



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

2008 Number 7, October 2008

CITY COMMISSION CHAMBER SITE FOR OCTOBER FLORIDA AND THE CARIBBEAN, a Special FHC Program

The program will be presented by Paul Dosal, professor of history and executive director of ENLACE—Engaging Latino, African-American, and other Communities for Education—at the University of South Florida. Dr. Dosal earned his PHD in history at Tulane University and taught for 9 years at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst before accepting the position in Tampa in 1995. He is a third generation descendant of Cuban immigrants who settled in Ybor City in 1889. His speciality is the history of the modern Caribbean with particular interests in the history of Cuba and Guatemala. The program is sponsored by the Florida Humanities Council. **Please note the change of location!** [We have been moved from the City Library to the City Commission chambers because the City has authorized Library use for early voting during the date our meeting is scheduled.]



Paul Dosal

WHAT: Speaker Dr. Paul Dosal
Florida and the Caribbean:
From Ponce de Leon to
Hugo Chavez

WHEN: Monday, October 20
6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Commission Chambers
City Hall
100 E. Boynton Beach
Blvd.

Florida has been an outpost of Caribbean civilizations since 1513 when Juan Ponce de Leon arrived from Puerto Rico. Through a history of Caribbean products—including rum, cigars, sugar, coffee, and bananas—and a history of Caribbean rulers—including Papa Doc Duvalier, Rafael Trujillo, Fidel Castro, and Hugo Chavez—the speaker will highlight the political and economic forces that have bound Florida to the Caribbean for more than 500 years.

**ALL PROGRAMS OF THE SOCIETY
ARE OPEN AND FREE TO THE
PUBLIC.**

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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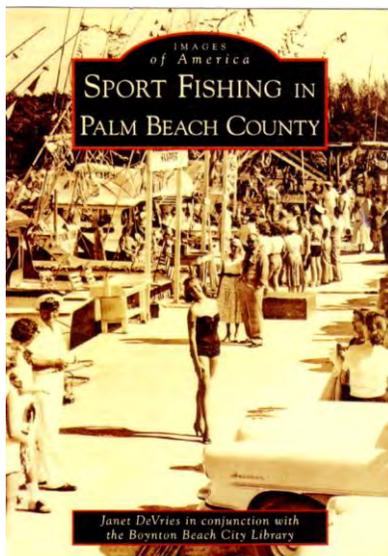
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The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org You can contact us at our e-mail address boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com or mail inquiries or information to our mailbox at P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012.

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.

SPORTS FISHING INDUSTRY NEXT TOPIC

Sport Fishing in Palm Beach County, a discussion facilitated by Janet DeVries who recently published her new book on the topic and Cindy Lyman Jamison, daughter of Captain Kenny Lyman, will be our program for our meeting on November 17. Janet's book will be available for those who would like to purchase a copy. All proceeds go directly to help support the Schoolhouse Children's Museum.



STATUS OF 1927 SCHOOL STILL UNKNOWN



2008 Photo of 1927 Boynton High School
[photograph by Voncile Smith]

On October 7 the City Commission voted to return the 1927 historic old high school to the control of the City Commission. They had given it to the CRA in 2006 to include in its plans for redevelopment of the old downtown area of Boynton. A study commissioned by the CRA had recommended that it be refurbished into a public building as a pivotal point in redevelopment. Unfortunately, the CRA was unable to reach an agreement with a contractor for the building's restoration. You may remember the Commissioners dismissed the citizen makeup of the CRA several months ago and took it over themselves.

Part of the difficulty, of course, is the cost. Estimates for restoration range from about \$4 million to \$8 million. The high figure is the one the City prefers to refer to. They have budgeted over \$600,000 for demolition. They fault the Historical Society and others for not having raised the money, but we cannot undertake a serious fund raising effort if we do not have control of the building.

We are holding your petitions which we have collected in conjunction with the efforts of B.O.S.S., our affiliate for urging restoration. We also have the pledges of financial support that many of our members returned early this year. The total cash pledges totaled over \$26,000—rather impressive for a letter than went to only about 150 households. Many indicated that that they would pledge more when we could actually begin using the money.

We are still trying to save the building. You can help by continuing to write, e-mail and telephone the City Commissioners to remind them what a treasure we have that deserves to be resurrected and used for cultural purposes.

Some members of the City staff have questioned the building's historic significance. State of Florida experts in historic preservation through the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation have designated it one of Florida's most endangered historic sites for 2008. They are concerned about preserving Florida's heritage. The Boynton Beach City Commission should be too.

OH GOLLY! UF WAS ALMOST IN EAU GALLIE

FLORIDA REAL ESTATE MAGNATE W.H. GLEASON



William Henry Gleason

In 1855, at age 26 with his Yale Law Degree in hand, William Henry Gleason who was to become one of Florida's major land salesmen and developers during post Civil War Reconstruction moved from New York to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. He had long held interests in engineering, banking, law and politics. In Eau Claire he opened a bank and began developing the town. He moved fully into sales during the Civil War.

Gleason made a name for himself on the issue of slavery, and he was appointed a special agent of the Freeman's Bureau in 1865. His mission was to scout the Florida peninsula as a possible site for a Negro colony. The idea of colonization did not appeal to Gleason. His recommendation against it prompted local political support in later years.

After he had toured Florida for several months, he realized that the state offered a great potential for business. He rented a schooner and moved his family to the old military post, Fort Dallas, (present day Miami) in 1866. Gleason sought investment land under control of the state's Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund and proposed to ditch and drain land in exchange for bargain rates on nearby real estate.

His principal business activities involved real estate development and a law practice which specialized in land cases.

He was active politically and served as Florida's Lt. Governor from 1868-1870. During the State Senate's attempt to impeach Governor Harrison Reed during that time, Gleason claimed the Governorship. But Reed's supporters, including the state's Adjutant General and the county Sheriff, kept Gleason out of the Capitol. He set up a temporary office in a hotel and proceeded to sign documents as Governor. The Florida Supreme Court ruled in Governor Reed's favor and the political struggle ended with Gleason's removal from the office of Governor after brief and limited service. (The State Archives do not even list him among Florida's former governors.) In 1871 he began a term in the State Legislature where he served until 1874.

Much of the family's land dealings were in Brevard and Dade Counties. (Remember Palm Beach County was not

formed from Dade County until 1909.) The Gleasons purchased thousands of acres of land in various locations in Florida. Some of the residents of what are now Delray Beach and Boynton Beach purchased property from the Gleasons. Two of William's sons continued in their father's business and political footsteps. They operated a land development company, Gleason Brothers, and William took up his father's law practice. The brothers were also involved in intracoastal shipping and operated steamships and dry dock facilities.

In 1871 Gleason undertook a venture that could have resulted in what eventually would become the University of Florida being located in Eau Gallie (near present day Melbourne).

Gleason proposed the idea of building the State's first Agricultural College in Eau Gallie. He offered a 2,230 acre donation of land to the Trustees of the Florida Agricultural College if they would select Eau Gallie as the school's campus. A two-story coquina building was erected for the school on one of Gleason's donated lots, but it was never used for the intended purpose. The state, under different political leadership, located the college in the north Florida town of Lake City in 1884. The Lake City campus was moved to Gainesville in 1905 to become part of the University of Florida.

Gleason moved his family to the unused campus where they lived for a time as they established a sawmill and boat building business. By 1884 they had recorded their village plat of Eau Gallie and began selling lots in their new town. The Florida State Agricultural College filed to foreclose on Gleason's claim to the vacant college building. After several years of negotiation, Gleason agreed to pay \$2,000 for the small college building and campus. Gleason and his sons converted the building into the grand Hotel Granada, a tourist mecca in its day. It was destroyed by fire in 1902, the same year Gleason died.

[Sources:

Interview with Harvey E. Oyer, Jr., October 6, 2008.

UF: PK Yonge Library of Florida History: Gleason Family Papers at <http://web.uflib.ufl.edu/spec/pkyonge/Gleason.htm>.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Henry_Gleason.
[http://www.delray-beach-realestate.com/.](http://www.delray-beach-realestate.com/)]



William H. Gleason House in Melbourne, FL
U.S. National Register of Historic Places

THE 1918 COLORED CENSUS OF THE BOYNTON TOWNSHIP

[Editor's note: This list was prepared by Victor Norfus, one of the members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society]

The census was taken from two church rolls, St. Paul AME founded in 1892 and St John Missionary Baptist Church founded in 1908. St. Cuthbert's Church was not officially founded at this time. It had a mainly Bahamian congregation. It was founded in 1924 by a group of Anglicans from Long Island in the Bahamas.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Occupation</u>
*Andrews, James and Martha	Carpenter
Butler, Reverend James and Irene Curry	Farmer
Cuberson, Henry and Emma	Laborer
Davis, Fannie and Janitrees	
Girtman, Will and Julia	Farmer, Laborer
Floyd, Frank and Eva	Laborer
Hartley, Charlie and Cadie	Laborer
Hartley, Leroy and Yulie	
Howard, Jack	Laborer, Coconut Picker
Horton, Joe	Farmer
Jackson, Peter J. and Anna	
*King, Dillard and Hattie	Laborer
King, Maria	
King, William and Ethel	
*McCade, Ernest and Lilly	Farmer
McCade, S.B. and Betty	Farmer
McKenzie, Julia	
*Major, Nathan H. and Annie	Farmer
Major, P.M.	
Meeks, Washington and Lizzy	Farmer
Meeks, Ed and Francis	Farmer
Meeks, Cora	Farmer
Milton, Cicero and Allie	Farmer
Miller, Isaac and Rivona	Farmer
Phoenix, Cleo	Teacher/Principal
Pugh, Maggie	Laborer
Roberts, Bessie	Farm Hand
*Roberts, Eddy and Lizzie	Farmer
Roberts, Essie	Farm Hand
*Smith, Frank and Idella	Farmer
*Smith, Thomas A. and Martha	Fisherman
Smith, Will and Josephine	Laborer
*Wells, Robert and Lizzie	Farmer
*White, James and Hattie	Laborer

[* African Americans who in 1920 attended the Incorporation of Boynton.]

IN MEMORIAM

STUART B. McIVER. The Boynton Beach Historical Society lost a good friend with the passing of Stuart McIver last April. He had presented several programs to the society based on his prolific writings. In 2003 he appeared here for the last time when he discussed *Death in the Everglades: The Murder of Guy Bradley, America's First Martyr to Environmentalism*.

Altogether he wrote 14 books and about 450 magazine articles. He was also a journalist having at one time written for *The Greensboro (N.C) Daily News*, *Charlotte News*, and *Baltimore Sun*. For 15 years he contributed to *Sunshine*, the Sunday Magazine for the *Sun-Sentinel*. He understood the history of the area and why it had developed the way it did. This was especially helpful to people who were new to Florida, but also to all of us.

BOYNTON HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 1931

[Courtesy of Frances Tuite McKeral]



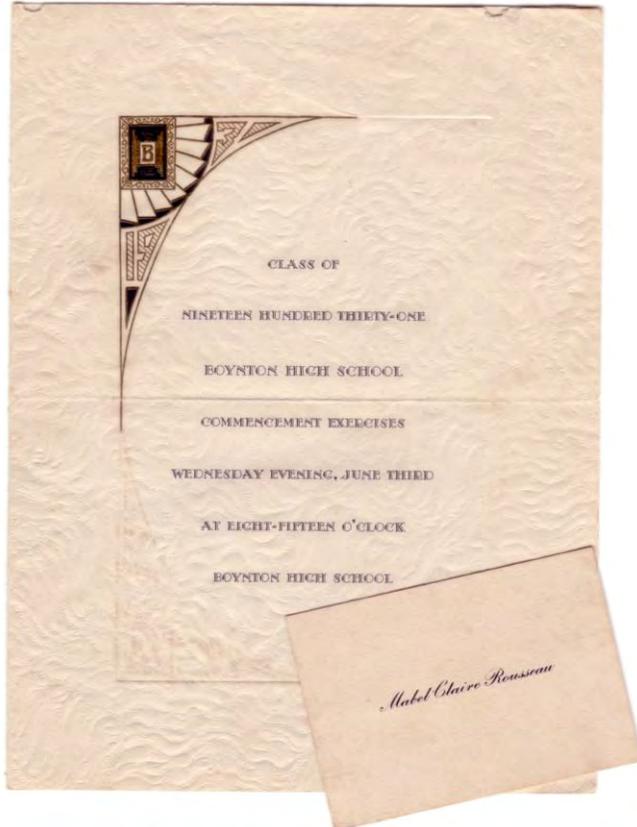
Class of 1931

Back Row:

Curtis Cherry, Otley Scott, Mabel Rousseau, Miriam Richardson, Charles Winegardener, Lee Andrews

Front Row:

Bert White, Lucille Tuck, Helen Shepard, Ethel Powell, Roger Fain, Dorothy Powell, Tommy Joe Woolbright



The Commencement Invitation

Prophecy of the class of '31 Month of June 1941

Tommy Joe Woolbright, honorable member of the class of '31, has just refused to sign with a big Los Angeles Movie Company to succeed Will Rogers. As President of the Standard Oil Products he feels at this critical period the company needs him.

Miss Mabel Rousseau, a very industrious member of the said class, has held the position of Boynton High School Principal since the retirements of the very worthy man, R.F. Williamson.

Otley Scott, genius of the same class, now heads the largest Austin Company in the U.S. Mr. Scott promises a speedier and smaller Austin.

Miss Ethel Powell denied the report of her engagement to the Prince of Wales and for the next two years will continue her studies of music in Paris. Miss Powell claimed that nothing beyond friendship existed between the Prince and her. Miss Powell made this statement immediately after meeting her sister, Dorothy, who is making a lecture tour of Europe. Miss Dorothy Powell is now President of the International Animal Rescue League. Her first address will be broadcast this year over television radio from Paris.

Lee Andrews, America's greatest medical student, has retired to his laboratory and is conducting experiments for the purpose of discovering prevention for measles, on request of the principal of Boynton High School.

Miriam Richardson, a quiet member of the class of '31, established her fame as the World's best short story writer when her latest work swept the country like wildfire. It is a volume entitled "True Love and Loving Hearts" which is dedicated to Mr. R.F. Williamson.

Colonel Curtis Cherry, famous aviator, astonished the world today by announcing his plans for a non-stop flight around the world. No one doubts that this will be achieved as he flies a plane of his own construction and it cannot fail.

Miss Helen Shepard, a brilliant member of the same class, designs all gowns and costumes for the Metropolitan Opera Stars. Miss Shepard's skill and ability in this work surpass all other designers.

Charles Winegardener, coach at Yale, has just edited a book of Basketball rules that enable a star athlete to play a wonderful one man game. This new system is being adopted in all leading colleges and universities.

Miss Lucille Tuck, famous actress made her first appearance over television radio last week. Miss Tuck appeared in the first Mac Sennett comedy produced over this late invention.

Dr. W. R. Fain, the world renowned surgeon added to his fame a few days ago when he performed the greatest operation known, the removal of Bert White's tonsils. The entire world waited with bated breath the outcome of this most complicated operation which proved a wonderful success. The great singer and successor of Larence Tibbet had been unable to continue his career.

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.

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 TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: _____
 INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) _____
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 Seeking Sponsors _____
 Minority History _____
 Other (Specify): _____

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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



Members of the Boynton Beach Police Department in 1951 were [L to R] James W. Butler, Greatham E. Hodges, Jules Klinger, Chief A.C. "Boots" Carver, John Collins, Jack Henderson and James Erwin. They are posing in front of the police building at 415 N.E. 4th Street which they vacated in 1972. [Butler was Boynton Beach's first officer of African descent.]