

# THE HISTORIAN

The Newsletter of  
THE BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf, Briny Breezes and all areas of West Boynton to US Hwy 441  
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Voncile Smith, President

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Voncile Smith, Editor

## HARVEY E. OYER, III: RESTORATION OF 1916 PALM BEACH COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Is the program for the Monday, October 11, 2004 meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The meeting is scheduled for 7:00 p.m. at the Boynton Beach City Library. Harvey, who is President of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, will discuss the role of that group in bringing about the work currently underway to restore this historic marker of Palm Beach County's history. Harvey has been instrumental in promoting the project through the Palm Beach Society which has gained commitment and funding from the Palm Beach County Commission to bring about the restoration. The plans for use of the building after reconstruction include the creation of a County History Museum to display artifacts and other materials housed in the archives of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County.

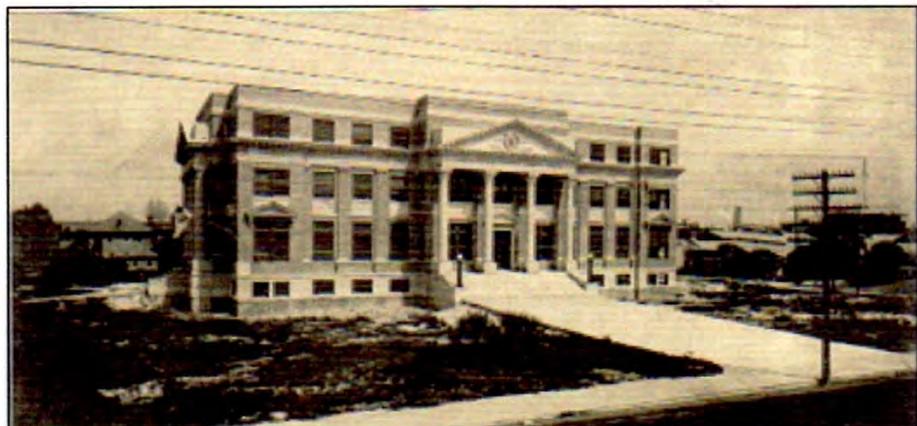
Harvey III is descended from several of the County's pioneer families and has a long-standing interest in the preservation of historic sites, buildings, memorabilia, stories, photography and art, and other materials relevant to the history of Florida.

All meetings of the Boynton Beach Historical Society are open free to the general public.



Harvey E. Oyer, III

Photo on right, Palm Beach  
County Courthouse, c. 1917.  
Photos courtesy Historical  
Society of Palm Beach County



## SEPTEMBER PROGRAM CANCELLED BECAUSE OF HURRICANES RESCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER

**LIGHTHOUSE FAMILIES: The Knights, the Pierces, and the Vosses** originally scheduled for September 13 has been postponed to November 8, 2004, 7:00 p.m. Boynton Woman's Club, 1010 South Federal Highway. Sheldon Voss, son of Frederick Voss, Jr., and well-known in Broward County for his talks to school children on Lighthouses, will discuss the history of the Lighthouses with which his families were involved. Both the Hillsboro Lighthouse and the Jupiter Lighthouse were manned by members of these families in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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**President's Message**

Writing *The Historian* several times a year gives me the opportunity to comment on matters that are relevant to the history and the future of our area. If you are reading this, I trust you are in the process of putting the stress and inconveniences of our unprecedented spate of hurricanes behind you.

Admittedly, we are more or less at the mercy of the power, telephone, and cable companies for the restoration of their services, but one thing those of us who are homeowners can do to reduce outages and cut down on other damages is to consider what vegetation we plant and how we maintain it.

Rapid growing exotic species may provide quick shade, but they are brittle and break or uproot easily in high winds. Several large acacias growing behind my house on homeowners' association common property were essentially ripped apart by strong gusts. Even now, nearly a month after Hurricane Frances tore through them, their branches lie in jumbled heaps often still hanging partially connected to the main trunk. The association president has had trouble finding an insured removal service willing to clean them up at this time.

If you are replanting, use care in your selections. The Home and Garden sections of our major local newspapers offer suggestions. The Florida Agricultural Extension Division is another good source of information. Palm Beach County Extension office advice is free—call 561-276-1260.

I had a huge, beautiful Royal Poinciana that shaded a large portion of my yard during the summer, but it hung in part over my house and over that of my neighbor. It was on the property when I bought the house. I remembered the devastation to this variety of quick-growing tree during the hurricanes of 1947 when a huge limb fell near my grandmother's house. I had my tree removed last March and the roots ground away so no new shoots would grow from them. In its place I have planted a small Southern magnolia—a hardwood that will be slow growing, but much more storm durable.

For the future, I urge you to choose wisely for your replantings, and to keep all your trees and shrubbery well

pruned throughout the year. If we all do this, we will have considerably less yard waste after other hurricanes and fewer potential missiles which may injure or cause other damage.

May your yard, and you, have a happy recovery.

**"PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OF LAKE WORTH"**

[From *The Lake Worth Historian*, a souvenir journal from 1896 reproduced by the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. Lake Worth referred to the region of the Lake at this time, not the City of Lake Worth which was not formed until 1912.]

By Anna L. Bonker

"A trip to Lake Worth just twenty years ago differed somewhat from a like journey in the year '96. I was a girl fresh from a Massachusetts college and having visited in the South, lived in the West and been educated in the East, considered myself something of a traveler as far as my own country was concerned. But nothing seemed to me so surprisingly peculiar as the small sail boat my father met me with at Titusville, in which I was to travel the hundred and forty miles of Indian River and thirteen miles of ocean, into Lake Worth Inlet.

"I was not at all afraid, as the boat was managed by an excellent sailor, and I had a certain spirit of recklessness and daring which the young usually dignify by the name of courage. We left Titusville that night, and the events of the journey are indelibly stamped upon my memory. The usual discomforts of 'camping out'—having your food seasoned with sand instead of pepper and salt, being caught in numerous unexpected showers, getting doses of sand flies when the wind went down, and getting head winds when they blew at all—were some of my new experiences.

"We camped at night before the sun went down, in order that supper might be cooked ere the appearance of the musical mosquito, whose numbers in those days trebled and quadrupled those of the present time. Beds were made and nets were hung under which each individual crept and made himself as comfortable as the oppressive circumstances permitted.

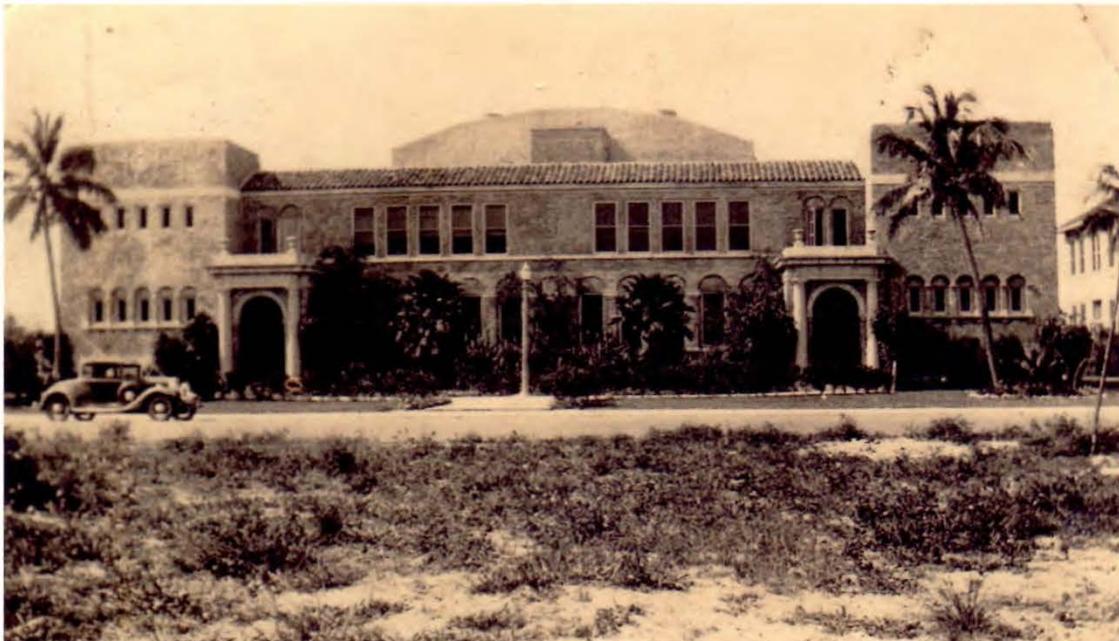
"One morning I awoke feeling a burning and stinging sensation about my wrists and neck, which hurried my movements astonishingly. A nest of large red ants had made themselves at home in my quarters and were quite disposed to dispute possession.

"It took us ten days to reach Jupiter, and thankful enough I was to avail myself of the hospitality offered at the lighthouse, and rest. At Jupiter my father found a friend, who kindly offered to take us through the saw grass, instead of waiting (no one knew how long) for a favorable west wind in which to sail out of the Jupiter Inlet and make the thirteen miles run on the ocean to Lake Worth.

"So we stowed ourselves away in a row boat and were pushed with long poles, Indian fashion, through acres and acres of sharp, tall grass, with nothing (to my eye visible) as a path. And so I reached my home, stiff from my cramped position, hungry, worn out, and my face like a boiled lobster from the sun.

"But I was young, my spirits elastic and recuperation not a hard task, so I soon began to look about for amusement."

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Boynton High School c. 1927  
[Photo courtesy of Sue Murphy Beaman]

## UPDATE ON HISTORIC BOYNTON HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING

The Boynton Cultural Centre, Inc., which oversees the operation of the 1913 Schoolhouse Children's Museum, has requested that the Boynton Beach City Commission authorize the City Manager to work with the Cultural Centre in its request to define, develop, and design use for and operate the Old High School in partnership with the City. This proposal is scheduled for consideration for the October 4, 2004 meeting of the City Council. The Board of Directors of the Boynton Beach Historical Society has voted to support this request.

In its request the Cultural Centre has noted that assignment of the project is important so that one group may spearhead the effort. *The Historian* will provide additional information in subsequent issues.

## THE PLEASANT CITY FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Soon after your current editor began editing *The Historian*, representatives from several historical societies within the County met to exchange information. The names and addresses from each were distributed, and some of us began mailing copies of our newsletters (if we had one) to the others. The most faithful correspondent has been Everlee Jimerson Clarke who represents the monthly *Pleasant City Family Newsletter* in West Palm Beach.

Ms. Clarke's mission is a noble one. *The Palm Beach Post* paid tribute to her efforts in a lovely article on September 25, 2004. Pleasant City is the oldest black community in Palm Beach County, and Ms. Clarke is fervently attempting to record and preserve its history, but not without some opposition. Some would prefer to let the story fade into oblivion. Many of the residents were hired help to wealthy whites in Palm Beach. They brought their earnings over the bridge to

build shops, schools, churches, a theater and a community swimming pool. Ms. Clarke operates a small gallery at 2127 North Dixie Hwy. which contains photographs and other memorabilia. She has a contract to complete a picture book of the history. Your editor is grateful for the excellent continuing information she sends in each issue of her newsletter.



Everlee Jimerson Clarke  
[Photo from *The Palm Beach Post*, September 25, 2004]



BOYNTON WAS YOUNG

... Fred Benson and Mrs. Clifford Dunbar



HER WORK HELPED

... Edythe (Mrs. Howard) Hood



ONE OF BOYNTON'S FIRST FAMILIES

... Treasurer, Glenn Murray



OCEAN RIDGE PIONEERS

... Mrs. Pomeroy Dunbar and Mrs. Bertha Chadwell



LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

... Beryl Woolbright and Stanley Weaver



CHARTER MEMBER FROM OCEAN RIDGE

... Mrs. Donald Bird with Mrs. Louis Merkel

### First Meeting Held By Historical Society

About fifty people were present on May 24 at the first meeting of the new Boynton Beach Historical Society which includes pioneers, new comers - all residents of Boynton and the immediate area who are interested in the preservation of its history.

Mrs. Henry Harding, the temporary chairman presided. She read the proposed constitution for the society and it was accepted by the members present. Mrs. Norman Merkel was the program chairman.

Among those who spoke of the early days of the town were Glenn Murray, Mrs. L. C. Chadwell, Pomroy Dunbar, Mrs. Donald Bird, Mrs. Katie Andrews, Fred

Benson, and Irl Garnett. There were many references to the transportation available away back when boats, bicycles and trains were the usual thing. It was quite awhile before the automobile was often seen. Many more of these stories will be told at subsequent meetings.

The nominating committee will consist of Mrs. Fred Benson, Walter Dutch, Mrs. Howard Hood and Stanley Weaver. Elections will be held at the next regular meeting. Meanwhile it has been suggested that in true pioneer style, there should be a picnic on the Fourth of July. If anyone is interested in furthering this he should get in touch with Mrs. Norman Merkel.

### WE HAD OUR 37th BIRTHDAY THIS SUMMER!

This article is from the *Boynton Beach Star*, June 1, 1967 (Copy courtesy of Edythe Hood). Several of the members mentioned in the article are still active members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society—Edythe Hood, Stanley Weaver, and Rebecca (Mrs. Norman) Merkel.

### 1910 MAP ON Page 5

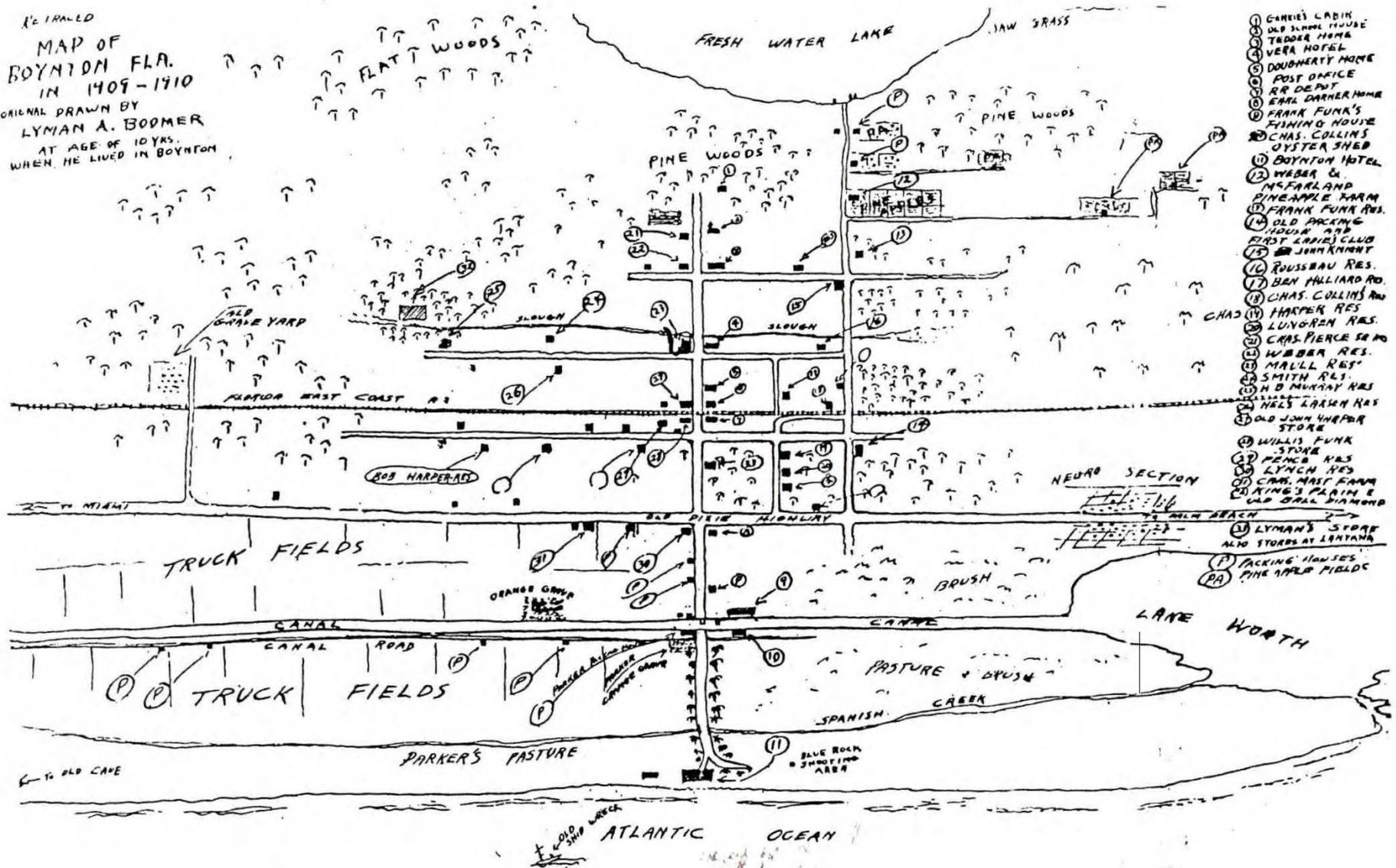
[Map courtesy of Bob Katz]

The map on the following page was drawn by a 10 year old boy whose name was recorded, apparently some time after the map was submitted, as "Lyman A. Boomer." Since no such family could be found, Bob Katz and Harvey Oyer have speculated that he was probably a member of the Lyman family nicknamed "Boomer."

To aid reading the map, the list on the left is transcribed:

1. Gonkie's Cabin
  2. Old School House
  3. Tedder Home
  4. Vera Hotel
  5. Dougherty Home
  6. Post Office
  7. RR Depot
  8. Earl Darner Home
  9. Frank Funk's Fishing House
  10. Chas. Collins Oyster Shed
  11. Boynton Hotel
  12. Weber & McFarland Pineapple Farm
  13. Frank Funk Res.
  14. Old Packing House and First Ladies Club
  15. John Knight
  16. Rousseau Res.
  17. Ben Hilliard Res.
  18. Chas. Collins Res.
  19. Chas. Harper Res.
  20. Lungren Res.
  21. Chas. Pierce, Sr. Res.
  22. Weber Res.
  23. Maull Res.
  24. Smith Res.
  25. H.B. Murray Res.
  26. Nels Larsen Res.
  27. Old John Harper Store
  28. Willis Funk Store
  29. Pence Res.
  30. Lynch Res.
  31. Chas. Mast Farm
  32. King's Plain & Old Ball Diamond
  33. Lyman's Store
- Also stores at Lantana  
P Packing Houses  
PA Pineapple Fields  
Ocean Avenue (unnamed) intersects Old Dixie Highway in the center of the map. Note the "Negro Section" (later moved) straddling Dixie Hwy. Note also the Florida East Coast Railroad, and Spanish Creek between the Canal and the Atlantic Ocean

RETRACED  
 MAP OF  
 BOYNTON FLA.  
 IN 1909-1910  
 ORIGINAL DRAWN BY  
 LYMAN A. BOOMER  
 AT AGE OF 10 YRS.  
 WHEN HE LIVED IN BOYNTON



In 1910 a pioneer child, Lyman A. Boomer age 10, drew this map of the Town of Boynton. Extensive research failed to find any record of this early family.

