



# *The Historian*

*The Newsletter of The Boynton Beach Historical Society*

Voncile Smith, President

Volume 2006, No. 4, April, 2006

Voncile Smith, Editor

## UPDATES ON HISTORIC SCHOOLHOUSES TOPIC FOR APRIL MEETING

**Brian Edwards**, President of the Boynton Beach **Cultural Center, Inc.**, and **Arleen Dennison**, Director of the **Schoolhouse Children's Museum**, will present the program for the April meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The Cultural Center is the governing body for the Museum and is responsible for funding and personnel decisions related to the Museum's operation. The Historical Society was a strong proponent for the establishment of the Cultural Center when it was formed, and the President of the Historical Society sits as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors. Both Brian and Arleen are members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

Two years ago the City Commission turned the historic old high school over to the **Community Redevelopment Agency [CRA]** for control and determination of its use. Two weeks ago there was a symposium held at the Library to provide for public input on what the CRA should do. Participants saw sketches of possible modifications and a slide show of the current condition of the building and how other communities have handled refurbishment of historic buildings in their areas. Those attending also completed a questionnaire which addressed several possibilities. Among these were private development for business purposes, office space for the current City government, development as a cultural center, total demolition, partial demolition (gymnasium), and combined private and public usage. The Cultural Center on behalf of the Children's Museum had submitted a proposal months ago asking for all or part of the building to expand the Museum and provide for badly needed storage. Arleen and Brian will address what they feel needs to be done and the current situation as they perceive it.

The CRA's meeting scheduled in the City Commission chambers for April 11, 2006 at 6:00 p.m. [the day after our meeting] will address the findings of the symposium. We urge our members to attend that meeting and support the importance of preservation.

<b>WHAT:</b>	Brian Edwards and Arleen Dennison, Discussion	<b>WHERE:</b>	Schoolhouse Children's Museum
<b>TOPIC:</b>	What Lies Ahead? For the Museum? For the Old High School?	<b>DATE:</b>	Monday, April 10, 2006
		<b>TIME:</b>	6:30 P.M.

Please note the change in location for the meeting to the Schoolhouse Children's Museum.

All meetings of the Boynton Beach Historical Society are open and FREE to the Public.

## NEW OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, TRUSTEES

Congratulations to three new faces among the officers for the Society for 2006-07. At the March meeting, which was our annual membership meeting, the following three new officers were elected: Randall Gill as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, in charge of Programs; Bev Cormany, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Membership; and Linda Brown, Corresponding Secretary.

The following officers were re-elected: Voncile Smith, President; Betty Thomas, Secretary; Claire Weems, Treasurer. Directors and Trustees re-elected to serve three year terms 2006-2009 were Nain Weems Weaver and Helen Adams Meisenheimer, Directors; and Virginia Farace and Dan Rousseau, Trustees.

### BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2006-07

#### OFFICERS

President	Voncile Smith
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Randall Gill
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Bev Cormany
Recording Secretary	Betty Thomas
Corresponding Secretary	Linda Brown
Treasurer	Claire Weems

#### DIRECTORS

2007	Gloria Turner
2007	Curtis Weaver
2008	Lucile Dickinson
2008	Fain Weems
2009	Helen Meisenheimer
2009	Nain Weaver

#### TRUSTEES

2007	Janet DeVries
2007	Marion Weems
2008	Harvey Oyer, Jr
2008	Stanley Weaver
2009	Virginia Farace
2009	Dan Rousseau

Currently the Historical Society has neither a telephone nor a website. Inquiries may be directed to the Historical Society President Voncile Smith at 561-734-5653 or [smithvm@bellsouth.net](mailto:smithvm@bellsouth.net)

### BYLAWS AMENDMENTS PASSED

The proposed Amendments to the Society's bylaws, Articles II and IV, were approved at the March meeting. The effect is to require a minimum of six meetings each year, dates to be determined by the Board of Directors, and to set the Annual Meeting and Elections in April. If any member wishes to receive a copy of the bylaws, as amended, please contact Voncile at [smithvm@bellsouth.net](mailto:smithvm@bellsouth.net) or 561-734-5653.

## WHOM CAN YOU RECOGNIZE?



First Grade, 1939, at Boynton Schoolhouse

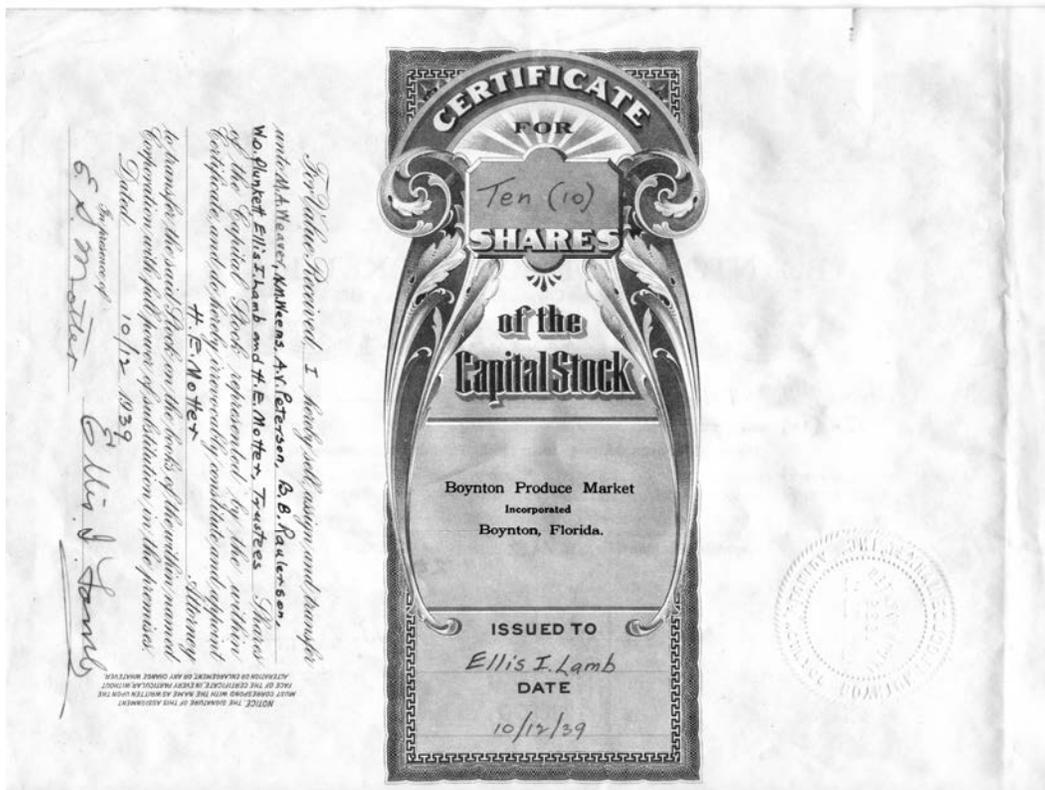
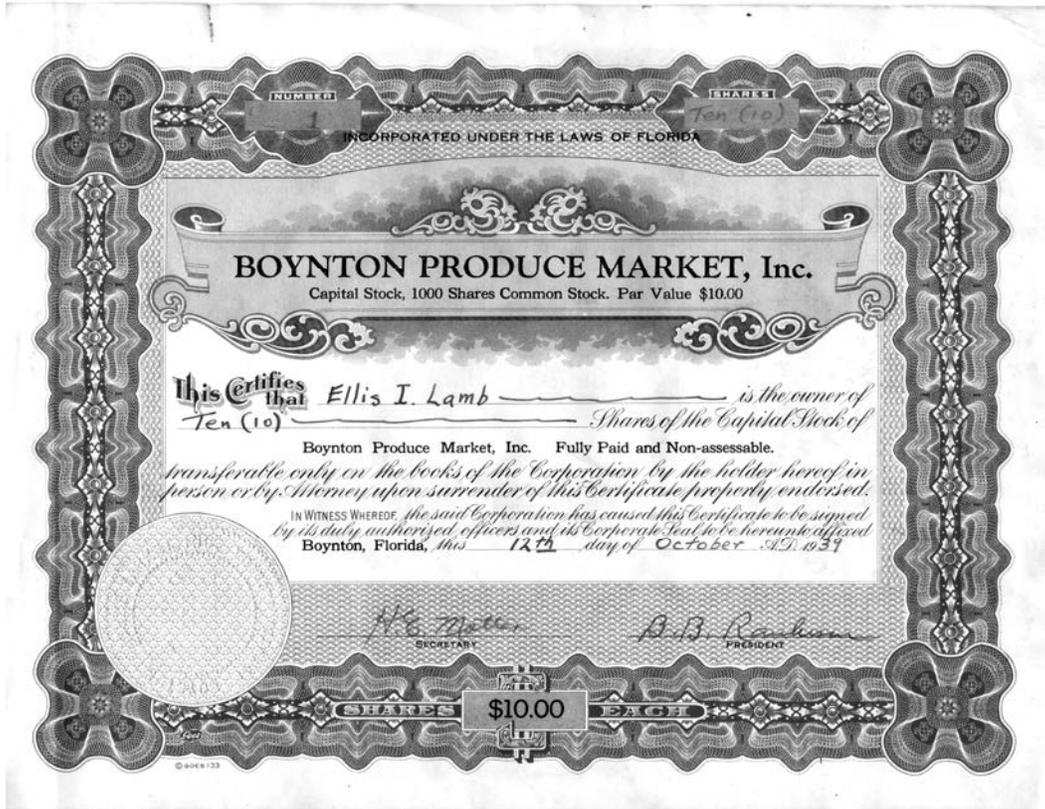
Anne Weems Michael, who is a student in this picture, kindly sent this to *The Historian* thinking some of you may be helpful in identifying the children who entered first grade that year. If you can identify some, drop a note to the Editor and we will credit you with the discovery.

## CITY HALL WAS ONCE ON FEDERAL HIGHWAY



In the 1940s Boynton City Hall and the one fire station were located on North Federal Highway where Bicentennial Park is now. The old 1920s water tower is also shown. If you heard our speaker at the February meeting of the Historical Society, you will note that the City Hall building had a number of Art Deco features.

**THE BOYNTON PRODUCE MARKET**  
(aka as the Boynton Farmer's Market)



Scanned and reduced copies of one of the stock certificates issued to establish the Boynton Produce Market in 1939. Much of South Florida was heavily dependent on agriculture until after World War II, and the major source of income, even exceeding that of tourism, was farming. The Boynton Produce Market was on the east side of Federal Highway just north of Boynton Beach Boulevard but south of where St. Marks Catholic Church is now located. Information about the Market is continued on page 4.

(The Boynton Produce Market, continued—)

Boynton, Florida  
November 24, 1939

278 1/2

Received from H. E. Motter, Agent and Transfer Officer for M. A. Weaver, N. M. Weems, A. V. Peterson, B. B. Raulerson, W. O. Plunkett, Ellis I. Lamb and H. E. Motter, Trustees, the following Stock Certificates in Boynton Produce Market, Inc., assigned to the aforementioned Trustees, under agreement of October 12, 1939, by the original purchasers indicated as follows:

<u>Cert.No.</u>	<u>No. Shares</u>	<u>Original Purchaser</u>
1	10	Ellis I. Lamb ✓
2	10	J. A. Lamb ✓
3	10	B. B. Raulerson ✓
4	2 1/2	H. E. Motter ✓
5	1	J. C. Keen ✓
7	10	S. E. O'Neal ✓
8	5	C. A. Lamb ✓
10	10	M. A. Weaver ✓
11	10	N. M. Weems ✓
12	5	Sundy Feed & Fertilizer Co. ✓
14	5	Geo. O. Butler ✓
15	1	F. A. Blitch ✓
16	5	J. D. Harless ✓
18	5	Charles Senior, Manager, F.P.&L.Co. ✓
19	10	Paul Mercer ✓
20	5	Stetson O. Sproul ✓
21	5	S. G. "Chic" Cosby ✓
22	5	Raymond Aycoth ✓
23	5	K. W. Parks ✓
27	20	The Kilgore Seed Co. ✓
29	20	Charles A. Austin ✓
30	5	Roy Harvel ✓
32	5	C. B. Savage ✓
34	5	James M. Owens, Jr. ✓
38	30	Hugh Dillman ✓
39	15	Newman T. Miller ✓
40	5	L. R. Baker ✓
41	10	Fred G. Benson ✓
42	10	Charles T. Peters ✓
44	10	W. O. Plunkett ✓
45	3	W. G. Mathes ✓
46	1	F. N. Wiltsie ✓
47	1	F. M. Richardson ✓
48	1	Lee Hughes ✓
49	1	Charles Fox ✓
50	3	R. J. Blank ✓
51	10	Coastal Realty Service, Inc. ✓
52	1	A. V. Peterson ✓
57	2 1/2	Geo. P. Crews ✓

TOWN OF BOYNTON

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Registrar

The Produce Market building was a covered wooden platform with its floor level about the height of a truck body. Crates or hampers of produce packed on the farms were unloaded then transferred to trucks to travel to northern markets. Some were trucked to Pompano which had the largest market in the world at that time. Some was taken to the Seaboard Railroad and some to the Fort Pierce Farmers' Market. Roy Roush was in charge of loading freight cars at the Seaboard Railroad; and he reported that between January 1 and May 1, 1944, 370 carloads were shipped from Boynton. Green beans, egg plant, and peppers were the major crops with smaller amounts of lima beans and squash. By the late 1940s there was only one broker at the Boynton Market, and by then many farmers were going directly to Fort Pierce or Pompano where more brokers meant more competitive prices. Late in the 1940s the Boynton building was moved to a spot that is now I-95 right of way north of Boynton. It appears to have disappeared before the highway was constructed.

## 2006 MEMBERS

### [Those who joined March 1<sup>st</sup> to March 20]

The following are the names your editor had received for paid members between March 1 and March 20. If you paid after March 20, and do not see your name, it will be published in the May newsletter.] Members whose names were submitted before March 1, 2006 were printed in the March newsletter.

#### **Individual Membership:**

Lorraine Keatts Gouge  
JoAnn Hackle  
Donna W. Harmening  
Judy G. Keatts  
Sandra McGregor  
Anne Maury Miller  
Margaret H. Rousseau  
Linda Stabile [paid earlier, but listed in wrong column in March]  
Marion Alice Weaver Wester

#### **Family Membership:**

Kenneth A. and Helen C. Lyman  
Joseph and Kathleen Massey  
Bob and Jayne Rousseau

#### **Patron Membership:**

Betty Perry and William H. Duffey  
Harvey E. Oyer. III  
Dorian Beck Trauger  
C. Stanley and Erna Weaver  
N. Marion and Cecile Weems  
Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

Thank you for your support! A reminder that our fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31, so if you plan to join us and support historical preservation in Boynton Beach, please let us hear from you soon.

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## BOYNTON PIONEERS AND INSECTS

[The February and March issues of *The Historian* included excerpts from a brief history of Boynton that "Freda" Voss Oyer wrote in 1969. "Freda" was born on Hypoluxo Island in 1896. We continue that history with another excerpt.]

"Ants and roaches were real problems. Today with the cutting down of the scrub palmetto the huge black roaches or palmetto bugs have been greatly reduced. The lawns have destroyed ant hills. Insecticides and mosquito control spray have helped rid the land of ants. But always ants have been a problem. Big ants, tiny ants, red stinging ants, black ants, sugar ants, and the big ants that could eat anything. Mostly table legs

were set in cans of water. If kerosene was added, the ants walked across the screen that formed. Syrup pitchers and cans, sugar bowls and plates of cake were set in water tho' the only safe way to protect sweets was to put them in screw top jars.

"My Grandfather Pierce built a screened cabinet with shelves to keep food. It was placed so nothing touched it, the legs set in cans of oil. We called it our "safe." Pioneer housewives found them very useful.

"Grandfather built it while the family was living in the Orange Grove House of Refuge on the beach near Delray. While he was working on it, some Indians came by for a social call. They stood looking at Grandfather nailing on the wire screening. Finally one asked, 'What you making?' Grandfather answered, "Cage for squaw and papoose." The Indian looked at it a minute and said, 'Pierce, you lie too much!'

"Mosquitoes! No one today can have the lease conception of what they were like. A mule died from mosquito bites. Riding lights on a boat were put in utter blackness by mosquitoes clustering on the lighted chimney. All the thick growth, the damp land, little sloughs and ponds made ideal breeding places. . .

"At first, men working in the worst places used to wear mosquito netting over their palmetto hats. It was worn like a veil hung from the hat all around and hung down the back of the neck.

"Every spring my grandmother had someone cut several scrub palmetto fans. These she made into mosquito brushes. She trimmed the saw edges off and stem then split the fronts in strips. When they dried the brush was wound and tied at the stick with string. These were put outside every door. When you wanted to go in the house, you quickly brushed off the door, your back, your legs, and brushing briskly slipped in the door crack, dropping the mosquito brush on the step.

"When the mosquitoes were very thick, such as wet, dark or windless days, smudges were put outside every door and in the house on every window sill. A tine plate or a shallow tin can was used. Paper or lightwood splinters were used to start the blaze, then leaves or wisps of green grass or slightly dampened rags were put on the little fire so it smoked and smoldered, discouraging the little pests.

"The pioneers here used mosquito nets over their beds. There was a frame over the bed with yards of mosquito netting that was let down over the bed at night after the bed had been smoked with a smudge. The sleeper was lulled to sleep by the hum of mosquitoes on the outside."

## BUILDING PRESERVATION AND BUILDING RECYCLING NOT NEW

In the story on pages 3 and 4 about the Boynton Produce Market, we mentioned that the market building was moved to another site and continued in use for several years after the market ceased to exist on Federal Highway.

Many of the buildings constructed in Boynton in earlier years were built from materials salvaged from shipwrecks. The building which originally housed the Woman's Club is one example. This was constructed of wood which came primarily from the Coquimbo which sank off Boynton. The city condemned this building and razed it about three years ago. Now condominiums are scheduled for construction on the block where the historic building stood.

Sometimes, because of their historic relevance, materials used were brought in from other places. We mentioned the bricks salvaged from buildings burned in Georgia by Sherman during the Civil War that were trucked here and used by Norman and Rebecca Partin Merkel to build their home, now demolished, on the Intracoastal Canal.

Often recycled buildings serve an entirely different purpose with new owners who may move them from their original sites. One such example is a building that was built for use as a Sunday School in the 1930s by members of the First Methodist Church of Boynton Beach. In the 1950s when plans had been approved and construction begun on new Sunday School wings, the original 1930s building was sold



The 1930s Methodist Sunday School building on original site

and moved to another address. The preceding picture shows the original Sunday School building with an adult class posing in front of it.

The building is now used as a rental residence and is located just south of Poinciana School, at 152 ½ Northwest Eleventh Avenue off North Seacrest Boulevard.



The 1930s building as it looks in 2006.

### JANET DEVRIES SEEKS READERS' HELP

Janet DeVries, who with Randy Gill put together the pictorial history, *Images of America: Boynton Beach*, is working on a second picture book. In the program she presented at the March meeting of the Historical Society she showed the members samples of some of the cards she has collected. Postcards of Boynton Beach form the basic material for the book. She is looking for people who have old postcards showing any scene about the local area from any time period. Even if a reader has only one or two old postcards which fit this description, she would appreciate having you share them.

She will scan the cards with the computer while you wait and return the cards to you in their original form. Some of the cards she showed the Society in her program depict many buildings no longer standing—tourist attractions, other businesses, fishing tournaments, sports events, street scenes, City buildings, and sometimes people.

Janet can be reached at the City Library, 561-742-6397, or at the Schoolhouse Children's Museum, 561-742-6780, or e-mail her at [DEVRIESJ@ci.boynton-beach.fl.us](mailto:DEVRIESJ@ci.boynton-beach.fl.us). She needs all materials by the end of May.



1—Ruins of Lake Park Hotel, Narcissus Street, West Palm Beach, looking toward the Citizens Bank Building. 2—Typical scene along Dixie Highway, south from West Palm Beach. 3—A park scene, West Palm Beach. 4—Clarence Saunders store, Flamingo district, West Palm Beach. 5—Tangled jungle left on Palm Beach estate by hurricane. 6—Centrally located residence, West Palm Beach. 7—Taken from railroad bridge, West Palm Beach, looking toward Palm Beach Yacht Club, north. 8—Wreckage along west shore of Lake Worth. Exclusive Whitehall Hotel in background, across lake.

*The Boynton*  
Boynton Beach Historical Society  
P. O. Box 12  
Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012

If you have not sent in your dues, why not take a few minutes, write out your check and mail it to us. Thank you!

**JOIN NOW FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2006**  
**BECOME A MEMBER OF THE**  
**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Memberships are for the Calendar year, January 1 to December 31. Check the appropriate line and return this form with the dues for that category to The Boynton Beach Historical Society, P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012. If you have questions, please contact Voncile Smith, 561-734-5653, or e-mail smithvm@bellsouth.net.

Individual Membership    \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_                      Family Membership        \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Membership    \$ 100.00 \_\_\_\_\_                      Patron Membership        \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Members Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Telephone/E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If you would be willing to serve on a Committee for the Society, please check all that apply.

Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_    Educational \_\_\_\_\_    Membership \_\_\_\_\_    Minority History \_\_\_\_\_  
Refreshments \_\_\_\_\_    Archives/ Preservation \_\_\_\_\_    Fund Raising \_\_\_\_\_    Program \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the Society is to act as a living repository for the traditions and history of Boynton Beach, to interpret items of historical and antiquarian significance, and to promote a better understanding of history. We are proud to serve Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf, Briney Breezes, and all areas west of Boynton Beach to U.S. Hwy 441, and, on occasion, greater Palm Beach County.