



The Historian

The Newsletter of The Boynton Beach Historical Society

Voncile Smith, President

Volume 2006, No. 6, September, 2006

Voncile Smith, Editor

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT – AGAIN!

This begins my fifth year as President of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. I welcome each of you and look forward to receiving your help in meeting the goals of the Society. I do think it is time for others to step forward with new ideas—and new energy, however. Boynton Beach is a growing, dynamic city, and the people here deserve a broader dissemination of information about the history of region where they have chosen to make their homes.

There is much need for outreach, not only to newer residents in the older, established areas, but also to new people moving into the western sections.

Our new first vice-president, **Randall Gill**, working with **Janet DeVries**, our historian and archivist and a member of the City Library staff, are looking into establishing a web site, a necessary tool for communication in our technological age.

If you can work with them on this project, we would be most grateful for your help. Give me a call at 561-732-4643 and I will put you in touch with them.

Do you have acquaintances or contacts among newcomers or residents of the areas west of Congress Avenue? Or perhaps you know people in some of their organizations, where we might make a presentation or leave copies of our newsletter. You, too, might talk to them and encourage them to join us.

People sometimes say to me, “Why don’t you do . . .” Their suggestions are good, but I am one person. An organization is not “me,” but **“US.”** We need to work together to serve our City better. What can you do? Encourage others to join us. Come forward to volunteer to help with our planning, with our preservation efforts, with membership, with our programs, with contact with other groups. Above all, continue your support. The Society needs you.

With high hopes for the next year,

Voncile

“MY HURRICANE STORY”

will be the topic for the September meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. All of us who live in South Florida have experienced or heard stories associated with one or more of our area’s storms.

Perhaps you also have pictures, letters or newspaper clippings about one of them. We are asking that you bring these, along with your own recollections, of course, to share with us at this meeting. Since each hurricane is different, and brings a different experience to those in its path, we should learn more about each other, and about hurricane conditions during former storms.

**WHAT: Meeting, Monday,
September 11, 2006**

**WHERE: Boynton Woman’s Club
1010 S. Federal Hwy**

TIME: 7:00 P.M.

If you have no stories, come anyway. You will leave with a new respect for the fury of nature.



Methodist Tabernacle destroyed by hurricane of 1928
(On site where current First United Methodist Church stands.
Photo courtesy of Stanley Weaver)

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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 , or send inquires or information to our mailbox at P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012.

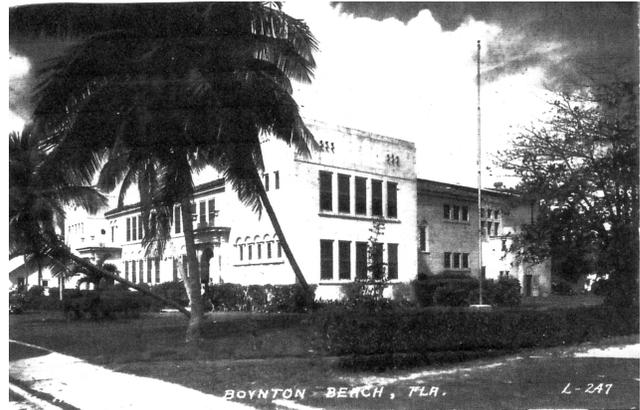
IN MEMORIAM

The Society is saddened by the loss on August 28, 2006, of **Don Besecker**, one of our long time members and a popular and active citizen of our community. We extend our sympathy to his wife, **Ruth**, and their children, grandchildren, and other family members.

Another person who, though not a member, had graciously supported the Society in other ways. **Bob Katz** died unexpectedly this summer. Several years ago he restored and refurbished the Katie Andrews house just south of Ocean Avenue and immediately east of the FEC railroad tracks. He had also loaned the Society several historical pictures which have appeared in past issue of *The Historian*. We express our sorrow for their loss to his son, his brother Richard, and other family members.

...OOPS! YOUR EDITOR ERRS SOMETIMES!

In the May, 2006 issue of *The Historian*, we printed a recollection by Lillie Pierce Voss which **Katherine Garnett Eubanks** had copied for Harvey Oyer. It was information Katherine had collected for a school paper about the history of the area. Mrs. Voss had written the paper at Katherine's request in 1949. We mistakenly credited the submission by Mrs. Eubanks to Jean Ann Thurber. Your Editor regrets the error.



Boynton High School, East View, late 1940s

DECISION ON 1927 HIGH SCHOOL

After years of letting it sit vacant and gradually deteriorate, the City has reached a decision on the historic old high school. Two years ago the City Commission turned the building over to the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) for action.

The CRA surveyed the community for recommendations for the building's use, and overwhelmingly people urged that it be used for cultural purposes. The CRA then advertised for proposals. One stipulation for all proposals required sufficient financial resources for consideration since rehabilitation is estimated to be more than five million dollars.

The proposal selected was submitted by Five Towns College, a small arts and entertainment institution based in Long Island. They expect to create offices, classrooms, a café, a theater, a library, and a special museum dedicated to the history of the entertainment industry.

Currently Five Towns College serves 1,200 students, and the proposal indicates they will use the old high school as an administrative hub with several classrooms which will be used in part to instruct current arts and music teachers from local schools to offering BA degrees in music, film video, child education, and theater.

When the theater on the second floor is renovated, it will be possibly provide performing arts space open to the public.

The Board of Directors of the Cultural Center, Inc., which operates the 1913 Schoolhouse Children's Museum next door to the old high school, hopes to be able to negotiate sharing some space in the building which they badly need for storage of archives and exhibits. The Museum Director has already had several discussions with representatives from Five Towns College, but no decision has been reached at this point.

THIS AND THAT

Several months ago your editor attended a meeting with **Harvey Oyer** of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War. One of the Historical Society's other members, **Leland Smith**, is an officer in that group. The meeting was interesting to me primarily because of the group's interest in promoting history and the preservation of historic artifacts.

But that aside, part of their meeting opening included recitation of The American's Creed. Then just last week, **Rosalie Alvaroe Morrissey**, another member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, sent me an envelope containing among other things a partial copy of The Creed which was part of a DAR award she received in 1947.

I had not heard The Creed in years, but I recalled every word. During World War II when I was a public school student, we recited it every day along with the Pledge of Allegiance.

I learned through the internet that it is the official creed of the United States of America, that it was written in 1917 by William Tyler Page as an entry into a patriotic contest, and that it was adopted by the U.S. House of Representatives the next year. As an official patriotic document this predates the Pledge of Allegiance by a good many years. The Pledge became the national official pledge on December 18, 1945, although school children had been reciting it since the 1890s.

The original Pledge of Allegiance was written in August 1892 for a family magazine. The author was Francis Bellamy, a Baptist minister in Boston and an avowed socialist. It has undergone several revisions until we have the present version.

Below is a copy of The American's Creed:

The American's Creed

I believe in the United States of America as a Government of the People, by the People, for the People; whose just powers are derived from the consent of the governed; a democracy in a republic, a sovereign Nation of many Sovereign States; a perfect Union, one and inseparable, established under those principles of Freedom, Equality, Justice, and Humanity for which American Patriots sacrificed their Lives and Fortunes.

I therefore believe it is my duty to my country to Love it, to Support its Constitution; to obey its laws; to Respect its Flag; and to defend it against all enemies.

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The September meeting of the Historical Society is scheduled for the fifth anniversary of 9/11/01. It seems appropriate to include in this newsletter these reminders of our American heritage.

REMEMBERING THE SOCIETY

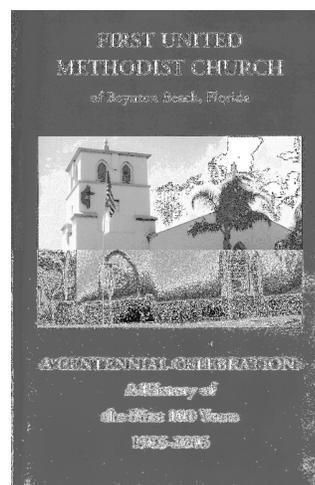
Please keep in mind the things that make up history. It is what happens each day to each of us and the pictures, letters, clippings and other artifacts we save to remind us of the events that are important to us. Most of what we know of any history is based in part on reports and materials furnished by the people who lived it. The historians are the ones who sort these things, organize them, and write them into the records.

When you clean out your papers, please remember us. Don't throw away old pictures or other memorabilia. Box them up or put them in a large envelope, and give them to us. Even if you write down some short recollections or other anecdotes, we would like to have them. Believe it or not, even old checks, water bills, and tax receipts have value to us because they reflect everyday events in times that have passed.

THANKS TO TWO RECENT CONTRIBUTORS

Two people who have recently mailed items to the Society are **Cheryl Muster** and **Rosalie Morrissey**. Rosalie has sent pictures, clippings, and other mementoes on several occasions. Cheryl boxed up pictures and a collection of seaside memorabilia that she sent us this summer. Thanks to both of them. These are important contributions to the holdings of the Society.

AN EARLY BOYNTON CHURCH—



For those interested, the 100 year illustrated history of the Boynton Beach First United Methodist Church is available for \$15.00 plus \$2.00 s&h. This history was compiled by several long-time members of the Historical Society. Contact Voncile at P.O. Box 244072, Boynton Beach, FL 33424.

A BOYNTON HURRICANE –BEFORE & AFTER



Miller House before 1947 hurricane

Ward B. Miller came to Florida in 1905 and bought land on the beach front in an area that was to become Briney Breezes. He built a large Spanish-style home and named his property Shore Acres. He brought in cattle and for a while prospered as a dairy farmer. When the land boom began in the middle 1920s, he sold his cattle, removed his dairy barn and hired a developer to lay out a community which he named Briney Breezes. As the boom collapsed, he lost his money. He still had his land



Miller House after 1947 hurricane

and he truck farmed and raised turkeys and strawberries. Often people traveling with trailers stopped at his property to look at the ocean. If they bought some of his strawberries or other produce, he let them park overnight for free. Gradually the land became a full-scale trailer park. Although Miller died in 1937, his son continued to manage the business, and in 1958 the residents of the park bought the land from the Millers and formed the town of Briney Breezes.