BOYNTON SCHOOL YEAR BEGAN EARLY IN 1916

A recent announcement by the School Board indicates that Palm Beach County Schools will begin earlier than ever in 2004, the second week in August. Your Editor, who has been volunteering a few hours a month in the archival section at the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, recently found an article in The Tropical Sun for Friday, August 25, 1916, page 9, which reads:

"Boyon, August 25—The second week of school closes today, it being customary to open school early in this district on account of closing in the spring in time for the children to help in the work of picking vegetables."

"There will be at least one hundred pupils this year. Eighty are from the town of Boynton and the balance from the flatwoods west of Boynton. The children from the country have been delayed three days on account of the truck not being ready for the transportation work."

"Arrangements have been made for the introduction of Spanish this year and Boynton students as well as those in the other towns in the county may study this language. It is especially recommended for those who contemplate a business career."

This article reveals that school in Boynton began about August '3 in 1916. Other sections of the county began school later—most well into September.

Earlier articles in June and July issues of The Tropical Sun named the following teachers for Boynton for 1916-17. Their appointments and salaries were set by the School Board:

- Miss Marie Aylesworth, $75.00 a month
- C.W. Carnes, no salary indicated
- Miss Blanche Devault, $65.00 a month
- Miss Agnes Heiseth, $65.00 a month
- Miss Ethel M. Wilson, $65.00 a month
- Principal to be supplied, $100.00 a month
- Mary Simmons Holmes, colored teacher at Boynton, no salary indicated.

According to information in Like a Mighty Banner, 1982, a public school for Negro children was established in Boynton, September 7, 1896. The number of teachers assigned to each school, the "white" and the "colored," was not mentioned in the articles reviewed.

The articles did show, however, that the salaries of both the principal and the teachers at "the high school" [the only one in the county was in West Palm Beach] were higher.
“THE HOUSE OF LACEY”

Julius Laycey appears to have had a copy of his family history which was so lively by the British colonists who were there. It is filled with stories from that time, supplemented by additional information by James Laycey Jr., as reported by him.

The Baytown Home in 2003 is an rich mixture of people representing a variety of cultures and traditions, but we sometimes forget that immigration into all regions of the United States has been a continuing process since early colonial days and even before we actually entered an independent country. Economic factors have often been a prime mover in bringing people to our shores at any of these times.

The name Laycey figures large in history, though often overshadowed without the letter e and with an e instead of an i. In “the town of Red St. Edmund” is a weathered column in the ruins of the famous abbey in which quarter the names of the men who founded King John to sign the Magna Carta. Among them is the name of Baron De Lacey who was one of the signatories. A De Lacey was suitor to the Black Knight who fought at the battle of Crécy in France in 1346.

William Lacey, Irvin’s grandfather, was born in 1859 in the village of Reddam, in Buckinghamshire, England. His mother Ann died at her birth. William probably received his schooling at a Chinn School and was taught the Three Rs. He admitted himself it was not much of an education, but he became proficient in all three and later read a good deal, adding to his knowledge. “William told school at an early age. Like many others he took up a trade for a skilled craftsmanship in those days stood a much better chance of getting a good job. Because the area where he lived was noted for its furnishing, “William went into the furniture trade.”

Play in the county towns was poor, however, anywhere around 1880 “William decided to leave home for the better weather of the city. He caught a train to London and began work in a factory which made wood toys and terrier bails.”

Alice Mary Naude Whitchlock, who was married, William, was born in 1867 in a house in New Street in Camberwell, a district in South London. The house had a staff that she later married and was a qualified nurse. Her schooling benefited from the education of the schools by the State and taught, compared to today, was minimal, the did at least learn to read and write and was proficient in arithmetic.

They married in 1884 and settled in Camberwell to raise a family. Their first child, a son Henry William, was born at the end of 1884. He was the oldest of eleven children. In 1901 when Alice had given birth to her eighth child, the family decided to move to a larger house in London. This became the House of Lacey in 1920. It was a large house that built in the late nineteenth century. It contained six small rooms and at the back there was a lean-to addition, known as the officehouse, which served as a room for men, etc., and also had the extra advantage of providing a roof over the entrance to the toilet. The downstairs room in known in those days as the front room, living room, and scullery, were all small was the three bedrooms upstairs. There was one bathtub over a brown slate sink and also in the scullery was a kitchen range for the cooking and a large copper in the corner under which a fire could be lit to boil the weekly wash. Washing oneself was not easy, nor much privacy, and bathwater was done in a galvanized bath. When children were small the bathing would be done in winter in the living room in front of the fire.

In 1904 and 1906 Alice gave birth to two more children. The house bought in 1901 was becoming very crowded. Work was done to find and was still very low. In 1907, Henry, who was to become Irvin’s father, and his next two brothers emigrated to Canada to work in the Cobalt/Silver mines. This did not turn out too well, and they left empty-handed. Ada married Ada Emily Bifold in Canada in 1910. She, too, was from England. Their eldest child, Ruth Iris Alice Lacey, was born in Canada. Ruth was to grow up to marry Albert McGregor in Boyton Beach and become the mother of Sandra McGregor and Margaret Ann McGregor Miller. Unfortunately, Ruth died of cancer in 1945 when her children were still very young.

In 1912 Ada went back to England where her second child John Henry William Lacey (Jack) was born. Meanwhile, her husband Henry left Canada and moved to Lake Worth. By 1914 Henry had moved to Boynton and Ada had returned to England to be with him.

Henry and Ada had seven children, five of whom were born in Florida. In addition to Ruth and Jack, they have Harold Walter (Skate); Hazel Mayor who married Winston McGregor; the brother of Ruth Iris husband; Albert McGregor; James Irvin; Walter Ridout; and Ada Leona.

While Henry was a petroler by trade, he worked for years on the Lake Worth Drainage Ditch and surveyed for the Palm Beach Canal. Later he worked with light bidding, a building contractor. Still later he was with Jepson, a cabinet shop in West Palm Beach.

Irvin was born when the family lived at the corner of Northeast Second Street and Ash Avenue in Boynton Beach.

The Boyton Lacey did different kinds of work over the years. Skate and Irvin joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1935. Jack returned from the Army after World War II and was employed by Florida Power and Light Company. Walter served in the Navy later worked as a carpenter, then operated a boat repair on Ocean Avenue. Skate operated a filling station on the southeastern coast of Ocean Avenue and Federal Highway. Jack who was a machinist and carpenter worked in Alaska on the construction of the Alcan Highway. Hazel taught school in Boynton for many years.

They were a loving and musical family. Henry loved to play the organ and practiced by the hour on one of the first United Methodist Church. But over the years his fingers had lost their flexibility because of the hard physical labor he had done. Skate played the harmonica and the accordion. Stanley played the harmonica, rhythm and sang and played the piano, and Hazel sang in the choir.

Today the grandchildren of Henry and Ada living in the area are Ruth’s daughter, Sandra McGregor and Margaret Ann Miller, Walter’s daughters, Valerie Lacey Edwards and Phyllis Lacey, and Jack’s son, Joel, who lives at the cottage.

(Source for early Lacey family, “The House of Lacey,” unattributed manuscript by Peter R. Lacey, Northport, England, 1993.)
FLORIDA VOCABULARY

Lighter knot: The pitch-felled knot of a pine tree, brick hard and highly flammable, often used to start and maintain bright, hot fires.

Double-peg log cabin: A common type of dwelling in nineteenth century Florida—the original "Cracker house." Hand-hewn logs were laid out to make two parallel structures some eight feet apart, with the Raos raised well above the ground. Between and around each of these "pens" a broad covered porch or "log groin" was built. The kitchen was detached to reduce the risk of fire and was built behind the house. There were no screens or window glass, so smudge pots and mosquito killing were the only defense against ever-present insects.

Pinny woods rooster: Cracker term for Florida's fierce native wild bird. They can weigh up to several hundred pounds and have a massive head and shoulders, four tufts that might reach six inches in length, and a perpetually foul disposition. Long considered dangerous for anyone to encounter. It reportedly kills and eats nesting regularly and has even been reported to fight alligators upon occasion.

Painter: Cracker term for the Florida panther.

Dinner: The major meal of the day was customarily eaten between noon and two o'clock in the South. The evening meal was "lunch," a light repast often consisting of cold meat and leftovers, or perhaps nothing more substantial than fisherman and cornbread, or hot tococa and bread.

HISTORICAL MEMORABILIA

Copies of Our Century, a lovely, hardcover book filed with photographs of people and events of the past 100 years in Palm Beach County, is available for a donation of $15.00 or more to the Society. Originally priced at $28.00, this book makes a lovely gift or memorial for anyone interested in local history. Mail requests accredited with an additional $1.00 for shipping and handling, or pick up one in person from Harvey Oyer at 511 E. Ocean Avenue, Boynton Beach, FL 33435.

Copies of Boynton Beach: The First 100 Years, a 38-page pictorial history of Boynton at $10.00 plus $1.75 S&H.

9-inch Centennial Commemorative Plates at $10.00 plus $3.00 S&H.

Who are the students in the picture? How many can you name?

[Photo from the Mary Show Collection, courtesy of The Cultural Center]

THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE MISTRION WILL BE IN JANUARY. WATCH FOR IT!

A NOTE ABOUT OUR ARCHIVES

For years the Boynton Beach Library has permitted the Historical Society to store records and artifacts in a special room by the Reference section. This shared effort represents a long standing working relationship we have had since the Library was first established. You will note that Virginia Farace, the Library Director, and Janet DeVries, Library Associate, both hold elected positions on our Board of Trustees.

Janet, who wears many hats, works with the Library, and the Schofield Children's Museum, and gives some time each week to archival cataloging and preservation of materials held by the Cultural Center (which oversees the Museum) and the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The time she can devote to archival work is limited, however.

The Historical Society has some materials which are in serious need of immediate attention. As a member and President of the Historical Society, I have begun some action to try to help this situation. Debi Murray, who heads the archives section of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, has offered to provide me some guidance, and I hope to begin meeting weekly with Janet DeVries so that we can take steps to preserve what we have.

Archival preservation requires some special equipment. Most of the paper, especially newspaper, used for the past 100 years is full of acid, and this acid causes the paper to disintegrate. But it also contaminates other papers or materials it comes in contact with. Wood products also emit a gaseous acid which causes discoloration and disintegration of archival holdings. Materials should only be handled when the examiner or preservationist is wearing cotton gloves. The Board of Directors of the Historical Society has appropriated a small sum to be used for acquisition of plastic sleeves for storing photographs and other papers, archival quality folders, archival quality storage boxes, cotton gloves, and other materials.

Janet and I will continue working to organize and prepare our histopic papers, but after the archival quality materials arrive we could use some additional help from library volunteers who would be willing to learn preservation procedures.

Students at Boynton High School in 1949 during a lunch break (the last year the building was open as a high school).
Special Thanks to Don and Dona Fenton, Investment Representatives, EDWARD JONES, 401 N. Congress Av., Boynton Beach 33426 for helping to defray the cost of mailing of this Newsletter.

Boynton Beach Historical Society memberships run 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.

| JOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM, CALENDAR YEAR 2004 |
| WORKING TOGETHER TO PRESERVE JOYNTON 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) |