



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 150th Year!*

*Bulletin #125
May 2015*

President's Message...

It was April 30, 2007...just over 8 years ago. I vividly recall waiting for a Metro Bus when my son called saying the Georgetown Branch Library was on fire. I looked up from Wisconsin & Q and could see the thick, black smoke rising above the trees.

I sprinted up the hill to Reservoir Road and worked my way through the crowds that had gathered, finding multiple pieces of fire apparatus, the media trucks and the nearly inconsolable Special Collections Librarian Jerry McCoy. It was, indeed, a dark day in the life of the historic Peabody Room. Renovations of the 1930s-era structure were underway when a workman's torch started the fire. It quickly raced through the top floor of the building containing the Peabody Collection.

The heroic efforts of the DC Fire & EMS firefighters saved most of the irreplaceable artifacts. Second District Detectives stood by guarding the pieces of history as they were placed on the sidewalk awaiting the arrival of restoration specialists from the Smithsonian.



The restored Georgetown Branch Library and the new Peabody Collection reopened in October 2010.

Bill Brown, President

May's Luncheon Event:

Jerry McCoy: "Peabody Room/Rebirth of a Special Collection: Georgetown Neighborhood Library Fire"



Please join us...

Friday, **May 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., May 12, 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., 5/14, 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 (***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 150th Year -- Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

June 19, 2015 – Rex Passion, “The Lost Sketchbooks: A Young Artist in the Great War”

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

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 May 15, 2015 luncheon.]

AOI held the third meeting of its 150th year at the Capitol Skyline Hotel on April 17, 2015, with 78 attendees.

Meeting Minutes: The draft minutes of the March 20 meeting were approved as distributed in the April newsletter. Moved by **Kay Eckles**, seconded by **Carl Cole**.

Membership: Two new members were accepted: **Nancy & Dan Mattausch**. Moved by **Cindy Janke**, seconded by **Vince Scalco**. AOI has 290 current members.

Treasurer's Report: **Cindy Janke** provided the Treasurer's Report.

- AOI unrestricted funds now total ca. \$1900.
- AOI has given GWU a check for \$750 for the Phil Ogilvie Award in the M.A. Tourism Studies program.
- There were 68 attendees at the March luncheon, at a net cost to AOI of ca. \$200.
- Interest and dividends from the investment account total ca. \$2400.

Fire Apparatus Resolution: **Bill Brown** said that the AOI Bylaws require the membership to approve board expenditures above \$5,000, which includes a decision to donate AOI's historic fire apparatus, including four vehicles and two large bells to the Friendship Fire Association Museum. Upon motion made by **Barbara Ioanes**, seconded by **Patricia Clark**, the resolution was approved.

Brief Announcements:

AOI member **Barbara Bates** has been doing research on the 499 DC residents who died while serving in World War I and will visit France and England this summer to study Battle Monuments Commission cemeteries. Barbara has found the names of 63 of the 499 war dead listed as either interred or missing in the overseas cemeteries. In addition, she has discovered that 15 of the 63 were African Americans who until now had not been fully documented, as their names are

listed alphabetically on the memorial without regard to race, gender or rank. Barbara is also researching the nine women whose names appear on the DC Memorial. Barbara's updates are continuously added to AOI's website. Barbara Bates is performing an important role in helping interpret and preserve the history of the DC War Memorial.

- **Woodley Park Fire Call Boxes:** Woodley Park residents have launched a drive to restore old fire call boxes in their neighborhood, much as **Joe Grano** and others did downtown. **Barbara Ioanes** is spearheading this effort.

Information and Trivia (Nelson Rimensnyder):

- Nelson reported on an April 15 (Tax Day) protest on the Capitol grounds against taxation of D.C. residents without representation. Rep. Louie Gohmert (R-Tex.) has introduced a bill in the Congress to exempt D.C. residents from taxes unless/until they gain voting rights.
- **Trivia Question:** Last month, Nelson asked, “Why the Evening Star did not publish on Dec. 7, 1865 –the day of AOI's organization meeting? With a month to ponder it, Nelson answered: Because President Andrew Johnson had declared a national day of prayer and mourning for the Civil War dead and urged institutions (e.g., newspapers) to support it.
- Nelson's next trivia question was a three-parter: Q: What was the name of the policeman assigned to protect President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater April 14, 1865? Q: What charges were made against the officer? Q: Why were the charges dropped? Member **Craig Howell** knew the answers to be: John Parker, Dereliction of Duty and the records were inexplicably lost.
- **Jim Embrey** reported that the vandalism reported to the D.C. fire dog statue has been repaired.
- **Bill Brown** took note of a postcard advertisement on the tables for the Friends of the D.C. Archives, who have not yet received tax-exempt status but are gearing up.
- **Washingtoniana Museum:** It was reported that GWU's Washingtoniana Museum, featuring Albert Small's personal collection, is excellent and is open for visitors.

Featured Speaker: The History of the Navy Yard with **Rear Admiral Markham Rich**, the 88th Commandant of Joint Naval District Washington and Deputy Commander of Joint Force Headquarters/National Capital Region. His 30-year career as a naval flight officer includes more than 3,600 flight hours, 900 carrier-assisted landings, and operational assignments as a flight instructor, Executive Officer, and Commanding Officer. Ashore, Admiral Rich's assignments have included U.S. Space Command, Chief of Naval Operations Staff, and Commander, Navy Region Northwest. Adm. Rich holds a B.S. in Industrial and Systems Engineering from the University of Florida and an M.S. in Systems Technology/Space Systems Operations from the Naval Postgraduate School. Additionally, he was a 2004-2005 Secretary of Defense Corporate Fellow, assigned to Honeywell International.

The speaker's fact-filled talk, supplemented with slides, began with the reminder that the yard is the oldest U.S. Navy shore installation and was first a ship-building facility, despite the fact that the Eastern Branch of the Potomac River (aka Anacostia River) has a maximum depth of 30 feet and is unsuited for deep-draft vessels. Many historic navy ships, including the USS Constitution and its sister ship, the USS Constellation, were serviced at the yard. The yard's most dramatic chapter came during the War of 1812, when Commodore Thomas Tingey, yard superintendent for over 20 years, burned the yard and the ships in it in order to protect against their being captured and used by the invading British forces.

Rear Admiral John Dahlgren, a noted American gun designer, established the yard's gun research and production facility, where the 14" navy rail gun and the 16" battleship gun were designed. A disastrous event occurred during a gun test firing when the gun exploded and killed the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Navy and almost killed President John Tyler. At the outset of the Civil War, superintendent Commodore Buchanan, a confederate sympathizer, defected to the South with a number of like-minded workers. Dahlgren replaced him and served honorably in that post. President Lincoln visited the yard the afternoon of the day he died. In recent times the yard has functioned as the headquarters for a number of navy and defense-related activities, including overseeing the Defense Intelligence University (Bolling AF Base), Patuxent River naval air base, and the former Bethesda Medical Center, now part of the Armed Forces University. The yard also serves as a ceremonial gateway to honor visiting dignitaries. Admiral Rich told the audience that the destroyer DS Barry, a long-time fixture at the yard, is to be removed and scrapped due to deterioration. No decision has been made whether to replace it with another ship suitable for visits, despite public interest. Admiral Rich noted that the Frederick Douglass Bridge, immediately downstream from the yard, will receive a new fixed span in a few years that will severely limit the size of ships able to visit the yard.

Next Meeting: The next AOI luncheon will take place Friday, May 15, when library archivist and historian Jerry McCoy will recount the disastrous fire at the Peabody Room of the Georgetown Public Library and its recovery. Respectfully Submitted, *John P. Richardson*, Secretary

AOI Membership Approval Required...

Having been provided sufficient notice, the members present at the May 15, 2015 luncheon meeting will be asked to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS: The Association of Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia was founded in December 1865 as an organization dedicated to preserving the memories and history of the District of Columbia; and,

WHEREAS: During its 150 year history the organization has supported programs and initiatives to preserve the city's design, such as: The L'Enfant, McMillan and The Capital Framework Plan; and,

WHEREAS: The organization has strived to protect the icons that bring to mind our capital city, such as: The Washington Monument and AOI's Memorial Stone, the award-winning District of Columbia Flag, the historic L'Enfant street plan, the District of Columbia War Memorials, the Heights of Buildings Act and returning the Shepherd Statue, among the most notable; and,

WHEREAS: Though not considered a fund-raising organization, over the years the AOI has used its well-managed financial resources to: support capital improvements of the historic Heurich House while it served as the headquarters for both the Historical Society of Washington and the AOI; support historic conferences and lectures; support the academic programs of the George Washington University's Master of Tourism Administration program; support the programs, exhibits and operations of the Kiplinger Research Library of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C.; support initiatives which tell the stories of and the effects of the Civil War on Washington, D.C. to include the Military Road School Preservation Trust, the USCT Cadet Program and efforts to preserve and promote the Circle Forts Parks; and,

WHEREAS: The Officers and Board of Directors of the AOI of DC believe that the membership should support our heritage partners by paying forward our financial support to these organizations in concert with the AOI's Sesquicentennial; and,

WHEREAS: The By-laws of the AOI of DC requires the approval of the membership for expenditures and disbursements in excess of \$5,000 (Section VI "Board of Directors", AOI By-laws, Revised Sept. 21, 2007);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The membership of the Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia approves the recommendations of its Officers and Board of Directors to make reasonable disbursements in the form of Sesquicentennial Grants to specific, heritage partners (some restricted in nature) at its 150th Gala Celebration on December 5, 2015.

Our e-mail address is: aoiofdc@gmail.com

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

Address Correction Requested

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of the District of Columbia
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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, May 16th, 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

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday, December 5, 2015 –
AOI's 150th Anniversary Gala. Mid-day event, reception,
entertainment, luncheon, awards and more. **Mark your
calendars now!**

Directors:

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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.**