



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 7

October, 2009

Mizner Industries/Mizner Style

is the title for the October program of the Boynton Beach Historical Society to be presented by Susan Gillis, a museum curator and local historian with 30 years experience in the museum profession. A native Floridian, she graduated from the College of William and Mary with a B.A. in History and Anthropology and from the University of Denver with an M.A. in Anthropology. She was curator at the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society for 15 years and has authored six books on local history. In 2007 she wrote the pictorial history, *Boomtime Boca: Boca Raton in the 1920s*. She joined the staff of the Boca Raton Historical Society in 2002 and is an instructor and freelance consultant to local historical and cultural agencies.



Addison Mizner

In the 1920s, Mizner Industries was one of the largest businesses in Palm Beach County. They supplied furnishings, architectural features and decorative items for Mizner and numerous other architects working in "Mediterranean" style in South Florida. By the 1950s, these furnishings and details

were no longer in vogue. Many have been lost to the demolition of Palm Beach estates or to later "renovations" of other buildings such as the Boca Raton Club. Because of Boca Raton's close ties with the architect, "Mizner Industries" has been a focus of the Boca Raton Historical Society's collections since the 1970s. Susan Gillis has spent the past several years in in-depth research using a variety of resources including the original catalogs and photos in the collections of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. For the October program she will present a sampling of her research to date.

WHAT: Mizner Industries/Mizner Style
A Presentation by Susan Gillis from
the Boca Raton Historical Society

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

WHEN: October 12, 2009 – 6:30 p.m.

MEETINGS ARE
OPEN AND FREE TO THE PUBLIC

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2009-10**

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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

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 26, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at the Boynton Woman's Club. If any member would like to attend, all are welcome and may participate in the discussion but not in the voting. A notice of this meeting will be posted on our website.

FUTURE PROGRAM MEETINGS

After October, we have one meeting remaining in 2009. Please mark your calendars for November 9 when Eliot Kleinberg, well-known columnist for *The Palm Beach Post*, will be our guest. Eliot, a native Floridian, has long been a contributor to South Florida lore. His particular topic for this session is yet to be announced.

The November *Historian* will be mailed before his presentation. There will be no *Historian* in December.

The January program is tentatively scheduled for January 18 and will feature Gillian Davis, better known as "Miss Gillian," who will speak

about her years teaching dance to the children (and some adults) of Boynton Beach.

In February, in honor of Black History Month, we hope to have one of our members, Victor Norfus, share with us the history of many minority families in Boynton Beach. Victor has been conducting interviews, collecting photographs and other papers in the process of writing a book about this aspect of Boynton Beach history.

In March, Allison Goff of the Flagler Museum will speak about Henry Flagler.

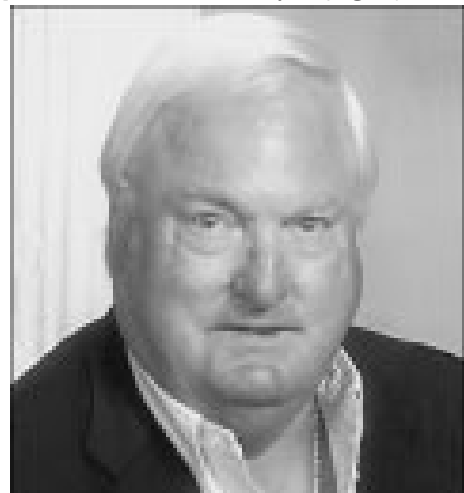
For April, we have tentatively scheduled Seth Bramson to speak on Miami: The Magic City.

In May we will have our traditional covered-dish dinner. The program for that meeting is TBA.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to report that lifetime resident, Robert (Bobby) M. DuBois, Sr. died Saturday, September 26, 2009. He along with his brother William (Billy) owned DuBois Farms, Inc., which today continues as the family-owned DuBois & Son LLC off Flavor Pict Road west of Boynton Beach.

For years their company has been one of the top vegetable farms in the United States producing most famously bell peppers, but also such other vegetables as cucumbers, squash, and eggplant. They shipped to markets throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. [See more on DuBois family on page 4]



Robert M. DuBois, Sr.

The Boynton Beach Historical Society extends our sympathy and best wishes to all the DuBois family members, and we thank them for their outstanding contributions to the community during their many years here.

BOYNTON BEACH BOOK CLUB CELEBRATES 70TH BIRTHDAY

In 1939 a group of women moved from an affiliation with a reading group connected with the Boynton Woman's Club into a separate book review group which they named the Boynton Book Club. At that time Boynton Beach's only library was the one in the Woman's Club. Over the years the group maintained ties to the original library and continued contributing as the Boynton Beach City Library was established to replace the limited facilities of the Woman's Club library.

Now named the Boynton Beach Book Club, the group over the years has maintained a membership of 25 to 28 active women members. Many participants have been teachers, but changing times have added members representing a variety of professions once essentially closed to women. Currently the membership meets once a month from September through May, usually in members' homes. A member reviews a book at each meeting. The club has a small circulating library of currently published books purchased with members' dues which the members check out to read. Periodically books no longer circulating are donated to the City Library or to a hospital.

With passing years, the format for the meetings has varied slightly. While the book review has been an established institution, often members have briefly presented information on an additional topic, such as a travel experience or the background of a well-known person.

At times the group has presented cultural events inviting members of the community to attend. For a period during the 1950s and '60s, the members referred to such events as "Guest Night," scheduled the presentation at the Woman's Club and often had an audience of 100-150. These events included the book review but might also have musical performances or poetry readings. Of course, member-made refreshments were served.

In 1993 the club honored, Ava Weaver, a long-time teacher and many year member on her 100th birthday. They scheduled this event at the 1913 schoolhouse, several years before it opened as the Schoolhouse Children's Museum. Ava had taught in that building for many years, and at one time had been the elementary school principal. Over 100 friends and former students attended.

The 70th birthday celebration took place in September at the home of Nainie Weems Weaver during which members Francis Tuite McKeral and Nancy Hood McNamee performed a skit in which they played their own mothers as early members. Nancy later presented the book review.

March 21, 1950

The Boynton Beach Book Club held their regular meeting at the home of Louise Tatum, hostess, with Mabel Tuite co-hostess.

Connie Braezeale, presided, in the absence of our President, Callie Mae Brown, who, much to the regret of all of us, had to remain at home because of the threat of chicken pox.

Roll was called and the following members were absent: Callie Mae Brown, Edith Hood, Alice Kelly, Rebecca Merkel, Wynna Slavens, Beulah Toelner, and Clara White.

Minutes of the March 7th meeting were read and approved.

Guests present were: Mrs. Annie Shepherd, Mrs. Ida Daugherty, Mrs. Greer and Mrs. Kenworthy.

Secretary read the letter of invitation from the new Library of Boca Raton to attend open house on April 4th, 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.

Discussion followed.

Roxanne McCall made the motion seconded by Marion La Quitte, that the Book Club attend the opening of the new Boca Raton Library, as per invitation. Members to make transportation arrangements and meet afterwards at the home of Edith Hood, hostess for the April 4th scheduled meeting. Motion was carried.

Marion La Quitte presented a bill for 3 books to be reviewed, total sum \$8.17 or \$8.20. It was moved and seconded that the bill be paid. Motion approved.

Connie Braezeale announced the members of the nominating committee: Ava Weaver, Rebecca Merkel and Mildred Stevens.

Librarian reported all books in and the addition of two new books: Cordelia and The Big Eye.

Program Chairman presented Roxanne McCall to give her topic. Roxanne chose to talk about Sterling Silver and further illustrated her topic by showing a movie "Our Gracious Heritage" put out by Gorham Silver Co.

Marion Thurber was the reviewer for the evening and gave us a delightful account of the novel Flame Tree, made doubly interesting because of its local historical note, and author, Theodore Pratt.

Program concluded--Social hour followed.

Post Script: Discussion regarding presentation of a book or books to the new Boca Raton Library arose. Question was settled by several members offering to bring a book to present.

Submitted for approval,
Mary Ann Potrekus
Mary Ann Potrekus,
Sec.

Book Club Minutes, March 21, 1950. The Secretary who signed these minutes is Mary Ann Potrekus, now age 94 and still an active member.



The Book Club honored Ava Weaver (in wheelchair) with a 100th birthday celebration at the 1913 schoolhouse March 14, 1993. At her left are Marie Shepard, whose mother Annie Shepard taught with Ava at the Schoolhouse for many years, and Clyde Harris, a principal of the Boynton Schools during the 1940s.

OH DEAR! SOME CORRECTIONS DUE

The editor apologizes for the following mistakes in the September 2009 *Historian*:

1. At the bottom of the second column of page 2 is a typographical error—"Miss Lillian" should be "Miss Gillian" who had the dance studio and is scheduled for our January program. (I remember a "Miss Lillian" as Jimmy Carter's mother. The identities of the two should not be confused!)

2. In the right hand column of page 3 about ¾ of the page down, "Orville Knuth" is identified as the mayor of Boynton when the Samuel Adams family decided to stay. The name should be C.F. or Charles Frederick Knuth according to his grandson Curtis Weaver, Sr. Orville Knuth was C.F.'s son and thus Curtis' uncle. The Alice H. Knuth who signed the receipt depicted on page 4 was "Grandma Knuth" to Curtis and was the wife of C.F.

The Historian regrets the errors.

BOYNTON WOMAN'S CLUB CELEBRATES (ACTIVITIES MARKING THEIR 100TH YEAR)

1. On **Friday, October 9, 2009** the Club will present an original performance of music, song and tales of life in Palm Beach County, "**The Early History of Palm Beach County in a CocoNUT Shell,**" by Rick Harlowe, Award Winning Playwright. Meet the author and the cast at the "**Afterglow Reception**" with **champagne and cake**. Tickets \$20.00 each, payable to Boynton Woman's Club, P.O. Box 1135, Boynton Beach 33425. You will be given your ticket when you arrive. Doors open at 6:30, Performance at 7:30.



Boynton Woman's Club, South Elevation

2. On **Saturday, November 8, 2009** is the **Gala Celebration** for the Club's Centennial which will feature gourmet food by Ken Rose, music, and fashions fitting to the times of the Club's history to be modeled by the members. Tickets available now, \$65.00 per person.

DUBOIS FAMILY ARRIVED IN 1930s

Four DuBois brothers arrived in Palm Beach County in the 1930s from Oklahoma. According to Wayne DuBois, they cleared 35 acres along the Range Line (now State Road 7 and U.S. 441) and planted lima beans with an old 35 hp International tractor. Land was cheap, and they gradually added to their holdings. All four brothers died farming before they had a chance to retire.

In 1971 Wayne DuBois joined with his uncle William DuBois, Sr. and William's sons, William, Jr. and Robert, to form DuBois Farms.



From left: William [Billy] DuBois, Jr.; Robert [Bobby] DuBois; Wayne DuBois; and William A. DuBois, Sr. about 1973. [Courtesy Historical Society of Palm Beach County, *Black Gold and Silver Sands* by James D. Snyder, 2004.]

They became one of the regions largest peppers growers, and by 1978 owned 1, 200 acres and 12 farms. Ultimately they became the nation's largest pepper growers on 2,500 acres. At their peak they employed 700 workers.



William A. DuBois, Sr.; Billy DuBois; and Bobby DuBois ca. 1966. [Courtesy, Boynton Beach City Library, *Images of America, Boynton Beach* by M. Randall Gill and Janet DeVries, 2005.]

WOODROW WILSON EASTON
Interviewed 10 Apr 2009
Jack Carpenter and Kathy Clark-Tilson
Lantana Historical Society

Woodrow Wilson Easton, nicknamed Woody, was born October, 1912 in Dowagiac, Michigan. He was the sixth child of James Willard Jackson and Sarah Jessie Bielby Easton. Willard, called Will, was one of Lantana's Bridge Tenders, who lived in the Bridge Tender's House on the water in the 1930s. Woody said he was named after President Woodrow Wilson. His father was named after President Jackson.

Woody's father, Will Easton, was in vaudeville at one time. He would do skits. Woody's Uncle Bill was also in vaudeville and he had a trained bear. Woody's granddaughters, Deanna Brant Boehner and Evelyn Brant Raulerson, both present at the interview, remembered their Uncle Bill. He would carve animals out of wood. Deanna said that he once carved her a bear, like his trained bear.

Woody came to Florida in 1921 and first settled in the Boynton area. His father Will was instructed by his doctor to move to a warmer area for his health. He had asthmatic problems. He and his family first checked out Texas, but found that area not to their liking. So Will, wife Jessie, and son Woody headed to Florida, a long trip by car at that time. They had to stop along the way for the nights and sleep. Woody said that his father always was sure to stop somewhere near a farm so he could catch a chicken for food. He said that back then farmers and people were willing to help out others in need. The trip was long with top speed being 35 miles per hour.

The Eastons first settled in Boynton Beach along the main road through town. There was a trailer park located on the north end. They erected what Woody described as an army tent to live in. The doctor in Michigan had told them they could stay on his land west of Boynton, and that they could stay as long as they wanted. The family made a futile effort to check it out. Traveling west of Boynton was not easy in 1921. Woody said when they headed west of Boynton, they might as well have taken a boat as that would have been the best way to get around. They never set up in that area, so they went back to the trailer park and again put up their tent. They eventually found a cheap place in town to rent near the home of Dr. Weems.

Will Easton did small odd jobs around town. Will's wife Jessie was reputed to be an excellent cook and got a job as a cook at the Boynton Beach Hotel. Later the Eastons opened a restaurant called "Dad's Place" in Boynton. It was located on the south side of Ocean Avenue. Jessie baked cakes and pies to be sold there. Often truckers driving through Boynton Beach would stop at Dad's Place just for some of Jessie Easton's pastries. Woody helped out in the restaurant. He came from school at lunch time to do the dishes, then he would go back to school. When asked why they closed Dad's Place, Woody said he was not sure but it may have been because they did not have a license. They sold pies, cakes and pastries along the highway.

Woody Easton went to old Boynton High School. He graduated from there in 1932. He remembers the Boynton

Beach caves. He often went to see them until they were "filled in."

Granddaughters Evelyn and Deanna added that they also remember the Indian mounds that were at the area of Boynton Inlet. They remember the Indian remains, the bones that were unearthed when construction occurred at the Inlet area.

After graduating from school, Woody took a job with a local nursery owned by Nellie King in the south Lantana area. It was on U.S 1 just south of the location of Ye Ole Tower. One day his wife Faye who brought him his lunch was startled by a crab and dropped a fifty cent piece which rolled into a crack in the wooden floor slats. Woody had to pull up the slats to recover the fifty cents. Woody earned only \$1.00 a day so that dropped money was a half day's pay for him. He was given a raise to \$1.25 per day, and since he worked six days a week—Monday through Saturday, he made \$7.50 per week. Nellie often called him to work on Sundays, too.

Woody moved with his parents to Lantana in 1927. He traveled from Lantana to Boynton High School on his motorcycle to and from daily. He kept his motorcycle in a shed at the bottom of the Lantana Bridge.

In 1929 Will Easton became the second of Lantana's live-in bridge tenders. He and Jessie and Woody moved into the Bridge Tender's House. Woody described what he remembered of that house. They had running water piped from the town. Once one crossed the bridge to Hypoluxo Island, there was just a path area to the beach, not an actual road. South Ocean Boulevard (AIA) was there running north and south, but it was not the same South Ocean Boulevard that we now know. It was much farther east. What remains of it is in the water and most often under sand now.

When Will Easton was the bridge tender, he opened the bridge whenever someone blew a horn for him to do so. It was a random opening cycle, but there was not as much boat traffic as we experience today. Opening the bridge involved inserting a "key" and then turning the key by walking in circles pushing the key around. Woody did not remember how many turns it took to open this center portion of the swing bridge, but he did state that it took between 5 and 10 minutes to open and then another 5 to 10 minutes to close. All the family members would and could open the bridge.

Woody mentioned that his father, Will, had a little farm section on the shore in what would now be Bicentennial Park. On the north side of the road he planted potatoes, carrots, onions and various other plants for his family.

In later years Woody went into construction. He built several homes in and around Lantana.

Woody did not give his recipe for living a long life, but one could surmise from talking to him. He still has a good sense of humor, and a twinkle in his eyes shows a bit of the young man he once was.

[Editor's note: Woody Easton died August 23, 2009 four months after this interview.]

(See pictures of Woody Easton and his family on page 6.)

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM, CALENDAR YEAR 2010

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) _____

Yes, I would like to serve on the following committee(s) [Circle choices]
 Archives/Preservation _____
 Program/Planning _____
 Membership _____
 Minority History _____
 Mailing _____
 Seeking Sponsors _____
 Fundraising _____
 Telephone _____
 Website _____
 Other (Specify) _____
 Public Relations _____
 Hospitality _____

Join now for the calendar year 2010. Complete the form below or copy the information and return it or the copy with your check for the type of membership you desire payable to The Boynton Beach Historical Society, P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, Florida 33425-0012. New memberships will be effective from now until December 31, 2010. Current members may renew now with 2010 dues effective until December 31, 2010.

Boynton Beach Historical Society
 Post Office Box 12
 Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012



Woodrow "Woody" Wilson Easton 4/10/09



An old Easton Family Photograph. It includes Will and Jessie Easton ca 1920s