

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

“THE HISTORY OF THE LAKE WORTH DRAINAGE DISTRICT” SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 14 MEETING

Danna Ackerman-White, Director of Community Affairs for the Lake Worth Drainage District (LWDD), will present a program on the history of the drainage district at the meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society on April 14, 2003 at the Boynton Beach City Library. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. The LWDD, originally created in 1915, is responsible for comprehensive flood control, water conservation, and water supply protection to a sizable portion of southeastern Palm Beach County.

At this April 14 meeting the Historical Society will hold a short business meeting for the election of new officers, directors, and trustees for 2003-04. **Stanley Weaver**, will report for the Nominating Committee and there will also be an opportunity for nominations from the floor. All meetings of the Historical Society are open free to the public, but only Society members in good standing are eligible to vote.

SOUTH FLORIDA VEGETATION: SOME DEFINITIONS

[Since our topic for this month's program presentation concerns water management, the editor of *The Historian* is including some definitions of plants affected by their proximity to water that may be unfamiliar to some readers.]

Cypress Dome. Have you noticed stands of cypress in open country growing in circles and appearing to be shaped like domes? These are pond cypress, one of two ancient species which are native to Florida, but related to the redwoods and giant sequoias of California. The older trees grow progressively taller as they approach the center of the dome. The area immediately surrounding them may be marshy or completely submerged and have arising from it a profusion of low-growing woody cypress “knees.”

Hammock. These are dense thickets of hardwoods that either grow in the floodplains of rivers where they are called “low” hammocks or grow slightly above surrounding swamps, prairies, or pine-studded flatlands where they are called “high” hammocks. It is word of Indian origin meaning shaded area.

Mangroves. Commonly this refers to a growth of salt-tolerant plants representing several different species that inhabit Florida's tropical or subtropical coastlines. Three distinct varieties occur: (1) red mangroves which may grow either in or immediately

next to water and have a dense network of aerial prop roots spreading downward from the trunks and lower branches; (2) black mangroves found along sandy shorelines and having stubby, vertical root extensions that project several inches up from the ground; and (3) white mangroves which are the most landward-growing among the three.

IN MEMORIAM: ROBERT B. “BOB” WEEKS

Robert B. Weeks, a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, has passed away since we sent out the last newsletter.

Robert was a fifth generation Floridan whose ancestor **Theophilus Weeks** began service in the American Revolution when only 16 years old. Theophilus came to Florida in 1825 and settled in Alligator (now known as Lake City). He may be the only Revolutionary War soldier buried in Florida, or in any case he is one of a very few.

Robert's family moved to Boynton in 1934. Robert was a war hero, too, and flew 50 missions as a tail gunner in a B-24 during World War II. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After living in Kentucky for 25 years following the war, he returned to Florida with his wife **Rachel** and his two sons, and was living in Riviera Beach at the time of his death. He had been a student in Boynton Schools and was an enthusiastic supporter of the Historical Society.

On behalf of the members of the Society, *The Historian* extends our sympathy to his family.

2003 PAID MEMBERS

[Payment received since March newsletter. If your name is not listed for this month and you have paid, check the February and March newsletters which included those who paid by those months. Because of space limitations, we list only the names of newly paid members whose names were not printed in earlier newsletters.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. and Mrs. William A. DuBois (Barbara)

PATRON MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. and Mrs. J. Paul Carrodus (Joan)
Mr. and Mrs. Delma Swilley (Billie J.)
Mr. and Mrs. Melvin E. Weaver (Charlotte Tatum)

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Bollenbacher (Sarah Thomas)
Mr. and Mrs. James Bynum (Marjorie L.)
Mr. and Mrs. Martin J. Feeney (Irene)
Ms. Nancy Hood McNamee and Mrs. Edythe Hood
Mr. and Mrs. Ward Parker (Martha)
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest G. Simon (Norma B.)
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Warnke (Bev)
(correction, previously listed under Individual Membership)

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. Carl M. Allison
Mr. John E. Breithart
Mrs. Callie Rousseau Brown
Ms. Elsie H. Coyne
Miss Gillian Davis
Ms. Ramona S. Davis
Ms. Arleen Dennison
Ms. Audrey Glacken
Ms. Wilese Jones Langford.
Ms. Mary Law
Mr. Joseph L. Lee
Ms. Evelyn R. Merkel
Mr. Gene Moore
Ms. Dorothy James Turner
Mr. J.H. "Jim" Weeks

OUR CENTURY AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS

We have received copies of *The Palm Beach Post OUR CENTURY* which we are giving to friends and members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society who donate \$15.00 or more to our reserve fund. This is a lovely, hardback book filled with color and black and white photographs of people and events for the past 100 years in Palm Beach County. A special feature is stories and photographs of 100 people who have changed the way we live. The book, first printed in 2000, originally sold for \$28.00. Copies will be available at our April 14 meeting, or you can drop by **Harvey Oyer's** office at 511 East Ocean

Avenue and leave your donation for the Boynton Beach Historical Society with Harvey and he will give you your book.

If you live out of town, we will mail you a copy for an additional \$6.00 shipping and handling.

This is a wonderful book to add to your own library about area history, and one which should make a thoughtful gift to friends or family members.

BERNARD THOMAS PROGRAM POSTPONED

The program about **Bernard Thomas** and his paintings which was to have been presented in May by **Betty Thomas** and **Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher** has been postponed until the fall. A number of people have expressed interest in seeing the mural he painted for the Shrine Temple in West Palm Beach. Because he considered himself to be first and foremost a muralist, the Historical Society is planning a field trip to view this major work and hear about the history of its inspiration. More information should be forthcoming in the September newsletter.

Our May meeting will take place as scheduled on May 12 at 6:00 at the Bpynton Woman's Club. We will have our traditional covered dish dinner. To conform to our Bylaws, we will install our new officers at that meeting, and present a short program the details of which will be included in the May newsletter and meeting notice.

WHAT CAN YOU SHARE WITH US THROUGH *THE HISTORIAN*?

A rich source of local history is the stories people have to tell. Do you have personal histories of your family or friends, or perhaps you recall some anecdotes of school or community life? We would appreciate hearing from you and perhaps sharing your photographs or clippings (we are happy to copy them and return the originals to you). Please contact the editor at P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012, telephone 561-734-5653, or e-mail yms317@bellsouth.net. We have received some great contributions this year, and some of our readers have asked for additional copies about some of the stories we have printed.

A SCHOOL RECOLLECTION

Do some of you who attended the 1913 schoolhouse remember lining up by grades on the pavement in front of the school for an outdoor pledge to the flag before school started? There was a tall, silver flagpole on the west lawn. Occasionally the rope used to hoist the flag slipped out of the pulley at the top of the pole and a fifth or sixth grade boy was asked to climb the pole and rethread it. Liability insurance probably did not exist then.

"PIONEER SCHOOLS"

[This is another excerpt from the book *Pioneer Daughter* by Margaret Gamett Harris (1990). Mrs. Harris has given *The Historian* permission to use portions of her work.]

My father, Andrew Gamett, was a quiet, modest man, and it was years after his death that I found out how aggressive he was concerning early schools. When the Palm Beach County School Board offices were moved from 301 North Olive Avenue to downtown West Palm Beach, my husband, Clyde Harris who was then Assistant Superintendent, discovered copies of the Dade County School Board minutes for the years 1885 to 1909. The Dade County School Board was organized and held its first meeting in 1885. That was also the year my father came to Hypoluxo. In 1909 Palm Beach County separated itself from Dade. Recognizing the historical value of these minutes, my husband had copies made of Volumes One and Three for the Palm Beach County Historical Society and for ourselves. Not long afterwards, Dade County requested copies because theirs were lost. Unfortunately, Volume Two for the years 1897-1905 was missing. It had been borrowed by Guy Metcalf, board member from West Palm Beach, and was never returned or found. This was disappointing to me because my father was on the School Board during those years. He was elected when the county seat was at Juno at the north end of Lake Worth and was still serving when the county seat was returned to Miami in 1900. This meant a train trip and an overnight stay in Miami. That, of course, was much better than when county commissioners and school board members had to cover the distance on foot with the mail carrier in order to use the boats provided for or by him (1885-93). It was also better than traveling from Lantana by covered wagon to Lauderdale where passengers camped overnight, crossed New River by boat, and rode in a different wagon the next day to Lemon City (North Miami) (1893-96).

The first school house, #1, in Dade County was built in the north part of Palm Beach. It was moved to present-day Phipps Park near the ocean where it stands today, a little, red, frame one-room building. School #10, in Dade County, was built at the east end of Lantana Road (then Osborne Road) near the shore of Lake Worth in 1893. Dad was named as advisor to the Lantana School in 1894. The school board minutes record that in 1895 several residents from Hypoluxo went to the board meeting to request a school. This was before my father had married, and it is interesting to note the others did not have children at that time. The request was denied because a state-regulation required three miles between schools.

The minutes record a Dade County School Board meeting was held in Hypoluxo in 1896, just two weeks after Dad brought his school-teacher bride from Kentucky. The Board agreed to abandon the Lantana School and to build halfway between the two post offices, which were a mile apart. Dad offered use of land on present-day U.S. 1, then called the "rock road." A frame building was erected there in 1908. After three years it was sold and moved to the adjoining property to the south. It was replaced by a two-story structure of ornamental concrete block.

The 1928 hurricane destroyed the top floor. The school board voted to discontinue this school, and the land reverted to my father. In the early 1930s, a Palm Beach architect, Maurice Fatio, purchased for a client that property including the acreage behind it all the way to the lake. The client proved to be Harold Vanderbilt, who was building a mansion on 500 feet of oceanfront property in Manalapan. He wanted the land so he could put down a deep well and get good water. From the mainland, a water main was extended eastward on the bottom of the lake. It crossed Hypoluxo Island on property owned by his sister Consuelo and her husband, Col. Jacques Balsan. The water main continued

across the lagoon, under the Ocean Boulevard to the Vanderbilt estate.

Today, as a one-story structure, the school building stands behind the Hypoluxo Town Hall and houses the town water plant. From a tall, impressive structure, it has somehow shrunk to a small, insignificant building. Things have a way of changing!



Miami showing Biscayne Bay and Miami River in 1900 when Garnett went to school board meetings in Miami.



Lantana-Hypoluxo school after it was re-opened and improved with awnings, trees and playground equipment.

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Boynton Beach Historical Society memberships are for the calendar year, January 1 to December 31. If you are not now a member and would like to join, complete the form below and return it 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.

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM, CALENDAR YEAR 2003
WORKING TOGETHER TO PRESERVE BOYNTON BEACH'S HERITAGE**

NAME _____

STREET _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ FAX _____ E-MAIL _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP	INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) _____	FAMILY (\$35.00) _____
	PATRON (\$50.00) _____	CORPORATE (\$100.00) _____