

THE HISTORIAN

The Newsletter of THE BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulfstream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton to US Hwy 441

Post Office Box 12 Boynton Beach FL 33435-0012

Voncile Smith, President

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Voncile Smith, Editor

JANUARY 13 MEETING TO BE AT BOYNTON BEACH LIBRARY

The January meeting of the Historical Society is scheduled at the Boynton Beach Library at 7:00 p.m., January 13, 2003. The speaker will be **Doug Hutchinson**, Executive Director of the CRA, who will speak about preservation of community landmarks. The meeting has been scheduled at the Library to permit easy access to VCR projection of a videotape of a project in another community that involved Mr. Hutchinson. All programs of the Historical Society are open free to the public. Please join us.

MEMBERSHIPS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2003 NOW DUE

According to our Bylaws, the fiscal year for the Boynton Beach Historical Society is from January 1 to December 31. If you have not already done so, please complete the membership form on the last page of this notice and send it with your check for the desired membership to **Sue Beaman**, Treasurer; 2010 S.W. 15th Street, Boynton Beach, FL 33426. If you have already paid for calendar year 2003, we thank you.

Your membership is very important to us to help us continue serving the community. Currently, we present eight program meetings each year, and we want to continue sending you a newsletter before each of those meetings—September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May.

We hope to move toward more services. We want to encourage better preservation of local knowledge through recordings in an expanded oral history program. We would like to support a part-time executive director to work with the Library and Mr. Hutchinson on dissemination of historical information and archival collection and preservation. We plan to work with and involve more minority groups in the above projects as well as recovering information about the role all citizens have played in the development of Boynton Beach.

These projects, in addition to the expense for producing and mailing meeting notices and newsletters, cost money. Although currently all work by Society members is on a strictly voluntary basis, we do need your help for defraying our various miscellaneous expenses. **WON'T YOU JOIN US AND ENABLE THE SOCIETY TO MOVE FORWARD?**

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR SPRING

Please reserve the following dates for our spring meetings:

February 10, 6:30 p.m. Boynton Beach Library: actor **LeRoy Mitchell** portraying **James Weldon Johnson**, Florida poet, educator, and community activist;

March 10, 6:30 p.m. Boynton Beach Library: writer **Gary Monroe** will discuss his book, *The Florida Highwaymen*. In conjunction with this program, the Library and the Historical Society will sponsor a small exhibition of paintings by the Highwaymen that will be on display at the Library for two weeks. (Both the February and March programs are available through the courtesy of the Florida Humanities Council and are jointly sponsored by the Boynton Beach Historical Society and Friends of the Library.)

April 14, 7:00 p.m. Boynton Woman's Club: The History of the South Florida Drainage District, speaker TBA (courtesy of **Stanley Weaver**).

May 12, 6:00 p.m., Boynton Woman's Club: covered dish dinner and a special program, The Life and Works of **Bernard Thomas**, with **Betty Thomas** and **Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher**.

IN MEMORIAM

Leonard Thompson, who with his wife **Katherine Foy Thompson**, were paid members for 2003 in the Historical Society, has passed away since the last edition of *The Historian*. Mr. Thompson was born in Palm Beach County 89 years ago and had moved with his family to Boynton Beach when he was quite young. He began elementary school in Boynton

when his family lived on North Federal Highway. His father was a builder and had participated in construction work for both the First Methodist Church and the First Baptist Church. His mother Kate, who was quite artistic, was both a music teacher and a painter.

Leonard's parents built a family home on South Seacrest Boulevard (Green Street at that time) which is one of the few Mediterranean style homes in Boynton from the 1920s. (The house is currently owned by **John Fitzpatrick**.)

Some people in Boynton remember the airplane that Leonard and a friend built in the 1930s which he kept in his garage. Using as a runway the open fields of the 1920s defunct boom-time subdivision Lake Boynton Estates, he took pleasure flights over the area.

After serving in the Navy during World War II, Mr. Thompson returned home to work for Acme Drainage District, the developers of what is now Wellington.

He and Katherine lived in a home on Thompson Road on the South side of Hypoluxo Road, west of the E4 Canal, for 50 years where they raised their two daughters, **Kandy Thompson Thompson** (yes, she married a Thompson) and **Vickie Thompson Pollard**.

The Society extends its condolences and good wishes to Katherine, their two daughters, and their grandchildren.

"I HAVE A DREAM . . ."

While many cities have streets named in honor of **Martin Luther King** and we have a holiday (January 20, 2003) celebrating his birthdate, people sometimes forget the importance of his contributions to the cause of civil rights. And they forget especially that he achieved these through nonviolent tactics (or *satyagraha* "holding to the truth") inspired by the passive protests and resistance by **Mahatma Gandhi** to British oppression in India.

Besides King's unparalleled leadership in advancing the causes of the unfortunate and disadvantaged, let us remember and acknowledge his other achievements: He was well-educated—a B.S. in Sociology from Morehouse College, a B.D. from Crozer Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in philosophy from Boston University. In 1964 he was *Time* magazine's Man of the Year, the first African American so honored. Later that same year, he became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize.

We continue to honor and to work toward his dream.

THE WEAVER FAMILY LEGACY

(The following is an edited excerpt from a speech made by **Melvin E. Weaver**, December 2, 2000 at the Grand Opening of the DeVos-Blum Family YMCA of Boynton Beach.)

Marcus Aeschylus Weaver was born in Jacksonville, Alabama in 1887. His father, **Marquis**, owned a small farm on the outskirts of town. He and his wife, **Alice Green Weaver**, had nine children, five girls and four boys. M.A. was the fourth child and the oldest son. In 1907, when M.A. was almost twenty years old, his father told him that the farm could only support one family; and, therefore, he should seek his fortune elsewhere. These were harsh words, but those were harsh times, so M.A. soon packed his grip, said goodbye to his family and childhood and headed for Florida. He eventually wound up in Boynton Beach and for the next few years worked at various farm related jobs from the orange groves of central Florida to the pineapple fields of Dade County. During the summer months he would always return to the family farm in Alabama to help with the crops.

When World War I broke out, M.A., declared 4-F due to an old eye injury, found work in the shipyards of Brunswick, Georgia helping to build ships for the war effort. At war's end, he had saved up the tidy sum of \$1,500.00 and, after stopping by Atlanta, Georgia for an operation to correct his eye, he headed back to Boynton Beach.

Two events occurred in the life of M.A. during the period between 1918 and 1920 that would establish the direction which his life would take. He met his future wife, **Marion Grace Knuth**, who had moved from Cleveland, Ohio with her family, and he went to work for a man named **Ward Miller**, who owned a dairy farm located between the Intracoastal Waterway and the ocean.

Mr. Miller rented plots of his cow pasture to northern visitors who arrived in Florida pulling their house trailers behind their cars. This practice eventually led Mr. Miller to create a mobile home park now known as Briny Breezes.

(Continued on page 3, Legacy)

ANSWER TO "GUESS WHAT AND WHO"

Page 3. If you haven't looked at this picture to make some guesses, go there now before reading the answer below:

Boynton High School graduating class 1944. Boy in center is Harvey E. Oyer, Jr.; Girl, lower left is Betty Lewis (who married Marvin Wright and whose son James Wright spoke to the Historical Society several years ago on Aviation History of the Area during World War II); girl, lower right, is Janie Croft; girl on upper left is Julia Holden who lived on the Range Line (now U.S. 441 and State Road 7); and girl, upper right, is Frances McBride.

(Legacy, continued from p. 2)

M.A., having learned the essentials of dairy farming, decided to invest his meager savings in land and cattle and go into the dairy business for himself. He purchased 90 acres of land at the end of a shell rock road that would later become the northeast corner of the intersection of Old Boynton Road and Military Trail. The Trail in those days was just what the name implies, a strip of land running along the higher elevated terrain that was used by the military during the Seminole Wars. There was nothing to the west except swampland gradually converging into the Everglades. In 1922, M.A. Weaver established his dairy farm on the edge of civilization.

M.A. married Marion Knuth in Delray Beach on September 15, 1920. He was 33 and Marion was 22 years old. This union brought forth five children: four sons (**Stanley, Marcus, Curtis, and Melvin**), and finally a daughter (**Marion Alice**), so desperately desired. Both families had long been involved in local civic and political affairs. **Charles Knuth**, Marion's father, served as mayor of Boynton in 1924. M.A. Weaver was mayor in 1938 and for 29 years was elected to

the Board of Supervisors of the Lake Worth Drainage District, an office **C. Stanley Weaver** still holds. Stanley also served on the City Commission and was elected Mayor in 1955.

M.A. Weaver was known as the "Father of the Dairy Industry" in Palm Beach County. The industry grew until at one point it supplied most of the fresh milk consumed in southeast Florida. Today, not one dairy farm remains in the county.

On a hot summer day in 1954 when M.A. turned over control of his beloved dairy farm to his children, he told them that someday his farm would be the center of a large city. M.A. Weaver died on February 21, 1960 at the age of 73. He never saw the city of his dreams, but his children have. They have helped to build it. On what was once a 1495 acres dairy farm now stand three shopping centers; 2 golf courses; hundreds of homes, villas, and apartments; and the DeVos-Blum Family YMCA of Boynton Beach. M.A. Weaver was a real pioneer and visionary in the truest meaning of the words. He loved this land and understood its strengths as well as its limitations.

GUESS WHAT? AND WHO?

Can you identify the event represented by the picture below? Can you name the people?
(See page 2 for the answers)



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Boynton Beach Historical Society
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Special Thanks to Don and Sean Fenton, Investment Representatives, EDWARD JONES, 901 N. Congress Av., Boynton Beach 33426, for the mailing of this newsletter.

To join the Boynton Beach Historical Society for the calendar year 2003, please complete the form below and mail it with your check for the designated type of membership to Sue Beaman, Treasurer; 2010 S.W. 15th Street, Boynton Beach, FL 33426. Make checks payable to BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM 2003

NAME(S) _____			
STREET/P.O.BOX _____		CITY _____	STATE ZIP _____
TELEPHONE () _____		FAX () _____	E-MAIL _____
TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP	INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) _____	FAMILY (\$35.00) _____	
	PATRON (\$50.00) _____	CORPORATE (\$100.00) _____	