



# 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 6, September 2009

## PALM BEACH: A DISCUSSION OF THE HISTORY

is the topic for the September 14 meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The speakers are two staff members of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, Richard A. "Tony" Marconi and Debi Murray.



Richard A. "Tony" Marconi



Debi Murray

A new Arcadia pictorial history of Palm Beach is the basis for their discussion. Copies of several books sponsored by the Historical Society of Palm Beach County will be available for sale.

Tony last visited the Boynton Beach Historical Society in 2007 when he showed portions of his DVD "Puddle Jumpers of Lantana: The Civil Air Patrol's Coast Patrol 3" and discussed his interviews with some of the surviving pilots.

He has lived in Palm Beach County since 1998. In 1978 he enlisted in the U.S. Army as a military policeman, and after 20 years of service he retired and moved to Florida. While enrolled at Florida Atlantic University, he interned for two semesters with the Historical Society of Palm Beach County then volunteered with the organization. When he graduated, he began working in the archives and in 2002 became the Society's education coordinator (now the Curator of Education). He is co-author of the Arcadia publication *West Palm Beach 1893 - 1950*.

Debi Murray is a native of Palm Beach County. She has been Director of Research & Archives at the Historical Society of Palm Beach County since 1999. After completing several business classes at Palm Beach Community College, she discovered her real interest was in the study of history. She graduated with a history major from Florida Atlantic University and eventually received an M.A. in history. She was the point person for the Historical Society's most recent project, The Richard and Pat Johnson Palm Beach County History Museum housed in the 1916 County Court House.

**WHAT:** PALM BEACH: a Discussion of the History

**WHERE:** The Boynton Woman's Club  
1010 South Federal Highway

**WHEN:** MONDAY, September 14, 2009  
6:30 p.m.

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

**OFFICERS**

President	Voncile Smith
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Janet DeVries
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Bev Cormany
Recording Secretary	Virginia Farace
Corresponding Secretary	Carol Mahoney
Treasurer	Fran McKeral
Editor <i>The Historian</i>	Voncile Smith
Archivist and Webmaster	Janet DeVries

**DIRECTORS**

2010	Gloria Turner
2010	Tim Bednarz
2011	Steve Anton
2011	Sally Dye
2012	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
<b>2012</b>	<b>Delma Swilley</b>

**TRUSTEES**

2010	Wendy Franklin
2010	Marion Weems
2011	Randall Gill
2011	Harvey Oyer, Jr
2012	Victor Norfus
2012	Dan Rousseau

The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is [boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org](http://boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org) You can contact us at our e-mail address [boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com](mailto: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.

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**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

The Board of Directors of the Boynton Beach Historical Society is scheduled for Monday, September 21, 2009, 6:30, at the Boynton Woman's Club. All members of the Society are welcome to attend Board meetings and may participate in the discussion, but may not vote.

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**1927 HISTORIC OLD BOYNTON HIGH SCHOOL**

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation has sent a letter informing the Boynton Beach Historical Society that the building is listed for a second year on its list of the ten most endangered historic sites in Florida. They also featured a special program at their state convention in May on the old high school. City Commissioner Marlene Ross, who has been a constant ally for restoring the old building, made the presentation.

A number of preservation architects from around the state were present at the program. They concurred that a building of similar quality could not be built today for \$20 million.

The estimated cost for restoration has been set by the City at \$8 million.

The school also has an enthusiastic supporter in its bid for restoration in Barbara Ready from the Arts Council. Barb lobbies and schedules events to keep the need for preservation before the public and the City Commission. She recently convinced the City that its staff should be drafting an ordinance with some teeth in it for establishing a meaningful historic preservation board. She also recently arranged for a photo op for television coverage of preservationists at a demonstration at the school. A picture taken at that time should appear in the newsletter of the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, and pictures of the crowd and interviews of some of those present were shown on WPTV news.

Several others among our members hope they are making progress in solving the funding problem.

Meanwhile, from neglect for maintenance on the part of the City, the building continues to suffer. The most immediate need is to stabilize the roof to eliminate leaks. The exterior walls are strong, but the interior is in shambles. The plumbing and the electrical systems need to be completely overhauled.

Most of the supporters are urging its conversion to a Community Cultural Arts Center.

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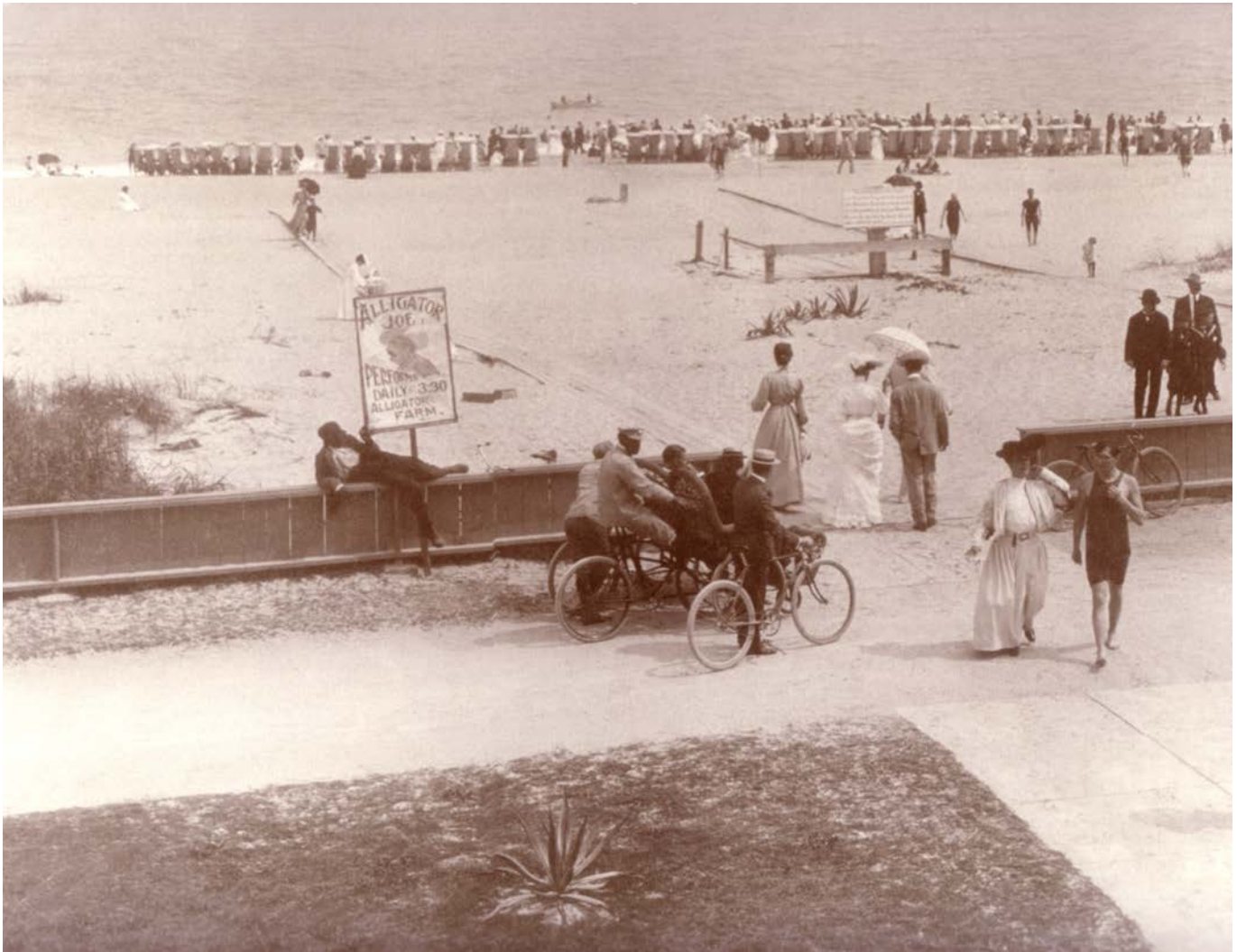
**FUTURE PROGRAM PRESENTATIONS**

The Society's new Vice President for Programs, Janet DeVries, has been busy all summer setting up programs for us for next year, in addition to all the tasks she completes for the Library and the Schoolhouse Children's Museum. While some programs are still tentative, we can report firm commitments for the following:

November 9, Eliot Kleinberg of the *Palm Beach Post* on Local History, specific topic TBA.

March 8, Allison Goff of the Flagler Museum on Henry Flagler.

We expect also to have programs on Miami—The Magic City and one by "Miss Lillian" on Teaching Dance to the Children of Boynton.



The Beach at the Breakers - c. 1905

[Courtesy Historical Society of Palm Beach County as published in a 2004 limited edition calendar in partnership with TransAmerica Printing. Caption under picture reads, "Alligator Joe's was the first tourist attraction in the area. Located in Palm Beach where the Everglade's Club is today, visitors stopped at Joe's to see the reptiles and occasionally a manatee or two. If they were lucky, Joe would be on hand to wrestle an alligator for their entertainment."]

## FROM A TENT IN BOYNTON—

[Editor's Note: Helen Adams Bonomini, a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, has given us pictures and other materials about her family, early settlers in Boynton. The following is derived from an article written by Mrs. Mark White published in the *Boynton Beach Star*, May 9, 1963.]

Samuel Adams and his family came to Boynton in 1916 and again in 1919 to visit Ella Adams' mother, Mrs. M. A. Meredith, who had moved here in 1912. Mrs. Meredith's home was located on the site of the old Tropical Acres on what is now U.S. 1 South. She owned several acres and grew much of the family's food. Another relative, Thomas Woolbright, was raising pineapples on land just south of her home. The Meredith family had lived in a tent when they first came to the area around Lake Worth, but a hurricane wrecked it and they had to find other housing.

Because of the lack of adequate housing in Boynton, the Adams family, too, had to live in a tent

when they first moved here. They used bean hampers for chairs. The family consisted of seven children and their parents.

Ella Adams thought longingly and lovingly of the modern home she had left in Centralia, Illinois and wanted to return there.

Orville Knuth was mayor at that time and wanted the Adams family to stay. The town badly needed an experienced builder.

He helped the family find a temporary home on old Palmetto Street. Later a house belonging to the railroad became available and they took it. Unfortunately the railroad site led to tragedy. Their youngest child was playing on the tracks and was killed. Ella became determined to leave Boynton.

Her attitude changed over time, however. For several years afterwards they spent summers in Centralia harvesting peaches on their old farm.

(Continued on page 4, Adams Family)

(Adams Family - continued from page 3)

When time came for school to begin, they returned to Boynton. Gradually Boynton became home. Sam Adams was busy as a builder.

Ella, always a civic-minded person, circulated a petition for a much needed school building. She was the second president of the Boynton PTA. Later she started on a cannery in a building opposite the old post office. The cannery provided much needed food for pensioners. The farmers in the area donated seconds and the pensioners furnished empty containers and the labor. The pensioners shelled peas and beans and prepared corn and tomatoes. A donation of cabbage was converted into kraut. The men, working right beside the women, built an outside stove to help with the canning.

In 1942 this activity became a government project and was conducted by the Boynton Woman's Club.

Meanwhile, Ella took her service elsewhere. In 1943-44 she managed the cafeteria in the Boynton School. She baked her own rolls, pies and cakes and served 195 meals a day.

After leaving the school, Ella turned to selling real estate. She worked with Ann Barrett for 22 months and then for a brief time with Joe Harless. She became a broker in 1947 and went into business for herself. She was a charter member of the Boynton Realty Board and continued selling real estate well into her later years.



Ella Adams c. 1963

She and Sam were avid fishermen and as they aged began travelling around the country and saw much of the State by bus.

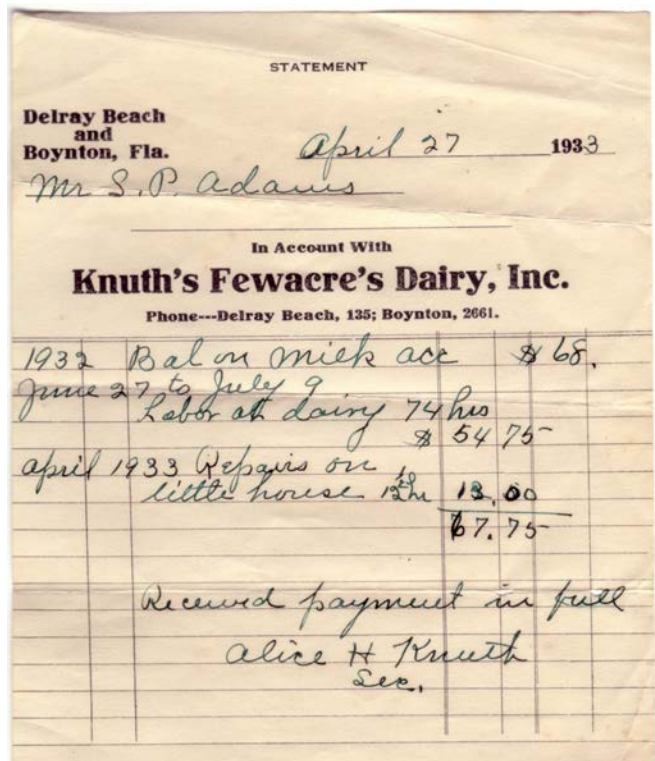
Some of the places she had visited had made a deep impression on her, and she decided to take up oil painting at around age 75. Always interested in learning, she had previously taken courses to learn how to type, to learn about parliamentary procedure, and to learn about appraisals.

In 1959 she and Sam celebrated their golden anniversary. At that time their four surviving children were Homer; Samuel, Jr.; Aileen (Mrs. Graham), and Helen (then Mrs. Meisenheimer - now Bonomini).



What is thought to be the first roadside stand catering to tourists in Boynton was that of Mrs. Meredith, mother of Mrs. Samuel Adams. The stand was alongside of the Dixie Highway leading south to Miami. Pineapples, home-made preserves and what appears to be watermelons attracted the Florida visitors, in 1920.

[Clipping and receipt below courtesy Helen Bonomini]



Receipt to Sam Adams, 1933, from Alice Knuth for work performed to pay milk account. Dairy labor and house repairs each paid less than \$1 per hour.

## WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER?

From time to time people send your editor little gems they've found on the internet. The modified "The History of Aprons" which follows is just such an example.

Children of today probably do not know what an apron is.



The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she had only a few, and it was easier to wash and iron aprons than dresses. Making an apron also required less material, but along with that, aprons also served as handy potholders for removing hot pans from the oven. They were useful too for drying children's tears and on occasion for cleaning out dirty ears.

The apron was used to carry eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs from the chicken coop. The half-hatched eggs might be assisted to completion in the warming oven.

When company came, aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

When the weather was cold, grandma wrapped hers around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow bent over the hot wood stove. Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, aprons carried all sorts of vegetables. When peas had been shelled, the apron carried out the hulls. In the fall the apron might be used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, that old apron could dust a surprising amount of furniture in seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron and the men knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

Her granddaughters would go out of their minds today trying to figure out how many germs were on that old apron, but I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron.

Sewing an apron was a fairly standard assignment in home ec classes which until the early 1970s all girls were required to take in high school.



Selecting a pattern was a common part of home sewing.

Now most aprons one sees are worn by men, either as chefs or for home Bar-B-Q or for certain other jobs requiring protection for one's clothing or as a type of uniform such as those worn by employees of Home Depot. Women in corresponding jobs usually also wear them.



Whatever the circumstances for apron wear, the household apron of yesteryear has largely disappeared.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_  
 Seeking Sponsors \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Website \_\_\_\_\_  
 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



After World War II, Boynton High School housed elementary classes before its use as a high school ceased. Top: Jackie Howard, Marie Williams, Dick Moody, Danny Gaylord, Nancy Hood, Bob Moore, Kay Robinson, Roberta Luther, Wendy ?, Center: James ?, Bobby Swilley, Bradley ?, Bobby Nixon, Gladys Baker, Darlene Gerdts, Wade Stevens, Virginia Bachor, Juanita Burke Botton: Elaine Calloway, Onie Jean ?, Savilla Westbrook, Norma Jean Sloan, Jerry Adams, Kay D., Wayne D., Nancy E., Teacher, Mrs. Christine Judd [Photo courtesy Billie Jo Swilley]