



# 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.

2016 Number 6

September 2016

## LAKE WORTH DRAINAGE DISTRICT: SERVING US FOR 100 YEARS

The September program for the Boynton Beach Program will present Patrick A. Martin, P.E., describing for us the problems and solutions the Lake Worth Drainage District has faced during the 100 years it has been functioning. Patrick is the Director of Surface Water Permitting and Engineering. He is a native Floridian and a Florida Registered Professional Engineer. He enjoys a statewide reputation for his engineering expertise in water resources in which he has worked for over 35 years. At the Lake Worth Drainage District, he is responsible for the drainage, permitting and construction within approximately 200 square miles of Southeastern Palm Beach County. He is a recipient of the distinguished *state government engineer of the year*, by the Florida Engineering Society. He has also published in his field. (See pictures on p.3.)



Patrick A. Martin

**WHAT:** The LAKE WORTH DRAINAGE DISTRICT:  
100 YEAR HISTORY, a discussion by  
Patrick A. Martin, P.E.

**WHEN:** Monday, September 19, 2016  
6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** BOYNTON BEACH CITY LIBRARY  
208 South Seacrest Boulevard  
Program Room

All program of the Boynton Beach Historical Society  
are open FREE to the Public. Come Join Us!

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2016-17**

**OFFICERS [Elected Annually]**

President	Randall Gill
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Anne Rimler
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Voncile Marshall Smith
Recording Secretary	Diana Dennis
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
Treasurer	Frances Tuite McKeral

**[Non-Elected]**

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

**DIRECTORS [3-Year Staggered Terms]**

2017	Steven Anton
2017	Barbara Ready
2018	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
2018	Diane Gerino
2019	Tim Bednarz
2019	Judith Merkel Howard

**TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]**

2017	Ginger Pedersen
2017	Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher
2018	Janet DeVries
2018	Vacant
2019	Susan Merkel Shaffer

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 and Ann B. Gill  
 Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak  
 Melear Bros., Inc. - Cliff and Rick Melear  
 Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson  
 Alexander "Sandy" Simon  
 Ernest G. Simon  
 Voncile Marshall Smith  
 Dorian Beck Trauger  
 Charlotte Tatum Weaver  
 Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

**CORPORATE MEMBERS – 2016**

Boynton Woman's Club  
 Delray Awning, Inc., Don and Regina Day  
 Florida Coalition for Preservation  
 George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi  
 Marion Weaver Clark Wester  
 Pearce Doors & Windows Inc., Glen Pearce, President  
 Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

**MEETING SCHEDULE  
2016-2017**

Anne Rimler, Vice-President for Programs, has announced the following schedule for our upcoming programs:

Monday, September 19, 6:30 pm	BBC Library
Monday, October 17, 6:30 pm	BBC Library
Monday, November 14, 6:30 pm	BBC Library
Monday, January 16, 6:30 pm	Woman's Club
Monday, February 20, 6:30 pm	Woman's Club
Monday, March 20, 6:30 pm	BBC Library
Monday, April 17, 6:30 p.m.	BBC Library
Sunday, May 7, 5:00 p.m.	Woman's Club

All the meetings except the May covered dish dinner are scheduled for 6:30. The January and February meetings are held at the Boynton Woman's Club because the Library is closed on those dates.

**IN MEMORIAM**

To our knowledge, four of our members passed away during the summer. If anyone else should be included, please let us know and we will list them in a later edition.

**Jim Edward**

Jim had been a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society for many, many years. He was an ardent supporter for saving the 1927 schoolhouse and cared about traditions of old Boynton. He operated a trucking company in Boynton and eventually moved to an Industrial Avenue site where he worked until his death. We share the sorrow of his loss with his family and friends.

**Heather Frazer**

Dr. Heather Frazer lived in Ocean Ridge. She was a retired professor emerita from Florida Atlantic University where she had taught in the Department of History for many years beginning in 1971. Her specialization was Asian Studies and she had traveled in India and written much about the history of culture there. She loved all history, however, and had developed courses in Victorian and Modern British History as well as others. As a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, she conveyed her interests to local American history as well.

We are so sorry to lose this good friend and send our condolences to her family members.

**Nancy Rosa**

Nancy had renewed her membership in the Society for 2016. Sadly, she passed away on June 8, 2016. She had been a long time member. We are saddened that she will no longer be a part of our organization and send our best wishes to her family.

(Continued on page 3)

## Leland Smith

Leland and his wife Donna Fuller Smith have been associated with the Boynton Beach Historical Society as members and program presenters for many years. Both have been very much interested in history and genealogy. Leland was particularly active in the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War and actively participated in it and other historical Veterans organizations. He also participated in helping to support and conserve the Okeechobee Battlefield location and facilities. We regret very much that we have lost this good supporter and send our condolences to Donna and other family members,



Leland Smith

\* \*

Even though Hilda Pitts was not a member of the Historical Society, she was a major figure in the community and she and her family have supported our programs in the past, so we feel it is appropriate to note her passing --

## Hilda Girtman Pitts

Hilda was always recognized during commemorative services on Veterans Day as a Gold Star Mother. She had lost a son in combat. Another son, James Pitts, operated an antiques shop for many years on the south side of Ocean Avenue known as Mrs. Hilda's Antiques. She often sat at the store greeting many of the passers-by, some of whom she had known all their lives, during the hours the shop was open. When the building was sold and torn down, James shifted to the internet to serve his customers.

Hilda passed at age 102 years. We send our best wishes to all her family members.



Hilda Girtman Pitts

## ARE YOU MISSING SOMETHING?

At the end of the May dinner meeting at the Woman's Club, Fran McKeral picked up some containers left behind by some of you who attended. She has a plastic salad bowl with salad tongs and a metal square pan which she believes contained scalloped potatoes at the dinner. She will take these to the September 19<sup>th</sup> meeting at the Library or you can call Fran at 313-5857 to arrange to claim them.

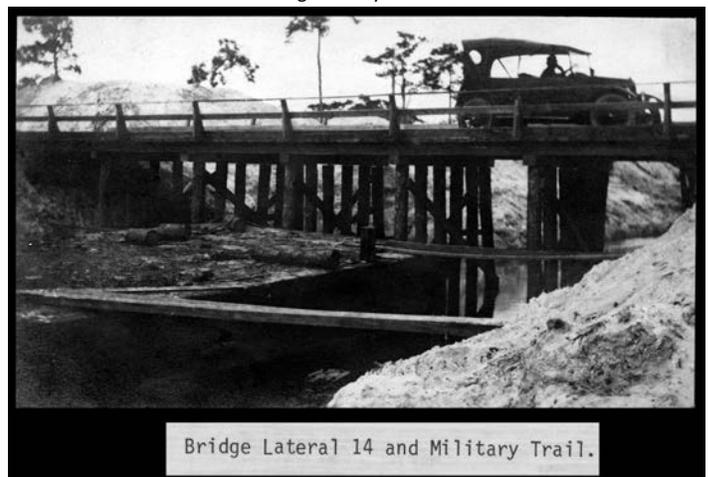
Some pictures relative to program on LW Drainage.



LW Drainage District construction of an early dam



A Dredge on Boynton Canal



Bridge Lateral 14 and Military Trail.

## REFLECTIONS ON CLEANLINESS – 75 YEARS AGO

By Voncile Smith

Life today is remarkably different from what I knew as a young girl living in South Florida in the 1930s and 1940s. Then patterns of cooking, bathing and handling laundry did not differ greatly from what they had been for centuries. Many homes, even in the little towns, lacked running water with families depending on a pitcher pump, located outside the house, for all their water needs. Outhouses were common and if a home had indoor plumbing, it usually had but one bathroom and it probably had a bathtub, but certainly no shower.

Unless one was willing to brave pump water, fresh and cold from below ground, in order to take a tub bath, sponge baths were the common standby. Most hairwashing was dependent on water heated on the kitchen stove, poured into either the bathroom sink or a dishpan, with a second warm container also coming from the kitchen to be emptied over the washed head for rinsing. Few liquid shampoos were available and they were expensive, so we used Ivory or some scented toilet soap such as Lux, Camay or Cashmere Bouquet followed by a rinse with water containing vinegar to cut the soap residue. Many people did not shampoo but once or twice a month because it was so inconvenient.

My home had an electric water pump with a 50 gallon storage tank housed in a little 8' x 8' pumphouse that my father had built where we also stored our tools and a handpush lawnmower. Our house had a small back porch where a kerosene water heater with a one-half gallon capacity tank was located. My mother lighted this on Saturday evenings only so we had hot water for bathing on but one night.

We had no running hot water in the kitchen, only one cold water faucet. We heated water for washing and rinsing dishes and pots and pans in a kettle on a stove in the kitchen. We had dishwashing soap powder (no liquids), but detergents did not appear on supermarket shelves until after WWII. We could buy bar soaps such as Ivory and some that were made with stronger contents, sometimes including lye such as Octagon. Cutting grease on utensils was a problem made worse by insufficient hot water and inferior dishwashing products. Some people let their washed dishes drain, but this encroached on very limited counter space. Dishes were dried on cloth dish towels which also helped remove any residue left on them from the limited dishwashing facilities.

Very few people had washing machines for their laundry. Those that were available were called "wringer" washers, because one fed the wet laundry between two contiguous rollers or wringers powered electrically which squeezed out the water as one fed the laundry between them as she lifted it out of the washer tub. This wringer was positioned to eject the wrung clothes into a round wash tub filled with clean water for rinsing. Then the clothes had to be run through the wringer again to remove the rinse water with the wringers repositioned to drop the laundry either into a second rinse tub or a basket to be carried to the clothes line so the clothes could be hung to dry. The tub of the washing machine contained an agitator very similar to those found in today's top loading automatic washers. Since most people did not have continuous hot water, the water for the machine either had to be heated on the stove and

carried to the machine, or one could use cold water. Laundry soap powders were a problem and were dependent on hot water to work effectively.

Producing clean laundry for most people, however, involved more labor. Some, if they could afford to, hired a laundress either to do it at her home or to come and use the facilities at the employer's home. The facilities usually in back or on the side of the house included two or more large wash tubs filled with water, one of which might be hot water, all carried by bucket directly from the pump or the stove, a scrub board used by hand to work out dirt and stains, and a boiling pot which was filled with water and placed directly over a wood fire where stained or badly soiled clothes were boiled in a soapy solution until they were clean. When the laundry was clean from boiling it was frequently carried dripping wet on a broom handle to a tub on a stand or table for rinsing, or when washing items that were not boiled, using the scrub board. All wringing was done by hand, and since no one had dryers, the laundress hung clean laundry with clothes pins on a line to dry.

After the washing and initial rinsing, white items such as shirts, some underwear and linens were placed for an additional rinse into a tub or basin with "bluing" added to the water to enhance the whiteness. Shirts, dresses, pants, aprons and other garments were given a final rinse in a smaller container containing a cornstarch solution to provide stiffness when the item was ironed.

Since most items required ironing, one had to set aside a whole day for that purpose. Wrinkle free fabrics did not exist. Shirts, dresses, trousers, pajamas, some undergarments, as well as sheets, pillowcases and towels required ironing. Electric irons were problematic and quite heavy compared to those in use today and had no steam capability, so most of the clothes to be ironed had to be sprinkled with water and rolled up to disperse the moisture before the item was ironed.

Some people still relied on "flat" irons which were heated on a wood-burning stove that a family might still rely upon for cooking. Several flat irons were necessary. These were heated on top of the stove and removed by wrapping the iron handle with a pot holder. When an iron became too cool to remove wrinkles from the clothing, it was exchanged for a hotter one. Workers often set the ironing board up close to the stove, despite the heat, to make it easier to exchange irons.



It is no wonder laundry washing required a whole day and one had to devote another day to ironing. Some families had a "Mangel," a brand name for a large and clumsy ironer that was used primarily for flat items such as linens.

Today, I personally iron very little. Since washing machines now offer such a wide variety of settings, I find I can launder almost everything, and with care, put most of it into the dryer. I do, however, miss the wonderful smell of clean clothes that have been dried outside in the open air and sunshine.

## MAY DAY 1938

By Voncile Smith

In earlier times, May Festivals were common and were held in many countries of the world as a heralding of spring. Recalling such celebrations, composers Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe played upon the tradition by having Queen Guinevere go “a-Maying” in their celebrated musical *Camelot* in 1960. Some communities and schools held festivities where one highlight was the wrapping of the Maypole where dancing young ladies wove an intricate pattern of ribbons as they danced around a slender column set up before a viewing audience. Boynton Beach Historical Society Treasurer Frances McKeral remembers participating in just such an exercise with Celia Scott, Sandra McGregor and others when she was attending Boynton Elementary School 60 years ago.

In the spring of 1938 the townspeople of Boynton and the teachers at Boynton School, which incorporated both Boynton High School and Boynton Elementary, planned and presented a May Day Festival. Everyone in all grades 1 through 12 was involved. We had a Maypole which was duly danced about and wrapped by girls in the high school classes. Lorene Cunningham was the May Queen who wore a coronet of flowers and had a flower trimmed train. The May King was Bud Brant.



Lorene Cunningham as the May Queen



The May Day Court

[Photos courtesy Sue Murphy Beaman]

In the Court picture the children with the peaked caps on the right are the first grade boys who were elves; the little first grade girls are seated

center right and were butterflies. Some costumes were made by mothers or friends, and some representing countries of the world were rented. Each group had a little dance to perform, and we all sang in



1<sup>st</sup> Grader Voncile in butterfly costume

unison a song reflecting the theme of the occasion. We had spent weeks in rehearsal and I remember many of the words of that song—“Welcome, sweet Springtime, we greet thee in song. Murmurs of gladness fall on our ear; voices long hushed now their full notes prolong, echoing far and near.”

## ENJOYING WATERMELON, THEN AND NOW—

Some of our members decided to reenact a scene from the past.



And below, over 100 years later: 2016



Boynton Beach Historical Society  
Post Office Box 12  
Boynton Beach FL 33425-0012

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
2<sup>nd</sup> Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

THE SOCIETY IS A 501 © 3 Organization so dues are TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:	INDIVIDUAL	(\$25.00)	_____
(Check one)	FAMILY	(\$35.00)	_____
	PATRON	(\$50.00)	_____
	CORPORATE	(\$100.00)	_____
	STUDENT	(\$10.00)	_____
	LIFE	(\$500.00) One time	_____
		Payment only.	

The membership; year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year.  
Dues are not pro rated.

Complete this form and mail it with a check for the appropriate amount to  
Boynton Beach Historical Society, POB 12, Boynton Beach FL 33424-4012,  
You may pay by PayPal at [www.boyntonhistory.org](http://www.boyntonhistory.org)

**MAY DAY at Boynton School in 1938**



The entire May Day cast in 1938. The King and Queen of May sat under the umbrella on the left, but in this picture they can be seen standing in the center of the picture wearing their crowns and regalia. Children representing other countries wore rented costumes and performed dances appropriate to the country of their costumes. Some of us were butterflies, fairies, elves or flowers. To those of us participating it was an exciting and memorable event. [Photo courtesy Sue Murphy Beaman]