



Historical Society of the District of Columbia Circuit

Newsletter # 14 January 2013



Alan Rosenthal

Fascinating Tales from a Government Lawyer

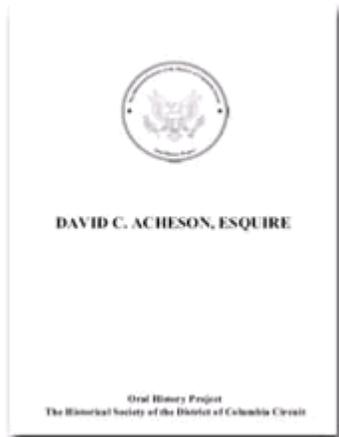
To argue in the Supreme Court -- as he did nine times -- government appellate lawyer Alan Rosenthal paid \$8 out of his own pocket to rent a morning coat after the General Accounting Office ruled he couldn't be reimbursed for it. It was one of the few times he gave ground. On other occasions he rebuffed interference from the White House counsel's office and from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover -- and, when President Eisenhower returned his draft brief in *Brown v. Board of Education* with handwritten notations watering down the proposed remedy, Rosenthal ignored the President's suggestions. The many stories of Rosenthal's colorful 20-year career at the Justice Department and nearly 40 years at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission are recounted in an oral history now available on the Historical Society's website (www.dcchs.org). Read the full oral history, which was conducted by long-time Justice Department attorney and Historical Society Board member, Judith Feigin.



Taken From Our Historian's Corner, a new addition to the Society's Website

In 1843 when the only surviving heir of Georgetown's most prominent free black man, tried to collect on money he had been owed for 20 years, she faced two obstacles in the Circuit Court. First, was the claim barred by laches? Second and more importantly, could she use the D.C. courts at all? At that time, not even free blacks could testify in actions at law where any white person was concerned. Washington attorney James H. Johnston tells what happened to Nancy Hillman in an engrossing story posted in the Historical Society's new "Historian's Corner." Read it on our website at www.dcchs.org

(James H. Johnston, *From Slave Ship to Harvard, Yarrow Mamout and the History of An African American Family*. Fordham University Press, 2012)



Become an Interviewer - Take an Oral History for the Society

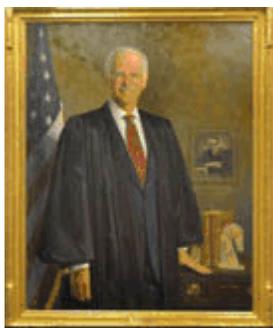
The Society is training a group of lawyers each of whom will take an oral history of one of the judges serving on the D.C. Circuit Courts or of an attorney who has been actively involved with our federal courts. In addition to learning the best techniques to use in taking an oral history, attendees will witness a mock interview of Judge David S. Tatel conducted by Society President Steve Pollak. The two-hour training session will be held on Wednesday, January 16, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Contact Linda Ferren at lindaferr6@aol.com if you would like to participate.



On display in the Courthouse: Portrait of Judge Richard Henry Alvey

Who was Judge Alvey? An ex-con who came to head the Circuit Court of Appeals in D.C? Yes, it's true (with an asterisk). Richard Henry Alvey was a Maryland lawyer, who, prior to the Civil War, authored the "Alvey Resolution" advocating states' rights and Southern secession. When the war broke out, he was arrested by Union soldiers and kept in prison for six months. After the war, he went on to serve as a judge in Maryland, including 10 years as Chief Justice. In 1893 President Grover Cleveland named him Chief Justice (as the Chief Judge was called until 1948) of the newly established federal circuit court. Alvey is the subject of the latest Historical Society exhibit, now on display on the ground floor of the E. Barrett Prettyman U.S. Courthouse.

Judge Alvey



New Judicial Portraits

The portraits of Judges Douglas H. Ginsburg and A. Raymond Randolph were recently donated to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. The Historical Society's on-line portrait exhibition now includes photos of these portraits. (www.dcchs.org - Click on Portraits of U.S. Appeals Court Judges)

Portrait of Judge
Douglas H. Ginsburg