



# The Historian

*The Newsletter of the Boynton Beach Historical Society*

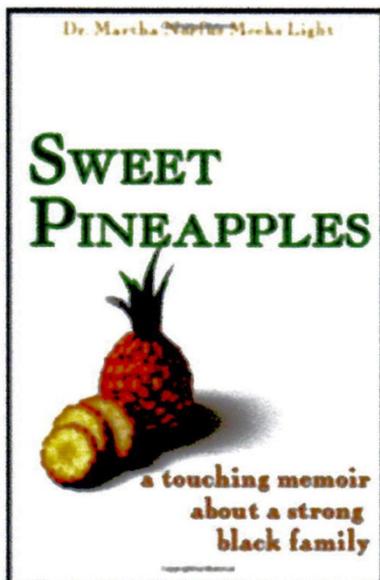
Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Briny Breezes, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton, in addition to supporting the preservation of the history of Palm Beach County and the State of Florida as a whole.

2015 Number 4

April 2015

## APRIL 20 = ANNUAL MEETING of the Boynton Beach Historical Society and a Special Presentation: **SWEET PINEAPPLES**

A touching family memoir by one of our fellow citizens in Boynton Beach, Dr. Martha Norfus Meeks-Light. Martha Meeks-Light is a former elementary school teacher who holds six college degrees including two doctorates. In her book she captivates her readers with her courageous journey and the challenges she has faced both in crises and parenthood. It is a story of faith and strong family ties.



The Book Cover



Dr. Martha Norfus Meeks-Light

Before Dr. Meeks-Light's presentation, we will hold our Annual Meeting during which we will elect officers for the coming year. All the officers positions, President, 1st Vice-President, 2nd Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, and Treasurer are voted upon each year. Directors and Trustees serve for 3 year staggered terms, so vacancies for those will be filled accordingly. If a Director or Trustee has resigned or left the position vacant for another reason, a person will be elected to fill the remainder of the term. A Nominating Committee was appointed in March and will present their recommendations. This is usually a fairly rapidly completed item of business and probably will take no more than ten minutes. Only Historical Society Members in good standing are permitted to vote.

- WHAT:** Annual Meeting and Election of Officers  
Discussion by Dr. Martha Meeks-Light of her book, *SWEET PINEAPPLES*
- WHEN:** Monday, April 20, 2015, 6:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** Boynton Beach City Library, 208 South Seacrest Boulevard, Program Room

## BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2014-15

### OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Janet DeVries
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Ginger Pedersen
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Voncile Marshall Smith
Recording Secretary	Diana Dennis
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
Treasurer	Frances Tuite McKeral

Editor, <i>The Historian</i>	Voncile Marshall Smith
Archivist/Facebook/Webmaster	Janet DeVries
Facebook Administrator/Webmaster	Ginger Pedersen

### 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	Susan Merkel Shaffer
2017	Randall Gill
2017	Wendy Franklin

Our website is [www.boyntonhistory.org](http://www.boyntonhistory.org). The e-mail address is [boyntonhistory@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach)

[www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory](http://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

Lenore Benson Raborn Boonstra  
Randall Gill  
Alexander "Sandy" Simon  
Dorian Beck Trauger  
Charlotte Tatum Weaver  
Curtis and Nain Weaver

### CORPORATE MEMBERS – 2015

Boynton Woman's Club  
Donald Day/Delray Awning, Inc  
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home and Crematory  
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi

### 2015 DUES

The membership year for the Boynton Beach Historical Society is January 1 to December 31 of each year. The following is an explanation of when we list your paid membership in *The Historian*.

Beginning with the November *Historian*, we print the names of people who have joined or renewed their memberships to date.

We do not repeat the names once they have been listed in an issue. Members whose dues were received after November and by the first week of January were listed in the January issue, those whose dues were received in January up to the first week of February were listed in the February newsletter, and those received after we wrote the February issue, were listed in the March issue. Dues received since the first week of March are listed below. We hope this will clarify when a member's name is posted in the *Historian*.

Members who have paid dues since the March issue of *The Historian* are listed below:

### PATRON:

Bill Suiter

### FAMILY:

Harvey E., III and Monique M. Oyer

### INDIVIDUAL:

Steven M. Anton  
Rick Chesser  
Ellen Brown Curtin  
Donald R. Edge  
Ramona Somerford Davis  
Edris Hatch  
Marie J. Horenberger  
Marilyn Rousseau  
Susan Swiatosz  
Jean Ann Thurber

Thank all of you for joining. We welcome new member Rick Chesser and appreciate the support all of you have shown for helping us preserve the history of our City.

### SOME PHOTOGRAPH IDENTITIES

In March we copied some pictures pertaining to The Old Dutch Mill bar and restaurant that Christine Ternenyi shared with us. It belonged to her grandparents, Bill and Olga Yanke, and the pictures were made about 1950. Christine's parents were Stanley Weaver and Erna Yanke Weaver. Curtis Weaver, Stanley's brother, identifies the people in the scene below:



L to R: Walter Yanke, Dolores Smith Yanke, Erna Yanke Weaver, Stanley Weaver, and Bill Yanke behind the bar.

## APRIL WEEKEND HISTORY STROLL

**Boynton Beach's Oldest African American Cemetery/Barton Memorial Park**—1110 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Boynton Beach, FL 33435

**Saturday, April 25, 2015, 10:00 a.m.** – Join us on Saturday, April 25 for a history stroll to the oldest African American cemetery in Boynton beach, with the burials going back to 1900. Narrated tour about the history of the African American community and the tombstones and folk markers by City of Boynton Beach Historic Preservation Planner Warren Adams. (60 minutes) This burial spot is part of the City of Boynton Beach Downtown Heritage Trail and has recently received designation as a historic site. Please wear comfortable shoes, bring water/sunscreen. There are no facilities on-site. Meet us at the cemetery (1110 NW 5<sup>th</sup> Street and Northwest corner of Northwest 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Northwest Fifth Street)

**Register for Barton Memorial Cemetery History Tour:**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/barton-memorial-park-history-stroll-boyntons-historic-african-american-cemetery-tickets-16222833933>

**All tours are free and open to the public; donations accepted.**

For more information, please call [561-327-4690](tel:561-327-4690).

**2015/2016 Weekend History Strolls**—All, as of this date, TBA

Boynton Harbor Marina

Bedner's Farm

Delray Beach Historical Society

Downtown Boynton History Tour

Mangrove Park History Tour

Green Cay Wetlands Tour

Wakodahatchee Wetlands

Boca Raton Historical Society

### 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS IN BOYNTON BEACH

Don and Ruth Besecker moved to Florida from Pennsylvania when they were in their 20s. In 1964 they opened as a Goodyear dealer Easy Pay Tire on north Federal Highway. When they began, business was slow, but as Don built his reputation in the community, business began to improve.

In 1970, the family moved their shop across the street to where it is now located. In October, 2014, Ruth and her son, Doug celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with acknowledgement from local officials and some of the people who have been customers for decades. For Don, who died suddenly in 2006, "This was his life," says his son Doug, who with his brother Dave worked in the store while growing up. Doug left the business for about 10 years, but came back in 1991 and took over after Don passed away.

Few businesses in Boynton Beach have experienced such longevity.

Bill Friel, who is general manager for Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company commented that among approximately 5,000 Goodyear dealers, only about 100 have been in business more than 50 years. Congratulations to the Beseckers for being among that remarkable 100.



Ruth and Don Besecker opened their business, Easy Pay Tire, on Federal Highway in Boynton Beach in 1964.

### FOOTSTEPS ON THE SANDS OF TIME

The Vosses and the Oyers were among the earliest families in Boynton Beach. Freda Voss was born on Hypoluxo Island in 1896. She graduated from high school in West Palm Beach in 1915. This fall, her step great-grand daughter, Francesca Alfano, enters the Dreyfoos School of the Arts which is housed in the same buildings Freda Voss attended 100 years ago.

In January and February, Francesca auditioned for theater and dance at Drayfoos. She has been admitted to both where competition is keen among the many applicants when only a few can be chosen for the limited number of seats. Francesca is the stepdaughter of Harvey Oyer III, and in addition to her performance talents, speaks fluent Italian and Spanish and has a developing knowledge of Mandarin Chinese.



Francesca Alfano

## RECALLING BOYNTON'S OLDEST HOUSE

[Editor's Note: In March, 1999, after he had completed restoration of the oldest house in Boynton Beach, owner Bob Katz opened it to the public. The following is directly quoted from an information sheet distributed at the time of the open house.]

### "BOYNTON'S HAUNTED HOUSE?"

"Boynton's oldest house, built in 1901 at 306 S.E. First Avenue, is undergoing a complete restoration to its original condition. Past residents of this landmark home, who lived there until a few years ago, recollect what may have been visitations from the spirit world. Many times, while sitting in the downstairs parlor, there were distinctly heard footsteps in the upstairs rooms. Cautious investigation of the rooms frighteningly revealed a door mysteriously closed and pieces of furniture were re-arranged. During the renovation, a workman saw a tall bearded man wearing an old farmer's hat and dressed in coveralls looking in a window. He quickly went outside to question the man but he had disappeared. Later, other workmen also saw the same apparition. One workman, visibly shaken, left the job and vowed never to return. Recently, a noted local historian while examining the room felt a cold draft. When he turned around he saw nothing. All the doors were closed and the windows were locked from the inside!

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"In our modern convenience lives the early settlement of Boynton would seem a danger filled wilderness, but to Boynton's earliest settlers it was a challenging beginning.

"Major Nathan Boynton platted the townsite in 1896 and by 1900 there were 83 people living here. Among these early pioneer families were Mr. and Mrs. Bert L. Kapp who bought the property in 1900 and built this historic landmark in 1901. It is particularly interesting to note that there were no building codes for construction back then but the pioneer families constructed homes to last! The Kapp house was built using heavy timbers of now nearly extinct Dade County Pine and adjustable steel rods were ingeniously used throughout the attic for strength. As a result this landmark home has survived every hurricane to hit Palm Beach County.

"The Kapps lived in the home until May of 1924 and then sold it to Alice Fields who subsequently sold it to Katie Andrews. Katie was only 17 when she married 60 year old Charles Lee Andrews, a decorated Confederate veteran of the Civil War. Katie Andrews had a thriving grocery store on the corner of Ocean Avenue and S.E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Eventually they had two sons, George and Charles Lee, Jr. Charles Lee died heroically serving in WW2. George Andrews found his bride, Edith, in England and brought her to Florida to live in this landmark home. After George passed on Edith continued to live here alone until 1996. Her old home stood empty and vandalized until April of 1998 when a returning local man bought it. Growing up in Boynton Beach, and realizing the historical heritage the home represents, a group of concerned citizens began the complete renovation. Historic furnishings have been gathered from far and wide including some especially rare and beautiful antiques from the home of the late Patricia Ann Lambert.

"Originally constructed 50 feet to the west of this big lot, it was moved onto a new foundation to allow its viewing from Ocean Avenue. Before the house was moved, the surrounding land was searched using a modern metal detector. Dozens of historical and interesting artifacts of early Boynton Beach were recovered . . . old buckles, toys, brooches, jewelry, eating utensils, empty and live cartridges all came to the surface. Although the sturdy Dade County Pine was undamaged, a large portion of the framework was riddled with termites and vermin. The interior was a wasteland of trash, graffiti and junk left by vandals. It took weeks to clean up the house before actual restoration could begin. Beneath the trash many items of historical importance were miraculously discovered including a family Bible dated to the 1700s, and a rare door with an etched glass window from 1889.

"The exterior walls, typical of the New England clapboard style, were weather worn so badly that they required complete and meticulous refinishing and painting. The original interior floors required weeks of sanding and polishing to restore them to their former beauty. The once leaky roof was carefully reconstructed utilizing old hand split wooden shingles and the windows have been restored using the original sash weights. The electrical wiring was updated and the once dangerous 'knob and tube' wires were preserved. All the old plumbing was replaced, of course, and concealed air conditioning installed. While re-construction was taking place a remarkable discovery was made! Under the steps going upstairs the large penciled name of B. L. Kapp, Boynton's pioneer builder, was found.

"Completely surrounding the historic renovation of Boynton's oldest house will be carefully orchestrated landscaping with cocoplum, slash pines. Pineapples, fruit trees and palmettos expensively recreating native Florida to allow visitors to complete their experience of a day in the lives of Boynton's earliest pioneers."



The Andrews House in 2015.

[Editor's Note: Bob Katz died unexpectedly soon after the 1999 open house. The building is currently not open to the public. There are some errors in the information sheet above. The stories of the owners is probably factual, but the Deweys, not Boynton, platted the area.]

## GARDEN STORE

Another business which began in the 1960s and operated several years was the Garden Store owned and operated by Herb Zobel. The store which was located at 414 East Ocean Avenue is pictured below. Some readers will no doubt recognize the buildings which still stand a block north of the relocated Andrews House described on page 4. Herb ran the business from 1967 to 1974. Later he and his wife Betty Magnuson Zobel moved north to Wellborn, Florida where Herb still lives in a modern log house, surrounded by his many plants under current cultivation. Betty passed away this past year.



Herb Zobel and his employee Bill Maul stand in front of the store located on the south side of Ocean Avenue

We are grateful to Herb Zobel for sending us a packet of pictures and memorabilia that Betty had saved over the years. The picture above and the one below were among those papers.



Herb was active in the Lions Club, and in 1968 was president. In this photo R.H. Rinker, Joe Cittadino and Herb Zobel are preparing to leave for the Lions Club Convention in Tampa. These Boynton Beach Lions complete with suits and cage marched in the convention parade and handed out City brochures on their way to Tampa.

## NOSTALGIC MOMENTS --- Once a Youth in Boynton

By Voncile Smith

- Eating lunch, or an after school snack, at Melton and Mary's on Ocean Avenue--
  - Swimming in the rock pits west of Boynton (never worrying about alligators or water moccasins)--
  - Picking and eating wild huckleberries while walking in a vacant field--
  - Jumping off the jetties into the ocean—
  - Cheering for Boynton High School at the state basketball tournament in Homestead—
  - Driving to Jupiter for a special dinner date at DuBois' Restaurant on the midden—
  - Ringing the Boynton School bell on Halloween night—
  - Riding the Greyhound Bus to see a movie in West Palm Beach—
  - Playing "Red Rover" and dodgeball on the school playground at recess—
  - Lining up in front of the 1913 Schoolhouse to Pledge to the Flag as it was raised each school morning—
  - Drinking a cup of fresh raw milk right after it ran over the cooling coils at Weaver's Dairy—
  - Picking "beggar lice," "Spanish needles," and sandburs off clothing after walking through a field—
  - Stealing an occasional orange off a tree at Knollwood Groves—
  - Removing husks from coconuts by hurling them repeatedly against the pavement—
  - Catching minnows in the ditches to take to science class—
  - Walking barefoot in the rain—
  - Playing softball in Bell's pasture in the summertime—
  - Shooting marbles in the sand beside the schoolhouse—
  - Playing "Statue" on your best friend's front lawn—
  - Chewing paraffin or resin just for fun—
  - "Necking" at night at Lake Osborne—
  - Driving through the crunching of hundreds of land crabs on Highway 1—
  - Using a soda straw as a peashooter—
  - Feeling salt sticky after playing in the surf—
  - Giggling at "knock-knock" jokes—
- These are a few of the things that the editor recalls. Do you have some nostalgic moments to share? State them briefly, and we'll put contributions together in a future issue.

## A REMINDER

The last program meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society until September will be our annual covered-dish supper scheduled for Sunday, May 17, at 5:30 at the Boynton Woman's Club. The Society furnishes the entrée items plus the beverages (including wine). Those attending are asked to bring a dessert, salad, or vegetable casserole large enough to serve 8. If you do not wish to bring a dish, you will be asked to pay \$10.00 per person to the Society. The program topic is "The History of Bud's Chicken and Seafood presented by the Brinkman Brothers. Plan to join with us for a good, happy time!

4-15

