution:

WHEREAS the year 2010 will be the centennial of the 1910 Height Act signed by President William Howard Taft on June 1, 1910 (An

Act to Regulate the Height of Buildings in the District of Columbia); and,
WHEREAS the 1910 Height Act has guaranteed the low-profile nature of the District of Columbia for nearly 100 years; and,
WHEREAS the 1910 Height Act has made the District of Columbia unique among the major cities of the world with its distinctive skyline; and,
WHEREAS the 1910 Height Act has been called the Third Dimension of the L'Enfant Plan; and,
WHEREAS President George Washington issued the first building height regulations for the city in 1791, concerned as much about structural and fire safety as about urban design; and,
WHEREAS Thomas Jefferson hoped the new capital would emulate Paris with buildings "low & convenient, and the streets light and airy; and,
WHEREAS development pressures in the future may foster a desire to significantly modify the Act; and,
WHEREAS a better understanding of the nature and purpose of the Act may lead the Congress to resist such pressures; therefore, be it
RESOLVED that The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia calls upon affected parties and stakeholders to hold a public conference in the year 2010 to discuss the history of the 1910 Height Act, how the Act has been implemented and enforced and examine issues which may affect the future of the Act. To such a forum should be invited representatives from civic and citizens associations, academia, historic preservationists, historical societies, the business community and planning and public safety officials from the Federal and District of Columbia governments.

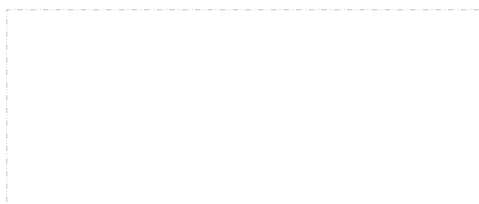
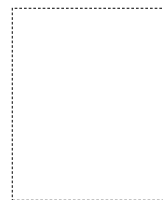
2009 Dr. Philip W. Ogilvie Award Presented...



Christopher Canfield, Director of Tourism for the state of Virginia, was this year's recipient of the Dr. Philip W. Ogilvie Award for Academic Excellence in George Washington University's Accelerated Masters of Tourism Administration program. The award was presented during a reception/dinner at the Melrose Hotel on May 14th.

Address Correction Requested

The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of D.C.
4425 Greenwich Parkway, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007-2010



Officers:

William Brown, President 202-342-1638
4425 Greenwich Parkway, NW, Wash., DC 20007
John Gill, Sr., Vice-president 202-338-5001
Seymour M. Selig, Secretary 301-292-1054
Hulit Pressley Taylor, Treasurer 202-625-0203
Nelson Rimensnyder, Historian 202-546-4668
John Breen, F.D. Liaison 301-586-8866

Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

Past Presidents:

A. L. Wheeler 202-337-0030

Directors:

Carl Cole 202-889-8813
John Jay Daly 301-951-9110
James Gaffney 202-363-6688
Jan Evans Houser 301-968-4749
John P. Richardson 703-534-3577
Sherwood Smith 202-686-4107

-- Help keep AOI alive and strong: invite a friend to join and be sure to renew your membership!
-- Free exhibits, book shop and café at the Historical Society are now open Tues. thru Sun., 10am-5pm! (Kiplinger Library, Tue-Sat)
Check HSW's calendar at: www.historydc.org



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