



The Historian

The Newsletter of the Boynton Beach Historical Society

Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Briny Breezes, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton, in addition to supporting the preservation of the history of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida as a whole.

2014 Number 5

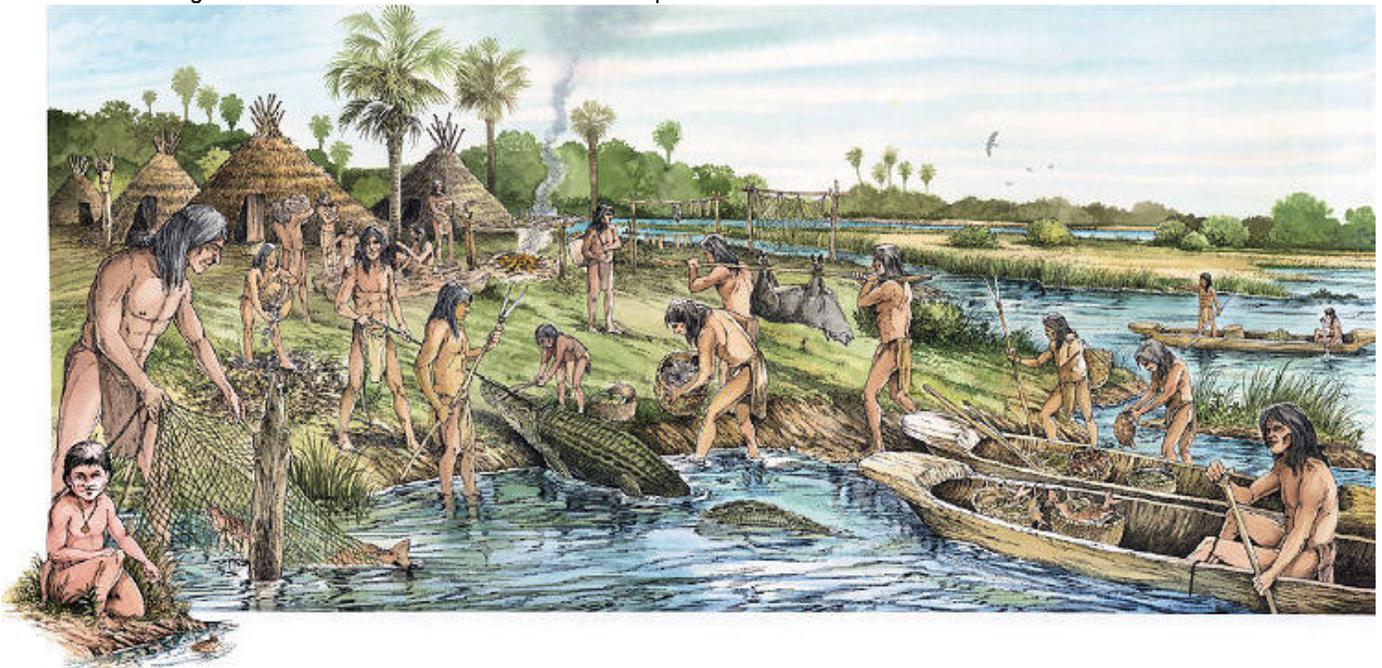


May 2014

SUPPER and INDIAN MOUNDS

That's the agenda for the Sunday, May 4th meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. We will follow our tradition and meet at 5:00 p.m. at the Boynton Woman's Club to close out the Spring season. We will dine and then have a program on the Boynton Mounds. The Historical Society provides the entrees, the beverages (including wine), and the place set-ups (napkins, plates, flatware and cups). You are asked to bring one of the following, sufficient to serve 8 or more—a salad, a dessert or a vegetable casserole. If you do not wish to bring a dish, you may pay \$10.00 per person at the door, and join us anyway. People who do not wish to eat with us may come free to the program at approximately 5:45 p.m.

The program, **Boynton Mounds: Past, Present and Future**, will be presented by Rebecca Stitt, current FAU graduate student who will reveal findings from her recent excavations of the Boynton Mound Complex located in Palm Beach County. The Boynton Mound Complex is composed of sand mounds, midden mounds and earthworks similar to the Belle Glade culture. Originally excavated in the 1970s, evidence of European trade was found. Building on this research, Rebecca will present a robust history of the evolution of our current understanding about the culture that once called the complex home.



A Scene from the Glades Culture

WHAT:
WHEN:

COVERED-DISH DINNER and a **SPECIAL DISCUSSION** on the **BOYNTON MOUNDS COMPLEX**
SUNDAY, MAY 4th, 5:00 p.m. **WHERE:** **BOYNTON WOMAN'S CLUB, 1010 S. Federal Hwy.**

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Our website is www.boyntonhistory.org. The e-mail address is boyntonhistory@gmail.com

Please mail inquiries or information to our local address P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425. Voncile can be reached at 561-734-5653. Boynton Beach Historical Society number is 561-327-4690.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach
www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory

The Historian is mailed eight times a year—September, October, November, January, February, March, April and May—to all members. No copies are produced in December, June, July and August. Copies from past years are posted on the website.

LIFE MEMBERS

Randall Gill
Alexander "Sandy" Simon
Curtis and Nain Weaver

LAST HISTORIAN UNTIL SEPTEMBER

Please take note of the schedule above. This is to remind you that this is the last *Historian* until September. We schedule no program meetings during the months of June, July and August; and we do not compose and mail out copies of *The Historian*.

We call this to your attention because sometimes members who receive no copies during those months assume we have dropped them from our mailing list.

If you have received this copy, you will also be mailed one for September.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Directors is scheduled for Monday, June 2nd, 6:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Boynton Beach. Any member in good standing is welcome to attend any Board meeting and may present requests and participate in the discussion. However, only Board members may make motions and vote on them.

CORA STICKNEY HARPER FOUNDER, BOYNTON WOMAN'S CLUB

New research by our President Janet DeVries and First Vice-President Ginger Pederson has revealed many interesting details about this important woman who was a major figure in the early history of Boynton Beach.

The Cora Stickney Harper Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution [DAR] in Fort Pierce contacted the Boynton Beach Historical Society regarding information about Cora Stickney Harper who founded their DAR chapter in 1914. Cora Harper also had founded the Boynton Woman's Club in 1909 and served as that organization's first president. Janet's and Ginger's findings have been shared with the DAR Chapter for their 100th Anniversary gala scheduled for May 14th. Both will attend the event to preview the incredible story about Cora that they have unearthed, and which they plan to publish in the fall. The new information will not only add greatly to the history of Fort Pierce, but to that of Boynton Beach as well.

MISS AMERICA VISITS BOYNTON, December, 1956



In 1956 Miss America was Marian McKnight of Manning, S.C. She arrived in December on an Eastern Airlines flight to judge a beauty contest at Boynton Beach's All Star Festival. Meeting her at her arrival at the airport are Mayor Stanley Weaver; Congress member Paul Rogers; Miss Florida, Sally Fisher of Coral Gables; Chamber of Commerce President Cliff Province, six-year old Judith Merkel who presented the orchid bouquet; and Mrs. Mott (Lois Jones) Partin, President of the Boynton Woman's Club.

CELEBRATING the LEGACY OF CONRAD PICKEL

Conrad Pickel was a visionary stained glass artist who designed windows for religious and secular buildings throughout the United States. He lived and worked in Boynton Beach where a number of fine examples of his work can be found. As we mentioned in last month's *Historian*, he designed and built the triangular building just north of the Woman's Club as his showroom and studio.

(A bit of historic trivia—the Woman's Club at one time had an opportunity to purchase the lot where the Pickel building stands, but did not want to spend the money to buy it believing that such a small odd-shaped piece of property would never suit anyone interested in building on it. Then along came Conrad Pickel----)

On May 24, Art in Public Places, the Boynton Beach Historical Society and the Boynton Beach Historic Preservation Board have scheduled a number of events honoring Pickel's achievements.

At 8:00 a.m. on May 24 a group will meet at the Boynton Beach City Library to begin a tour of buildings where Pickel's work is on display. Warren Adams, Planner for the Historic Preservation Board, and Janet DeVries will narrate a tour of these building and points of interest including NE 3rd Street Industrial Units, Boynton Beach Park and Mausoleum, Ascension Lutheran Church, St. Joseph's Episcopal Church, and Galleria Fantasia. Access to the interiors will be provided at the Boynton Memorial Park Mausoleum, the Ascension Lutheran Church, and St. Joseph's Episcopal Church.

The bus will leave promptly at 8:00 a.m. from the Library north parking lot which is accessed from E. Ocean Avenue.

On completion of the bus tour, the free program will work of Conrad Pickel will be given by the Boynton Beach Historical Society and Conrad's son Paul Pickel. For further information call 561-742-6757.



Pickel Building

UPCOMING

Weekend History Stroll—Lake Trail Stroll, in Palm Beach, April 26, 2014, 4:00 p.m. Meet in front of Flagler, Museum. 60 minute tour led by Janet DeVries and Ginger Petersen. Call 561-327-4690 for More information.

May Program Meeting and Annual Covered-Dish Supper. See front cover.

Galaxy Elementary School Dedication, May 8, 2014. By invitation.

Conrad Pickel Events, May 24th, 2014. See column on left, and back cover for full schedule.

ABOUT BRINY BREEZES

Dorothy Mann McNiece, who lives in Briny Breezes, has described what her life has been like in that little community. One selection discusses her father's business:

"My father talked to Paul Miller, the manager of the Park, about a building for a gas station to be located on A1A (now Old Ocean Blvd.) just north of the office grocery store and snack bar. The building was built to include a gift shop for my parents to sell sea shells and handmade shell articles. My father made shell jewelry and polished sea beans and sea hearts found on the Briny beach for necklaces."



Mann's Gas Station

"Some of the rare shells were found in the summer by divers, sold to shell shops and then my parents would purchase them. The Vanderbilts from Manalapan would stop by on a Sunday afternoon to buy shells."

"In the late 1930s Ellene and Glen Mann sold gasoline and kerosene from a pump and barrel at their little gift shop

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located on the ocean just north of our present Ocean Clubhouse. In the gift shop they displayed jewelry they had polished and made from sea beans and sea hearts found on the sands of our Briny shore. . . .”

“SEA BEANS

“Sea beans are considered one of the most beautiful and unique souvenirs of our South Florida beaches. Beachcombers find them in limited numbers in seaweed left at high water mark by the receding tide. They are native to the tropics in Africa, South America, Mexico and islands in between. They grow on vines and climb high in the trees growing along the banks of the jungle rivers. Their large bright yellow blossoms produce large pods with three or four beans to the pod. When the pods are ripe, they burst. The beans then fall into the river, and then begins their long journey down to the sea and they are carried by ocean currents into the Gulf Stream to our beaches in South Florida.

The genus *Mucuna* (wide band) and the *Dioclea* (narrow band) both come in colors of gray, yellow, red, black and mottled. The inside seed coat of these beans is very hard and durable. The art of polishing these beans properly is a long and patient process involving the use of the emery wheel, running water, sand paper and buffing wheel with jewelers rouge and careful hand labor.’

[from *Looking Back in Time* by Dorothy Mann McNiece]

FROM THE 1920s

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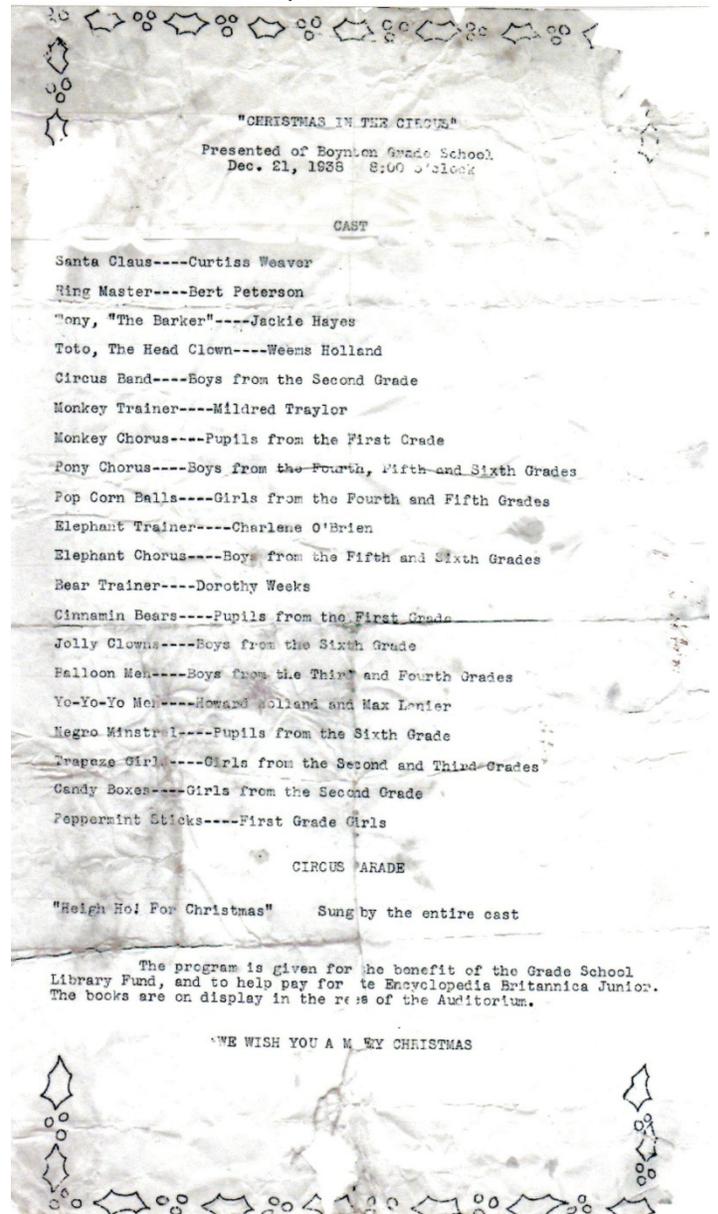
Stanley Weaver ca. Age 2 to 2 ½

Stanley was seated in a child's wagon decorated for a local parade. What the event was is unknown, but he is handling the steering wheel of what appears to be a little boat with confidence. His power source is the unidentified little girl who pulled his wagon while walking in the parade.

[Photo courtesy Christine Weaver Temenyi.]

BOYNTON GRADE SCHOOL – 1938

By Voncile Smith



This is a rather tattered copy form a school musical presented by the Boynton Grade School in December, 1938. I was a second grade trapeze performer in this production. Of course, we did not actually have trapezes, but to seven-year-olds the tutu-like costume was a sufficient reward. We danced around in unison and sang a little song with appropriate circus lyrics.

Whether a performer was on key was not a concern. This was a big event for the parents and other townspeople.

The teachers in Boynton Grade School (there were 5 at the time) handled the full production. They selected the play, dealt with all the production aspects including teaching the children the songs and dances, enlisted help from parents who were responsible for making the costumes, and

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generally saw that everyone was happily having a good time.

All the Grade School classes were held at that time in the 1913 schoolhouse, but our circus play was to be presented on the huge stage in the 1928 Boynton High School Auditorium at night. I remember the teachers saying that everyone was included. Since we were still enduring the Great Depression, I do not know how some of the parents were able to afford the material for a child's costume (and some parents had several children at the school), but the community apparently saw that the children of those parents who were struggling were taken care of.

The teachers assigned the details for each child's costume. I was told I needed a bright red trapeze dress. The top and the panties were to be satin and the skirt layers of net. Other girls were assigned other colors. My Aunt Mary Fletcher sewed my whole costume by hand because we did not have a sewing machine, and it would have been inappropriate to take it to a dressmaker. How grand we all felt once we were able to cavort around in those stunning dresses. I know we were envied by the other girls in our class who were "Candy Boxes." The teachers worked to make their costumes pretty, but they could not compare to being a trapeze girl. I reveled in my good fortune.

As the program indicates, this event was designed to help the school raise money to buy a set of Encyclopedia Britannica Junior. The Grade School had no designated Library, but I know the books were not housed in the library at the high school. We were earning them for our own use, and I suspect one teacher was responsible for overseeing their use and maintained them in her classroom.

The teachers referred to this production as an "operetta," and we had a number of other "operettas" while I was in Grade School. They were some of the ways the school raised funds for supplies since school funding was tight (Isn't it always?). But the "operettas" served another purpose. They helped us all develop a stage presence and taught us about community commitment, and we had fun while doing it. I hope others shared some of the joy I experienced.

I have no idea what happened to that amazing costume. I know I later played dress-up in it sometimes, and it probably became bedraggled from such wear, but never once do I remember putting it on and feeling anything comparable to the elation I felt the night of the play.

I had no memory of the mimeographed program. To my knowledge it never appeared among my school mementos, so I was excited when a copy of it was among a group of papers Dorothy Mann McNiece donated to the Historical Society.

A grander school production which I will cover in more detail at a later time was "May Day" in spring of 1939. It involved the entire school, grades 1 through 12. (Remember Florida did not fund public school kindergartens until the late 1960s.) Since I have no pictures of me in my role as trapeze girl, I decided to share with you one from May Day. The third grade girls were butterflies and this shows my yellow and fuchsia costume. My Aunt Mary Fletcher also made this for me all by hand. Despite the way it looks today, as an eight-year-old, even with my front teeth missing, I felt grand in it. But I have to admit, it could not compare to wearing that trapeze dress.



Voncile in 1939 Butterfly Costume for May Day

HISTORY OF BOYNTON DVDs ARE AVAILABLE

Although we had more copies on hand, some of you were concerned because you were unable to purchase DVDs at the April meeting after the program was shown. We will have copies available for sale at the May supper meeting, or you can order one by calling the Society number listed on p. 2 of this bulletin.

If you buy a copy at the May meeting, the price is \$10. Copies sent by mail are \$13.

