



# 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 150<sup>th</sup> Year!*

*Bulletin #126  
June 2015*

## *President's Message...*

Since 2010 the AOI has sought to call attention to the centennial of the First World War. At the urging of Lee Rogers, we celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the World War I 16<sup>th</sup> Street Tree Memorial on Memorial Day 2010. Inspired by Joe Grano, we turned our attention to the plight of the District of Columbia War Memorial... its deteriorating condition, efforts to re-designate it a 'national' memorial and, instead, turn attention to the existing Pershing Memorial as an existing site worthy of designation as the 'national' World War I memorial in the District of Columbia. Our efforts continue as we support the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission's efforts to rehabilitate and rededicate the Pershing Memorial and encourage programs to promote the centennial of the Great War.

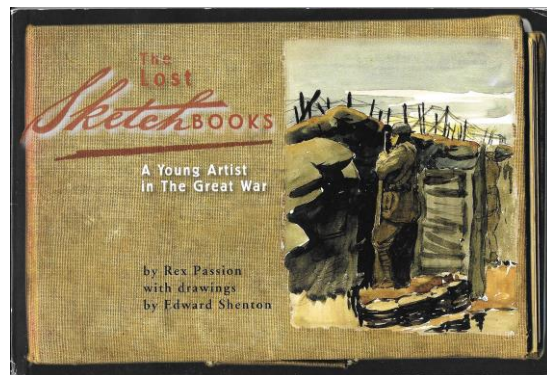


During the ensuing years, we have continued to explore the lives of the 499 DC men and women memorialized at both DC memorials. Their names were always portrayed alphabetically without regard to race, gender, rank or branch of service; but, there was no effort to try to further identify these heroes.

Working with several sources ("Soldiers of the Great War," newspaper accounts, etc.), we  
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## June's Luncheon Event:

**Rex Passion: "The Lost Sketchbooks: A Young Artist in the Great War"**



## *Please join us...*

Friday, **June 19**, 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., June 16, 2015 – EARLIER RSVP TIME!!

**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, 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 (***Panko Crusted Baked Cod with lemon butter 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 150<sup>th</sup> Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

Sept. 18, 2015 – Rohulamin Quander: "The Quander Family: Since the 1670s, an Enduring African American Legacy."

Oct. 16, 2015 – Oak Hill Cemetery with Superintendent Dave Jackson

Nov. 20, 2015 – Carole Ottesen: "The Smithsonian Gardens"

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.



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

[Draft minutes of our last meeting for approval at the June 19, 2015 luncheon.]

The Association of Oldest Inhabitants (AOI) held the fourth meeting of its 150<sup>th</sup> year at the Capitol Skyline Hotel on May 15, 2015, with 67 in attendance.

**Meeting Minutes:** The draft notes of the April 17 meeting were approved as distributed in the May newsletter.

### Treasurer's Report:

#### Non-Routine Expenses Since April Luncheon

- \$500 grant to the Military Road School Preservation Trust

#### Luncheon Report

- 78 Attended our April luncheon.
- AOI's cost for the luncheon was \$190.51 (\$1.08 per meal plus the bartender fee).

#### Investment Account

- Our investment account continues to do well.

#### Membership:

- We now have 297 paid-up members, including just-elected **Naomi Glass** (Barbara Bates).
- Those who have not yet renewed will receive a final reminder notice in the June Newsletter.

**Sesquicentennial Resolution:** Bill Brown presented a resolution concerning grants to be made at the 150<sup>th</sup> gala, which requires membership approval since it exceeds the \$5000 board discretionary limit. Bill noted that the text of the resolution was contained in the May newsletter. Upon motion made, seconded, and approved, it was RESOLVED: That membership approves the awards to be made at the gala celebration.

### Announcements:

- Bill Brown attended graduation ceremonies of the GWU Business School May 14 at which the Phil Ogilvie Award was presented to the top students in the Masters of Tourism program.
- Woodlawn Cemetery on Benning Road will hold a cleanup campaign May 16<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
- Casa Italiana has commissioned a portrait of Constantino Brumidi as part of a panel of distinguished Italian-Americans. It will be dedicated on Sat., June 20<sup>th</sup> at 6pm to the late **Joe Grano**, who championed the cause of Brumidi before the Congress.
- The Friends of the D.C. Archives will hold an informational meeting May 21 at MLK Library to update the public on where things stand concerning plans to establish a professional home for the District's historical records.

**Featured Speaker: Jerry McCoy**, Librarian and Archivist of the Peabody Room at the Georgetown Branch public library, describing the near-death and amazing resurrection of the Peabody Room after the fire of April 30, 2007.

McCoy, a well-known Washington librarian and specialist in collecting local historic postcards, gave a lively talk that included his own participation in salvaging the contents of the historic Peabody Room after the fire. The fire was caused by improper use of a heat gun by a worker on the renovation of the Georgetown Branch library (where the Peabody Room occupied the top floor). Incredibly, more than 90% of the room's holdings were preserved and will eventually be restored,

thanks to prompt and efficient efforts by volunteers and specialists.

McCoy gave a brief history of the Peabody Room, made possible by a grant from George Peabody (1795-1869), a Massachusetts transplant who opened a dry goods store in Washington before moving to Baltimore, where he also endowed the Peabody Institute of Music and other cultural institutions. He later moved permanently to London, where his will established a trust for educational organizations. The Georgetown library was built in 1935; McCoy became the first long-term professional librarian to direct the Peabody Room. McCoy noted that all the damage to the room's contents was from water used to put out the fire. The children's room, directly across from the Peabody Room, was completely destroyed. McCoy, who was at the Martin Luther King Library when he learned of the fire, said that he had rehearsed what he would do in the event of a fire if he were on duty: he would rescue the 1822 portrait of former slave entrepreneur Yarrow Mamout and a bound copy of "The Maryland Gazette" from 1776. The newspaper volume escaped damage, and the portrait, which received water damage, was successfully restored.

McCoy gave great credit to the specialists who quickly placed the water-soaked objects in a freezer to prevent further damage, following which they were taken to Texas to undergo a vacuum drying process. A total of 10 pallets of materials were returned to Washington in November 2007 and reprocessed over the next three years. All materials have been returned to Peabody, but some materials still await conservation funding. McCoy paid tribute to MLK Special Collections expert Mark Greek, who worked with him in the salvage process right after the fire.

The Peabody Room was officially reopened in a ceremony October 18, 2010. Restoration of the library building cost \$16 million, paid by the District of Columbia. However, all funds for conservation treatment of damaged materials had to be privately raised by the DC Public Library Foundation. McCoy provided a discouraging footnote to the fire story, recounting a flood on February 3, 2015 caused by bursting of a ceiling sprinkler because of an uninsulated water pipe in the roof. The 2" of water on the floor of the Peabody Room were quickly drained, however, with far less damage than feared.

Respectfully Submitted, *John P. Richardson*, Secretary

### ***President's Message (Cont'd.)...***

began compiling the information into a spreadsheet that we could maintain and up-date as more information became available. Initially, we only recorded the names of the 499 and their rank if it was known. We also attempted to reconcile the names with the original location of their memorial marker and tree along the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Tree Memorial, again using maps and newspaper accounts. We published our compilation on AOI's web site and invited visitors to contribute additional information or ask questions, without much success.

Then, in the spring of 2015, AOI member Barbara Bates began to conduct some research of her own. Barbara was planning a visit to the military cemeteries in France and Great Britain and her research revealed that 64 of DC's fallen were interred or listed as missing in these cemeteries. She also found that 15 of those 64 were African Americans. This information previously had not been accessible or certainly not presented along with other facts known about the District's World War I veterans. While Barbara hopes that her visits to these overseas cemeteries and memorials will provide even more heretofore unrevealed information, she has also begun to delve into the stories behind the 9 women included on the memorials who mostly were victims of the 1918 flu epidemic and had served as clerks for the US Naval Reserve Force.

Barbara's research has helped to answer some of these questions and her work continues to enhance our compilation.

*Bill Brown, President*

Our e-mail address is: [aoiofdc@gmail.com](mailto:aoiofdc@gmail.com)

Our web site is <http://www.aoidc.org> or simply "Google" 'Governor Shepherd' and we'll pop-up!

Our newsletters are produced by:



*Address Correction Requested*

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A. L. Wheeler 202-337-0030

Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

**Weekend Research Hours at the Historical Society -**

- Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 10am to 2pm at the Kiplinger  
Research Library of the Historical Society's Carnegie  
Building. To make an appointment, contact them at:  
[library@dchistory.org](mailto:library@dchistory.org)

**SAVE THE DATE!** Saturday, December 5, 2015 –  
AOI's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala at Capitol Skyline. Noon-  
3pm, reception, entertainment, luncheon, awards and  
more. **Mark your calendars now!** Invitations will be  
mailed after Labor Day.

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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.**