

# 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 33425-0012

Voncile Smith, President

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Voncile Smith, Editor

## SHIPWRECK AUTHOR TO SPEAK AT OCTOBER 13 MEETING

**Linda Reeves** who recently completed a book about a shipwreck off the shores of Delray Beach, S.S. *Inchulva: a Florida Shipwreck Rediscovered*, will discuss her research and the people who assisted her at the October 13 meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The meeting will be at 6:30 at the Boynton Beach City Library. The *Inchulva* sank less than 200 feet off the beach on September 11, 1903 and has long been a popular destination for divers who had no knowledge of the name of the ship or its history.

An historic marker commemorating the site was recently erected. Ms. Reeves, a professional journalist and a resident of Boynton Beach, will bring copies of her book to sign for those interested in buying one.

**ADMISSION IS FREE** to all programs of the Historical Society, and the general public is invited.

**Remember the date — Monday, October 13, 2003, 6:30 p.m., Boynton Beach City Library!**

The Delray Wreck - SS *Inchulva*



Drawing courtesy Delray Beach Historical Society

### OVERLOOKED HISTORY: EARLY BLACK CHURCHES

Among the early churches in Boynton Beach are **St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church** that was established in 1907 under the leadership of **Brother Robert Wells** and **Sister Elizabeth Wells**; and the **St John Baptist Church** founded and organized in 1908 by two pioneers, the **Reverend James Butler** and **Sister Sarah Sims**. The land for the first structure was donated to Sister Sims by a white citizen whose name is unknown.

[See NOTES, p. 3]

### A SURVIVOR STORY: MARIE SHEPARD AND THE HURRICANE OF 1928

Even without the more sophisticated weather equipment we have today, they knew the storm was coming. **Charles Pierce, Sr.** was "storm knowledgeable" and also relied on his barometer and limited radio information to share warnings with the people of the little town of only a few hundred. Some sought refuge in the new high school building completed just two years earlier, others at the Seaboard Railroad Station, while some remained in their homes.

**Marie Shepard** was a little girl. Her parents, **Alfred Clayton Shepard, Annie Streater Shepard**, and their three children, lived in a house which stood behind the historic old school buildings of 1913 and 1926 on the site of the present City Hall and Police Station. A.C. Shepard had arrived in Boynton Beach in 1912. Annie Streater came from Lakeland, Florida, in 1913 when she was to teach in the new 1913 school.

People crowded into the Shepard house, especially those who had sought refuge in the high school building where the school auditorium/gymnasium portion of the roof was blown off and the floor collapsed onto the home economics and lunchroom area below. Eventually the three bedroom, single bath home of the Shepards housed 30-40 individuals for the few hours of the storm. Among them were the **Lewrenzes**, the **Austins**, and the **Laceys**. The Lewrenzes rounded up some of their live chickens and brought them along where they were slaughtered, plucked, cut up, and fried on the kerosene stove that was the usual kitchen cooking appliance at that time. [Continued, p. 2]

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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**'28 STORM SURVIVORS  
ATTEND LUNCHEON**

Six Boynton Beach residents who are survivors of the violent hurricane of 1928 attended a luncheon in West Palm Beach on September 16, 2003 to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the storm. **James Irvine Lacey, Harvey Oyer Jr., Marie Shepard, Lorraine Lewrenz Vicki, Aileen Lewrenz Warner, and Stanley Weaver** were guests of the Palm Beach Economic Forum and the Historical Society of Palm Beach County at the event held at the West Palm Beach Marriott.

The storm is considered one of the greatest national disasters to ever occur in the United States, and recent estimates place the death total as high as 3,000 in Palm Beach County with considerable loss of livestock and property. The large eye of the storm, believed to have been at least 25 miles wide passed over the coastal area from Delray Beach to Jupiter.

**DISCOVER 100 YEARS OF  
PALM BEACH COUNTY  
HISTORY**

*The Palm Beach Post OUR CENTURY* is still available for a \$15.00 donation to the Boynton Beach Historical Society. A lovely hardback volume filled with photographs can be ordered by mail for an extra \$6.00 shipping and handling or picked up in person from Harvey Oyer at 511 East Ocean Avenue. Think about the approaching holidays. This book would make a lovely gift for friends and family.

[A Survivor Story, Continued]

A few people arrived with cuts, scrapes, and bruises and were treated by A.C. Shepard; but none that he saw were injured seriously.

Mr. Shepard, originally from Wisconsin, had earned a degree in pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin. He had served in the military during the Spanish-American War and had been sent to the Philippines. After the war he remained in the Philippines for twelve years where he aided many of the people who needed medical care since he was the closest professional to a medical doctor available.

Homes were usually not equipped with shutters in 1928. To protect the glass in French doors and windows, the Shepards and their refugees braced the panes with magazines.

Marie's uncle, **W.S. Shepard**, and his family lived opposite the Boynton Inlet. The day after the storm, Marie's family learned that her uncle's home and all in it had been completely washed away by the surge through the inlet. Her cousins, **Ruth and Helen Shepard**, who were both good swimmers were asked to make their way to a filling station on higher ground north of the house while their father took the rowboat with his mother-in-law and his wife **Alice** to the **Clyde Miller** home which stood where Benvenuto Restaurant currently is located. The two girls carried the dog and cat with them and waited at the filling station for their father to come back for them. The day after the storm all that remained was sand where the house had stood. The W.S. Shepards had recently acquired a new Edison phonograph which was completely destroyed, but the records for it were buried in the sand. These were recovered, and although their labels were washed away, they were still playable.

Throughout the town, houses lost their roofs, windows were blown out, and garage doors blown in.



**OUR AGRICULTURAL PAST** affects where we are today. Have you ever wondered how Hagen Ranch Road got its name? **Lawrence E. Hagen** with 1600 lb. Bull "Bravo" on the ranch June 26, 1954. [Photo courtesy retired Judge Marvin U. Mounts via Historical Society of Palm Beach County.]



## Archives Corner

By Janet DeVries

**Edwin and Winifred Sherratt** sent in a few copies from the 1950s of the *Boynton Beach News*. The Sherratts were owners of the newspaper from 1947-1952. The 1952 issue I am reading is a far cry from today's news.

Each and every story printed is bursting with wonderful, personal tidbits of "news". It's written as if it's from one neighbor to another. Although I wasn't alive when this issue went to press some fifty years ago, the information printed long ago is making the past come alive, if only in my mind.

Each story holds a permanent map of the "who, what, when and where" of Boynton history. The first story for instance, tells about an upcoming Gala Halloween Carnival. It notes that a parade will kick off the event, and all grade school children will assemble at the school (today Boynton Beach has more than 15 different schools) and march down Ocean Ave to the business section of town. More historic information is supplied when it states a cafeteria-style supper will be served at the shuffleboard court. It goes on to say that merchandise and games will be offered in the area adjacent to the post office. This is a very short article, yet it paints quite a vivid picture of the downtown area.

There's a story listing names of students making a step toward a youth center in Boynton; it lists the teenagers by name, along with the chaperones for an upcoming dance at the Legion Post Hall. On an even more personal note, another brief mentions a family birthday party, given at home for a five-year-old girl, listing the names of the young guests, and telling what scrumptious food was served.

In six pages and fifteen minutes of reading I not only learned who managed the Boynton Theatre (**Mrs. Alva Shook**), how much the Boynton Beach city budget was (\$114,000 for 1953), and that local realtor **Ann Barrett** had just returned from an extended vacation in Europe and Africa. I felt as if I had stepped back in time. I could just about taste the key lime pies that the Legion Auxiliary was offering at their bake sale at **Wright's Grocery**.

Naturally, the growth of this area has impeded a paper generating this type of homegrown news. I found it interesting that there was not one item printed that was of crime or negativity. Does that mean it didn't exist back then, or perhaps that the media did not jump on every little bit of gossip or malice?

History is all around us; even what you ate for breakfast today will be history by tomorrow. Never think that your history isn't important, it truly is. History not only teaches us, it entertains us, and it transports us back in time for a glimpse of the past.

[Note: Janet DeVries is Library Assistant, Boynton Beach City Library. She is also a Trustee on the Board of Directors of the Boynton Beach Historical Society and directs archival preservation for the Society's holdings. We hope that her "Archives Corner" will be a regular feature in *The Historian*.]

## FUTURE PROGRAMS

We are continuing to plan programs for the year. A special program for Veterans' Day is being developed for November. Watch for details in the next newsletter, and put the date on your calendar now—November 10, 7:00 p.m.

We postponed a program on artist Bernard Thomas until this year. His wife and daughter, Betty Thomas and Sarah Bollenbacher will present the program which will probably include a field trip to see his mural in the Scottish Rite Temple. Details on this will also be forthcoming.

The two presentations last year scheduled through the Florida Humanities Council in cooperation with the Friends of the Boynton Beach City Library met with such success that we are planning two and possibly three this year. Watch for future announcements. There are some wonderful possibilities. Set the meeting dates aside for the year. Remember we usually meet the second Monday of the months of September, October, November, January, February, March, and April. We will probably schedule any field trips for Saturday.

## SOME OF YOU HAVE SOME GREAT MATERIAL TO SHARE

Some people have very kindly sent in material to be included in *The Historian*. Much of it has been printed, but your editor is holding some for later issues, **BUT** I can always use more. Little anecdotes or short reports of your real life events that concern you personally, your family, or your friends are welcome and lend a human touch that is often lacking in archival or historical accounts. I do not have a FAX at home, but Harvey Oyer has graciously offered to let me use the machine in his office—561-364-9848. Include Harvey's or my name on anything you FAX, and also indicate that it is for the Historical Society. In this day of multi-channels of communication, I do have a telephone—561-734-5653, and email, address - Vms317@bellsouth.net and, if you like, you can still use the US Postal Service to send something to the Society's mailbox.

## DUES NOTICES TO BE MAILED IN NOVEMBER

While this is a reminder that our dues notices officially are mailed out in November of each year, we usually include a dues and membership form on each mailing of *The Historian*. The dues you pay now will be applied to the 2004 membership year; so if you want to avoid the year-end hassle of holiday confusion, why not mail in your dues now. See the form on the back side of this newsletter. We thank those of you who have already paid. We will list you in a later issue.

[NOTES: The information on black churches is from *Like a Mighty Banyan: Contributions of Black People to the History of Palm Beach County*. Editor: Vivian Reissland Rouson-Gossett; Associate Editor C. Spencer Pompey. Published by Palm Beach Junior College, 1982. Unfortunately, the information it contains on black history in Boynton Beach is very limited.]

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Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012

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

To join the Boynton Beach Historical Society for the calendar year 2004, please complete the form below and mail it with your check for the designated type of membership to Boynton Beach Historical Society, P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012. Make checks payable to BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY. Memberships are based on a calendar year, valid January 1 through December 31.

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM 2004**

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