



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 154th Year!*

*Bulletin #159
October 2019*

“Bygone Transportation in Washington, D.C.”

By John Richardson

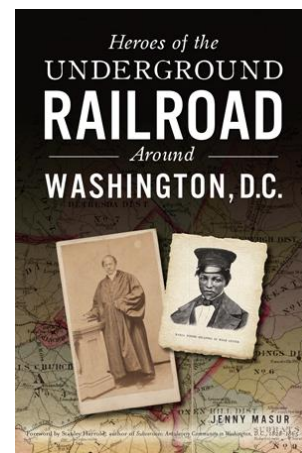
Local author and Washington history blogger **John de Ferrari** kicked off an informal reminiscence session at the September 20, 2019 AOI monthly luncheon with sketches from his 2015 book, “Capital Streetcars: Early Mass Transit in Washington, D.C.” De Ferrari is author of the blog, “Streets of Washington,” and his remarks generated a lively response from the audience. De Ferrari identified the principal periods of pre-Metro mass transit as omnibuses (most of 19th century), streetcars (1850’s on), and buses (from 1921). Omnibuses were uncomfortable wooden cars with steel wheel rims and pulled by horses. They were followed by streetcars, initially similar to omnibuses but pulled by horses along steel tracks; the cars were electrified in 1888. By the 1930’s cars were starting to replace streetcars, which were made more streamlined and appealing against the competition, but the automobile and fossil fuel lobbies generated enough political pressure to replace streetcars by 1962. De Ferrari noted that Glen Echo Amusement Park was built by a streetcar company in order to have its equipment used on weekends. Boats, primarily steamboats for Potomac River excursions, became popular toward the end of the 19th century.

Bill Brown then invited streetcar-related comments from the enthusiastic luncheon audience, many of an age to remember events from decades ago. The following are summaries of many of the offerings:

(Cont’d. page 3)

October’s Luncheon Event:

**“Heroes of The Underground Railroad Around Washington,
D.C.”
with Jenny Masur**



Please join us...

Friday, **Oct. 18**, 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., Oct. 15, 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., 10/17, 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 154th Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

Nov. 15, 2019 – Robert Headley & Pat Padua, “Motion Picture Exhibition in Washington, D.C.”; annual election of officers and directors

Jan. 1, 2020 – New Year's Day Brunch Buffet

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 Oct. 18, 2019 luncheon.]

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia (AOI) held the sixth luncheon meeting of its 154th year at the Capitol Skyline Hotel at noon Friday, September 20, 2019 with 74 members and guests present. **President Jan Evans**, having recovered from a recent fall, welcomed everyone. She thanked everyone for their cards and calls of well-wishes, encouraged everyone to attend our two remaining luncheons for 2019 and invited everyone to take a hand full of membership brochures to help recruit new members. **Vice-President Bill Brown** conducted the business meeting. He called for approval of the notes of the June meeting, which were printed in the current newsletter. With no corrections or additions upon a motion made by **George Hutchinson** and seconded by **Allen Beach**, the notes were approved and their reading waived.

New Members: There were four member applications for consideration: **Donald Clarke Havener** (via HSW); **Martha S. Lewis** (Jan Evans); **A. Gilbert Douglass** (Nelson Rimensnyder); and **Martha Jewett** (Loretta Neumann). The new members were approved upon a motion, by **Richard Marino** and seconded by **John Cady**.

Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented her report:

Membership

- We now have 319 members and 21 of those have joined this year.
- If you know of someone who would be interested in joining the AOI, please pick up some Membership brochures which we have on the display table or see me after the meeting.

Donations

- We have received about \$4,800 for our Unrestricted Fund.
- On behalf of the Board, we thank you for your donations.

Luncheon Report

- 72 Attended our June luncheon
- We always appreciate those who, at the last minute, are unable to attend the luncheon, but still pay the \$35 fee. Thank you.

Investment Account

- Our investment account continues to do well
- We recently closed our banking account and have consolidated those funds with our investment account. Our bills will be paid from our Cash funds and we will no longer be subject to annoying bank fees.

Vice-President Brown welcomed everyone on the Officers' & Directors' behalf and in addition to spouses and family members: **Vicki Crawford** had with her two guests: **Eleanor Reynolds** and **Patsy Richards**; **Gayle George** had with her **Barbara Curtis** and **Lucie Armstrong**; **Richard Marino** had **Walter Springman** with him today; and **Dick West** had with him **Beryl, Mary Agnes, Paul and Charles West**.

Brief Announcements: We were saddened to learn that former AOI President **Al (Asher L.) Wheeler** died on July 14th; he had just turned 100. Al served as AOP's President from 1995-1997. Several of us attended a memorial service for him on Sept. 14 at National Presbyterian Church where we presented his family with an AOI In Memoriam certificate. We also sent a sympathy note to his family. **Jan** and **Bill** also attended the funeral of past AOI Treasurer (and one of the three individuals who helped save the AOI from extinction) **Joseph Smith** on July 20th. Joe was 106 years old. We also learned that his long-time friend and AOI member **Anne Nairn** died in April... we were unaware of that.

Nelson Rimensnyder challenged the audience with a number of historic questions and provided 'prizes' consisting of historic documents, pamphlets and memorabilia from his collections and archives. Nelson's three questions related to the early first ladies and a President who had a penchant for nature walks. The correct answers and those who won are available on the luncheon audio on AOP's web site.

The Day's Speaker: [see cover story] Member and author **John DeFerrari** presented some highlights of his book, "Capital Streetcars" and helped inspire some memories of those present today to reminisce and pass the microphone to share their stories.

The program notes are recorded by John P. Richardson, Secretary and Vice-President Bill Brown.

[AOI's programs may be heard at <http://www.aoidc.org/aoi-luncheon-audio.html>]

"Bygone Transportation" (Continued from page 1)

- **Robert Barbuto:** Grew up in Southeast D.C. and attended Gonzaga H.S., relied on streetcars to get around.
- **Francine Berkowitz:** Grew up in Northeast and remembers taking the streetcar to Griffith Stadium for July 4 festivities. Bus tickets cost three cents in those days.
- **Nancy Harris:** Grew up in Northeast but attended Paul Junior H.S., relying on the streetcar.
- **Richard Dreschler:** Remembers the Glen Echo trolley and an incident when a friend leaned out the window and pulled a cord that disconnected the power and brought the car to a stop. An indulgent conductor reconnected the cord without retribution.
- **Maggie Hobbs:** For five dollars her brother purchased a heavy brass streetcar control mechanism and crank that survived several house moves since no one could figure out what to do with it.
- **Helena Wright:** While head of the Historical Society of Washington (HSW) Collections Committee recalled HSW possessing such a streetcar controller that was eventually given to the National Capital Trolley Museum.
- **Barbara Curtis:** Remembered a stunning view of the U.S. Capitol building as her streetcar came along East Capitol Street.
- **Lucie Savoy Armstrong:** remembered often stopping for a delicious orange drink and then re-boarding the streetcar; also the "gorgeous" smell from the Wonder Bread bakery. Also catching foul balls from a roof adjacent to Griffith Stadium.
- **Earl Williams:** Living in Eckington as a boy, watched with his father when the streetcar shifted from the below-ground power supply (D.C.) to above-ground when it crossed the line into P.G. County, since the two jurisdictions had different statutes

governing location of power lines.

- **Dick West:** Remembered riding the Cabin John trolley from the Palisades and having to signal his stop after dark by the sound of the streetcar as it crossed a bridge.
- **Nelson Rimensnyder:** Described researching a history of the House D.C. Committee and finding draft bills (never passed) called "Jim Crow Bills" that would have added separate cars for black passengers onto streetcars.
- **John De Ferrari** added that from World War II on, discrimination was prohibited in D.C. streetcars.
- **Tom Buckingham:** A lifelong trolley enthusiast described once driving a Pontiac sedan through the Dupont Circle trolley tunnel ahead of a trolley in order for three men to film it from the car trunk.
- **Bill Rice:** As a District Department of Transportation (DDOT) official remembered replacement of the old Taft Bridge lion figures and seeing them stored under the Third Street tunnel.
- **Nancy Harris:** Recounted that the owners of Glen Echo closed the amusement park and shut down the trolley in order to avoid having to comply with an integration order.

Bill Brown brought the session to a close, followed by presentation of the AOI certificate of appreciation by AOI President Jan Evans to John de Ferrari, who Bill announced had copies of his streetcar book for sale. Bill also mentioned that the next AOI luncheon will be on Friday, October 18, when Jenny Masur, a longtime National Park Service staffer, will discuss the Washington area portion of the Underground Railroad.



AOI's Newsletters are printed and distributed by:



AOI's web address is: aoidc.org and our email address is: aioifdc@gmail.com

Please check out our Home Page and listen to the audio of 2016-2019 luncheon talks by our esteemed guests at www.aoidc.org. And, follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/www.aioifdc.org which may contain more timely events and calls-to-action than our web site

Address Correction Requested

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Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

This Historical Society of Washington, D.C., and Washington History Center are now open Tues. thru Sat. 10am-5pm at the Carnegie Library.



Its Kiplinger Researcher Library is open by appointment, Tues.-Fri., 10-4. Visit dchistory.org for exhibit hours or to make an appointment to conduct research.

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