



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 6

September 2014

The HISTORY of LOXAHATCHEE RIVER BATTLEFIELD PARK

a presentation by Guy Bachmann, President of the Loxahatchee Battlefield Preservationists, is the topic for the September 15 meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

This park is one of the most significant multi-level historic sites in Palm Beach County. While providing entrance to the Loxahatchee River, this location represents prehistoric and historic habitation dating back over 5000 years. It was also the place where two battles took place during the Second Seminole War.



[Photo by Doug Carson, from www.pbcgov.com/parks/locations/loxahatcheeriverbattlefield.htm]

Firing an 1830 Howitzer during Second Seminole War reenactment at 2nd Annual Fall Muster

WHAT: The History of Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park by Guy Bachmann

WHEN: Monday, September 15, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Boynton Beach City Library
208 South Seacrest Boulevard
Program Room

A LETTER from BBHS President, JANET DeVRIES



Greetings,

The clock continues to tick forward and the calendar indicates the month of September has arrived once again meaning fall is close behind. What I like about fall is not only that the weather cools off a few degrees, but also that the Boynton Beach Historical Society once again gets together for our monthly meetings, history presentations and history strolls. If you are not attending our meetings, you are missing some wonderful history programs presented by esteemed Florida historians and noted legendary locals. For those who are reading this from afar, please keep in touch by sending in your photographs, family stories and memories! You keep our history alive.

Our website is growing; we now have back issues of *The Historian* from 2002 to 2013 online. Our website address is www.boyntonhistory.org. [Continued on page 2—DeVries]

BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2014-15

OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Janet DeVries
1 st Vice President, Programs	Ginger Pedersen
2 nd Vice President, Membership	Voncile Smith
Recording Secretary	Diana Dennis
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
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Editor, <i>The Historian</i>	Voncile Smith
Archivist/Facebook/Webmaster	Janet DeVries
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DIRECTORS [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2015	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
2015	Linda Stabile
2016	Tim Bednarz
2016	Judith Merkel Howard
2017	Steven Anton
2017	Barbara Ready

TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2015	Christian Oyer Macoviak
2015	Audrey Gerger
2016	Virginia Farace
2016	Nancy Hood McNamee
2017	Randall Gill
2017	Wendy Franklin

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

DeVries [Continued from page 1]

In addition to *The Historian* our website includes a photo-stream of vintage and historic photographs and interesting accounts of local research findings. Our Facebook page usually has a lively exchange of newer and long-time Boynton history fans reminiscing about our local lore and illustrious past. Everyone is welcome to view the site or join us. The Facebook page address is <https://www.facebook.com/historicboynton> beach.

One of the Historical Society's new features is the Weekend History Stroll series. These "grown-up field trips" welcome members and friends of all ages. Guided tours to places of interest such as Downtown Boynton, Historic Lake Trail, Loxahatchee Battlefield Park and the High Ridge Scrub Area are free-of-charge. For the 2014-2015 year, we are planning History Strolls of the Boynton Firehouse and Emergency Operations

Center Tour, Seacrest Scrub Natural Area, Palm Beach Lake Trail, Boynton Memorial Park Cemetery, Downtown Boynton, The Society of the Four Arts Garden, and the Richard and Pat Johnson History Museum of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County.

As the year progresses, I look forward to connecting with you. In the past few years, I had had the opportunity to visit, to reminisce and to interview a number of fascinating members of our Boynton community. Each person's story adds to our collective history. It is through telling these stories and sharing primary documents such as photographs, scrapbooks, newspapers and other memento of our history that we are able to chronicle our history for future generations.

The Boynton Beach Historical Society could not endure without the support and the participation of our members and the volunteer work of our Board of Directors, Trustees and committee members. I invite you to share your time and talent in furthering the mission of the Society. Please reach out to me or another board member to discuss ways you can help. In order to sustain the organization, we need additional members to take on leadership and committee roles.

Yours in history,

Janet DeVries, President

BOYNTON'S WAITE BIRD FARM

By Janet DeVries

[Editor's Note: Janet posted this as a blog on the historical society's website in December, 2013, after interviewing Dr. Howard Waite, Jr., one of our members. Howard passed away this summer, and it seems an appropriate tribute to him and his family to give all of our members an opportunity to read her article. The original article can still be found at boyntonhistory.org/?s=waite.]

The Waite Bird Farm, founded and operated by Howard and Angela Waite, served as a popular tourist attraction from 1947 to 1978.

The bird farm, located on North Federal Highway at the Boynton city limits, once existed as the State of Florida's largest breeder of rare and exotic birds.

The breeding farm first operated as the Lewis Bird Farm.

The Waites, along with son Howard, relocated to Lake Worth, Florida from Ohio in the early 1940s. Howard, formerly a radio engineer, married Angela Kellack, a teacher from Chicago, in 1928.

The Waites raised the birds in colonies, with Angela nurturing and hand feeding the fledglings and Howard traveling to Mexico to buy birds and others animals for the zoo and to sell.

The popular tourist attraction drew visitors from all over the state. People flocked to see the colorful parrots, toucans, ostriches, peacocks and macaws. The zoo at the Waite Bird Farm included giant tortoises, trained monkeys, alligators and a leopard.

Growing up surrounded by animals and caring for sick species inspired Howard Waite to study veterinary medicine at Alabama

[Continued on page 3, WAITE]

WAITE [Continued from page 2]

Polytechnic University (now Auburn University). Following his 1959 graduation, he served as veterinarian for his family's menagerie.



Angela Waite with Macaws



Howard Waite, Sr. feeds one of his birds

In the next few years, he, along with Charlie Camus and George Samra founded the Zoological Society of Palm Beach County which led to the 1969 establishment of the Dreher Park Zoo (now the Palm Beach Zoo) with colleague Paul Dreher.

After the Florida Turnpike extended its concrete ribbon through South Florida, traffic passing the quaint landmark dwindled and condominiums and large stores replaced the allure and charm of roadside Florida.

The bird farm closed in 1960, however the Waites continued operating the business as a pet shop until 1978.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, Howard Waite, Jr. used his artistic talent to contribute to Florida Audubon and other wildlife magazines with his pen and ink drawings.

Today Howard "Bud" Waite lives in east Boynton Beach and is an active member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The building once housing Boynton's exotic pet dealership still exists on the corner of North Federal between Potter and Dimick Roads.

IN MEMORIAM

LUND, ALICE MARGARET—



Margaret had been a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society for many years. She passed away on June 7, 2014. Originally from Canada, she and her husband John had moved to the U.S. in 1953. She loved children and animals, and most of her life taught young children.

She and her husband were charter members of the First Baptist Church of Hypoluxo which opened in 1954 soon after they came to Florida. She also belonged to Eastern Star. She is survived by her two sons John and David (Cindy) Lund, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren and numerous other relatives. We extend our best wishes to her family with appreciation for supporting her membership in the Society in her last years. She was 89.

McNAMEE, NANCY HOOD—



Nancy was currently serving as a Trustee member of the Board of Directors for the Boynton Beach Historical Society. She had been a member of the Society for many years and had completed terms in several different capacities, including First Vice-President. She was also active in a number of other organizations including St. Mary's Anglican Church in Delray Beach, the DAR, Boynton Beach Book Club, and Chapter EX of P.E.O. She was from the large family of Howard and Edythe Hood, early and influential settlers in Boynton Beach. She is survived by her two sons David (Debra) and Scott (Leanne) McNamee, seven grandchildren, six great-grand children, her five siblings, and numerous other family members. Nancy was a graduate of the University of Florida and had traveled much of the world as the wife of an Army officer.

She died peacefully on July 26, 2014 after a brave battle against lung cancer. We send our condolences and best wishes to all her family members. The Society will miss very much her continuing participation and service. **A memorial tribute will be held at St. Mary's Anglican Church on September 13, 2014 at 3:00 p.m.**

[Continued on page 4 –IN MEMORIAM]

WAITE, HOWARD, Jr.—



Howard as High School Player



Dr. Howard Waite, Jr. 2013

Dr. Howard Waite, Jr. who was an active member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society died early in the summer. We sympathize with his family in this loss. He and his family made noteworthy contributions to the area. **See the story on page 3.**

BONOMINI, SILVIO—Although he was not a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, his wife Helen Adams Bonomini has been an active participant for many years. Silvio passed away at age 92 in the first week of July, 2014. We extend our sympathy to Helen and their families.

BECHTEL, ETTA BRIDGEMAN—Etta was the sister of Jean Ann Bridgeman Thurber, a long time contributing member to the Boynton Beach Historical Society. They are descendants of Captain U.D. and Etta Hendrickson and Robert and Ursula Moore, all early Palm Beach pioneers. Etta's husband's family business, Bechtel Jewelers, continues to operate in the County. Etta contributed both her time and energy to many local organizations. She died July 20, 2014 at the age of 94. We send our sympathies and best wishes to Jean Ann and the other family members.

BBHS PROGRAM SCHEDULE FOR 2014-2015

Dr. Ginger Pedersen, the Society's First Vice-President and Program Coordinator, has posted the following schedule for the upcoming year:

- September 15, 2014** – Boynton Beach City Library, 6:30 p.m.
The History of Loxahatchee River Battlefield Park – presented by Guy Bachmann
- October 20, 2014** -- Boynton Beach City Library, 6:30 p.m.
Pioneers of Jewell (History of Early Lake Worth) – presented by Ted Brownstein
- November 17, 2014** – Boynton Beach City Library, 6:30 p.m.
Palm Beach County's Ancient Landscape and Waterways – presented by Christian Davenport
- January 19, 2015** – Boynton Woman's Club, 6:30 p.m.
Program to be announced
- February 16, 2015** – Boynton Woman's Club, 6:30 p.m.
Program to be announced

- March 16, 2015** – Boynton Beach City Library, 6:30 p.m.
Program to be announced.
- April 20, 2015** – Boynton Beach City Library, 6:30 p.m.
Program to be announced
- May 3, 2015** – Boynton Woman's Club, 5:30 p.m.
Annual Covered-Dish Supper, Special speaker TBA.

Meetings for January and February are scheduled for the Woman's Club because the Library is closed on those dates. Our program meeting day is the third Monday of the months of September, October, November, January, February, March and April. In May we meet on a Sunday for our supper, and we do not meet in the months of June, July, August and December.

SEPTEMBER HISTORY STROLL

If you wish to participate in the next History Stroll, Janet DeVries has announced that it will occur on **Saturday, September 27, 2014, 9:00 a.m. at Fire Station #5** – Emergency Operations Center, 2080 High Ridge Road (just south of Gateway Boulevard and just west of I-95), Boynton Beach, Florida 33426. People can sign up on line, if they desire, at <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/boynton-beach-history-stroll-fire-station-5-tickets-12872541117?aff=es2&rank=2> or they can call 561-327-4690.

The Boynton Beach Fire Rescue Station #5 and Emergency Operations Center facility stands as the first building in the City's history to be hardened to withstand a Category 5 hurricane. The modern construction of this multi-functional facility takes firefighting and City operations to a new level. The public art displayed in the building exists to depict the heritage and character of the fire service throughout the City's history leading up to today's modern, comprehensive level of fire rescue and emergency preparedness operations. The public art elements provide visual references of historical timelines to the viewer, and when translated by artists as seen here, communicate portals to our City's past.

**ANOTHER IDEA TO SAVE AND USE
1927 SCHOOLHOUSE**

The following information was recently sent to the Society and, although the Board of Directors has of this date taken no stand, some members may wish to participate. A group of Military Veterans seeks to convert the old high school into the Veterans Memorabilia Museum and Education Center. They will ask the City Commission to use the \$170,000 set aside to demolish the building to begin rebuilding the facility. The plan is to "MARCH ON CITY HALL" Tuesday, September 16th at 6:30 p.m. One of the leaders is apparently Cpl Burt Richards who played Major Nathan Boynton in the 100th Anniversary Reenactment of the arrival of Major Boynton in 1994. The memo we received states that he and his "Army" will "battle" for preservation and the creation of the museum. A Capt. Krenshaw indicates that more information is available through e-mail sent to PR.GROUP@JUNO.COM

JANET DEVRIES AND GINGER PEDERSEN MAKE AN HISTORIC FIND

The Boynton Beach Historical Society and Palm Beach County are benefitting from the enthusiasm for and the joy of discovery that historical research brings to two of our officers, Janet DeVries and Ginger Pedersen. We remember two years ago their revelations about the real founders of the Town of Boynton—the Deweys, and we have appreciated their interviews and postings of stories of various persons connected with our history.

They review historic sites on the internet, go through archives and land records, and occasionally search E-Bay for items listed for sale that might have some relevance to South Florida history. They were recently rewarded when they discovered an old photo item listed by a Texas based archaeologist, Bob Wishoff, who found the old album at a sale in Austin. Janet began an e-mail conversation with him and decided the pictures were made primarily before World War I in the Manalapan area. She purchased it and received it in the mail in July.

There were a few, rather limited written clues with the pictures, but Janet combed through old land records and discovered that the names Romyn and Leila fit with a family named Pierson who lived in, and actually owned most of Manalapan. Pictures of the old Boynton Beach Hotel which was demolished in 1925 helped to establish the dates. Romyn Pierson died in the influenza epidemic in 1919, so the pictures of the family were probably taken sometime between 1912 and 1919. They show a Florida long erased by development.



Pictures from the album include this labeled photograph of the old Boynton Beach Hotel Cottages. Such information provides clues to the dates of all the pictures in the album.

Old property records show that the entire stretch of Manalapan was owned by one family, that of Romyn Pierson, Sr. Newspaper articles from the time reveal that the wealthy New Jersey man came to the property by boat with his wife Leila in 1912. At the time the only building on the oceanfront land was a house built in 1892. A few years later, standing there with his wife, Romyn reportedly said, as he pointed to the land stretching from the Boynton Inlet to Lantana beach, "This is yours. All yours."

The Piersons had three children, including son A. Romyn Pierson, Jr. who may be the person who took most of the photographs. He is pictured in several of them lying in the sand.



Romyn Pierson, Jr. lying in the sand of the family's Manalapan property. Dressed in a WWI uniform, this is similar to earlier photos which show him posing as a wounded military man, and even posing under an American flag. Image ca. 1912-1917.



Janet believes this woman and man to be Leila and Romyn Pierson, Sr. with their granddaughter Nancy (Sands Tilton), standing in the coconut grove of their Manalapan estate. Romyn, Sr. would die from influenza shortly thereafter this picture was taken, probably between 1912-1918.

