



The Historian

The Newsletter of The Boynton Beach Historical Society

Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Briny Breezes, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton
In addition to supporting the preservation of the history of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida as a whole

2009 Number 2, February 2009

BOYNTON'S HISTORIC ST. CUTHBERT'S CHURCH

will be the subject discussed at the February meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. Father David Kennedy who has worked with this little congregation for many years will be joined by representatives from some of the long time member families. Ancestors of Vernon Thompson established the church in 1926 sharing their Bahamian Episcopalian heritage with people of Bahamian background. Many, including the Sims family, often married others from the Bahamas, so in many respects this has remained a family church. Located on Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard east of Seacrest Boulevard, the building is the oldest church building in Boynton. While other denominations may have been established in earlier decades, their buildings were all built more recently than St. Cuthbert's.



St. Cuthbert's Episcopal Church, Boynton Beach 2000. Note the Bahamian flag on the flagstaff. More photos p.3

WHAT: Program Topic: The History of St. Cuthbert's Church of Boynton Beach
A Discussion by Fr. David Kennedy with the Thompsons, Sims, and other Church Members

WHEN: Monday, February 16, 2009, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Boynton Woman's Club, 1010 S. Federal Hwy.

ALL PROGRAMS OF THE BB HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2008-09**

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The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org You can contact us at our e-mail address boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com or mail inquiries or information to our mailbox at P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012.

The Historian is mailed eight times a year—September, October, November, January, February, March, April and May—to all members. No copies are produced in December, June, July and August.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The Board of Directors will meet Monday, March 2, 2009, 6:30, at the Boynton Woman's Club. All members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society are welcome to attend any Board meeting and are free to present and discuss items, but only Board members may vote on an issue.

At the January Board meeting President Smith announced the appointment of a Nominating Committee consisting of Frances McKeral, Sheila Rousseau Taylor, Carol Mahoney, Steven Anton, and Gloria Gregory. All Officers positions are open for election each year, and the Society elects two Directors and two Trustees for three year terms.

If you would be willing to be nominated for a position as an officer, director, or trustee please contact Voncile at smithvm@bellsouth.net or 561-734-5653 and she will give the information to the Nominating Committee.

Election will be at the Annual Meeting on April 20, 2009.

MARCH PROGRAM MEETING

Reserve the date of March 16 on your calendars now. That's the date for our March meeting which will be held at the Boynton Woman's Club at 6:30. We expect to have a special program that should be a very pleasant treat for all of us. Look for a future announcement.

PLEASE SEND IN YOUR DUES

Please check the address label on this copy of *The Historian* to see when your dues expire. Many have sent in their renewals, and we are grateful to them for helping us save the labor and postage involved in mailing notices. However, we know it is easy to overlook another expenditure at the beginning of the year, so we will be mailing out notices this month to those of you who have not responded.

If you were a member in 2008, please put your check in an envelope today. Unless there has been a change in your address, telephone number or e-mail address, or perhaps marital status, you do not need to complete the membership form. Thank you for your help.

**HAVE YOU MISSED SEEING YOUR FAMILY
IN THE HISTORIAN?**

Historical societies are dependent upon people sharing their own histories and artifacts with others. Every individual and family who has ever lived in a community are important parts of the history of that place. One way to preserve the role you and your family have played is to let us archive your personal history. It need not be elaborate, but if you have letters, papers [old deeds, wills, or other documents], news articles, stories, essays, or photographs, we would appreciate an opportunity to preserve them. If you wish to keep them to share with your descendents, at least let us scan them on the computer. That is an extra safe-guard for you, since you will know copies will be available should something happen to your originals.

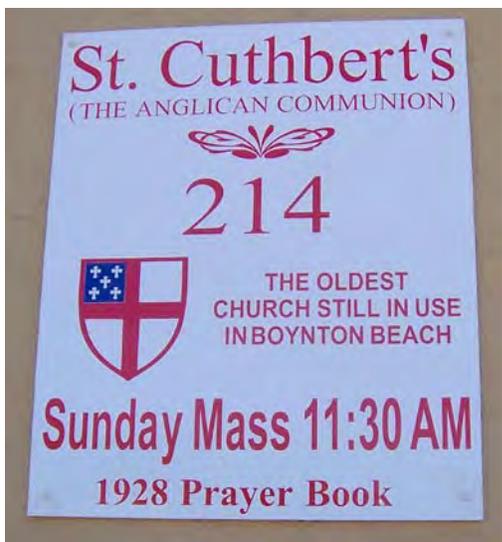
This month two of our members have come forward with new information. Ruth Jones has offered to loan us a scrapbook of "Mother Jones" [who operated Jones Hotel on Ocean Avenue in the 1930s and 40s], and "Miss Gillian" Davis

who taught many of our children to dance in her studio is giving us some of her memorabilia.

MORE ABOUT ST. CUTHBERTS



The rear portion of the church was the original building built in 1926. A stained-glass window [here shown above the door] adorns each end of the old section.



A sign on the front of the building provides denominational and worship information.



A cornerstone marks the 1977 addition.

"THE FLATWOODS STORY"

By C. Stanley Weaver

Before 1911 the area of Palm Beach County west of Lake Osborne and Lake Ida was practically uninhabitable. Called "The Flatwoods" for obvious reasons, it was flat and was covered by saw palmettos, slash pine trees, native grasses, ponds and "sloughs." It was wet and insect ridden. Only a few hardy pioneers and Indians attempted to live there.

During the late teens development of the area was begun with the construction of canals and dams of the Lake Worth Drainage District. This was the local agency authorized by the State Legislature to "reclaim" the land by systematically draining the area from Okeechobee Road south to the Hillsboro Canal, and from the lakes to what was called The Range Line (U.S. 441).

By 1920, or shortly thereafter, some roads began to be built from the small towns to the now opened lands to the west. Real estate developers such as the Model Land Company and the Palm Beach Farm Company began to encourage buyers of lots in the town to buy acreage in the woods. Plats of five and ten acres were laid out and sold under various schemes. Most of this land was still unreachable except on foot or horse back.

The "Land Boom" of the 20s brought the first serious attempts to use the land. The Boynton rock road was built as far west as Military Trail, and some small subdivisions were laid out.

By the time this happened, a pioneer dairyman, M. A. Weaver, had decided to begin a dairy farm at the intersection of Boynton Road and Military Trail, the end of the pavement. He was warned by friends that the insects, snakes, weather and other hazards would all work against his attempts. A lot of this advice proved to be true, but the dairy survived and expanded in size until by 1950 Mr. Weaver was successful,

and had built his holdings from the original 90 acres to 1,495 acres. The farm extended from the Boynton Canal to the south boundary of Brighton Lakes, and from E-3 Canal west of Military Trail to just east of Lawrence Road. There were some acreage tracts not included; however, owners of those parcels did not object to having them fenced for pastures, because this kept the land from becoming overgrown.

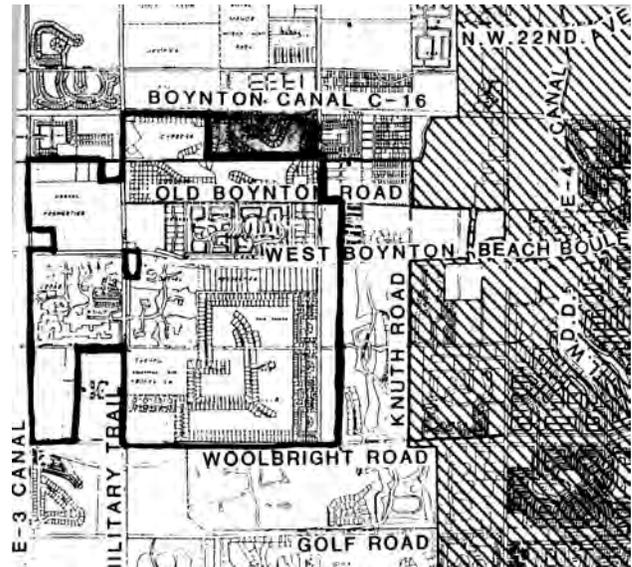
[Continued on page 4.]

["The Flatlands Story," continued from page 3]

Mr. Weaver was the father of four sons, all of whom entered the family business, and one daughter. Upon his retirement, the children bought the farm and continued to operate it. The dairy became the largest in Palm Beach County, producing for Southern Dairies, Inc. [Sealtest].

With the post WWII development of land and the demand for more land for urban expansion, land values were pushed up. As a result revaluation for tax purposes raised the cost of keeping the land. It was decided that the farm should be broken up and sold. Beginning in the late 1950s this was done.

As a result of this dividing of the farm, we have several residential and commercial developments at Boynton Beach Boulevard and Military Trail. The K-Mart and Winn Dixie centers were part of the farm. Applegate, the Seminary area, Cypress Lakes and the Boynton Water Treatment Plant area were not part of the farm, although they were fenced, and the cattle grazed there. Developments that are part of the Weaver Dairy property include Ashley Lakes, all of Bent Tree, Cypress Creek, Cypress Villas, Fairmont Place, Greentree, Limetree, Lexington, Island Reach, Pine Tree Village, Pine Tree Golf Course, Paladium, Palm Chase, and Santa Cruz.



On this map the Weaver holdings are enclosed in the heavy outline on the left. The dark area in the upper right portion of that outlined was acquired when the Weavers "took back" the Cypress Creek Development Area when the developers were unable to meet their obligation. All this area, and more, was under fence, and, with very few trees, was "wide open space."

[Stanley Weaver wrote this article several years ago and gave a copy to the Boynton Beach Historical Society.]

100 YEARS FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY

Did your family have members who lived in this area in 1909? The Historical Society of Boynton Beach is seeking to locate descendants or relatives of people who were living in the area when it first became Palm Beach County. Until 1909 what is now Palm Beach County had been part of Dade County.

We know some people who have ties going back to that time, but there are many we do not know anything about. If you have their names and know about when they arrived, please share them with us. Of course, if you have any family stories to tell or just happen to have any other information you would be willing to share, we would be delighted to know it.

We plan to print a list in a later issue of *The Historian* and would like to recognize the names of these families at our May dinner.

Although Boynton was organized under Major Nathan Boynton in 1895, it was not incorporated until 1920. A number of families had moved here even before Major Boynton arrived. By the time Palm Beach County was created, Boynton, although not yet officially a town, had streets laid out, numerous residences, businesses, and the Boynton Woman's Club [which is also celebrating its centennial].

Until Palm Beach County was created, except for a time in the late 1880s when some enterprising officials from this area moved the Dade County seat to Juno, the headquarters for all County functions were in Miami. Boynton was represented on the Dade County Commission and the Dade County School Board at various times. We will include more information about these public officials in later editions.

If you have information about your family, please call Voncile at 561-734-5653 or contact

one of the other Board of Directors members. We are counting on you to help us plan a celebration.

PALM BEACH COUNTY 1909 to 2009

THE PALM BEACH TIMES

TRUTH ABOUT FLORIDA NUMBER—1926

BOYNTON

The City Beautiful

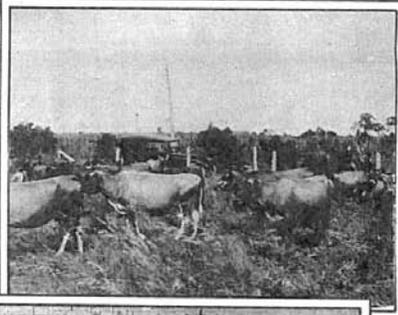


Boynton lies at the southern end of Lake Worth in Palm Beach County. It is on the line of the Florida East Coast Railway and the proposed extension of the Seaboard Air Line Railway to Miami. It has frequent motor bus service to Miami and Palm Beach and intermediate points. It is also served by the East Coast Canal upon which motor boats ply in both directions.

Boynton has the unusual distinction of seeing its property list increase in value this year by three hundred per cent. Last year's valuation was fixed by the assessors to less than \$2,000,000, while this year's assessment is at \$13,000,000, with a tax rate of only 7 mills.

Boynton has a fine group of public buildings, including a fine modern school building, two banks, churches, hotels, garages and business blocks, the latter housing up-to-date stores supplying the needs of local householders and business men.

Boynton's average winter temperature is 72 degrees, the summer average, 82 degrees. The maximum registered in the last 30 years is 100 degrees. The temperature variation in the east central portion of Palm Beach County, where Boynton is situated, is the smallest of any place in North America. The average sunshine during the past 30 years has been 360 days a year. Snow is unknown. Fog, hail, thunder and lightning are so rare as to be curiosities.



At the present time, Boynton dairies are shipping to market more than \$5,000 worth of milk each week. Boynton has eight large dairies. These, and others make possible a supply of rich, pure milk and cream from federal inspected Guernsey and Jersey herds.



A Pineapple field near Boynton is shown above. This section has very rich, fertile soil and grows only the finest agricultural products.

A page from the Palm Beach Times 1926 promoting the desirable qualities of "Boynton, The City Beautiful." [Courtesy of Jim Edward]

SOME EARLY TRAVELERS IN THE EVERGLADES

[Adapted from *200 Quick Looks at Florida History*, James C. Clark. Sarasota FL, Pineapple Press, 2000, p.82.]

Before the late 1920s the only road between the east and west coasts of Florida was one running from Tampa to Daytona Beach, but there was nothing south of that except some old Indian trails. Some large land owners in southwest Florida believed their land holdings would increase in value if a cross-Florida road was constructed. To publicize the idea of building a road, some citizens of Ft. Myers decided to stage a "trail blazing" of the proposed Tamiami Trail from Tampa to Miami. About a dozen leading citizens put up money and organized a caravan of 9 motor vehicles, including a brand new Elcar. The driver of the Elcar was the owner of an Elcar dealership in Miami who believed a successful crossing of the Everglades would help sell his new model. But, his car sank in the Everglades mire and soon thereafter his car dealership also sank. Most of the other cars constantly had to be pulled from the muck as the men constantly left their cars to cut a path through the brush. A trip that was supposed to take 3 days actually took over two weeks and some stories circulated that the drivers were lost, or dead, or had been captured by Indians. Later the Tamiami Trail was completed and is still in use.

We are proud to serve Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, Briny Breezes, and all areas west of Boynton Beach to U.S. Hwy 441, and, on occasion, greater Palm Beach County.

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Member's Name _____
2nd Member's Name _____

Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ e-mail _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: _____
 INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) _____ FAMILY \$35.00 _____
 PATRON (\$50.00) _____ CORPORATE (\$100 or more) _____

I will be willing to serve on the following committees (Circle choices):
 Mailing _____ Telephone _____ Hospitality _____ Membership _____ Public Relations _____
 Archives/Preservation _____ Program/Planning _____ Seeking Sponsors _____ Fundraising _____
 Minority History _____ Other (Specify): _____

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P. O. Box 12
Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012

