Legends & Lore of Fort Lauderdale’s New River
By Donn R. Colee Jr.

Monday, March 22, 2021 @ 7-8pm via Zoom
If your email is on file with us, check your inbox for the invitation. If not, send a request to join to BBHSPprograms@gmail.com by 3pm on the day of the event and we will send you an invite.

Donn R. Colee Jr. is a seventh-generation Floridian and a direct descendent of George Colee, who immigrated to the St. Augustine area from England in 1821. Donn grew up in Orlando but frequently visited relatives in the ancient city, where his curiosity was piqued by stories about a massacre of long-ago family members at Fort Lauderdale’s New River. While the “Colee Massacre” story was later debunked, it refused to die. His book, Legends & Lore of Fort Lauderdale’s New River, published by Arcadia Publishing/The History Press in February 2021, began as an attempt to finally resolve the last vestiges of that myth, but the power of New River quickly propelled the book to become a history of the river, its fascinating people, and the transformation of its wilderness into a metropolis.

Colee is a member of the Florida Historical Society, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, St. Augustine Historical Society and Historical Society of Palm Beach County. He is a former commissioner of the Florida Inland Navigation District, the state agency responsible for maintenance and improvements of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from Fernandina Beach to Key Biscayne. It was built by a company that was cofounded in 1881 by his great-great-great-grandfather, who became its civil engineer. The book “Legends & Lore of Fort Lauderdale’s New River” can be purchased from Arcadia Publishing at DonnColeeWriter.com or at Amazon.com.
Boynton Beach Historical Society

Since 1968

2020-2021 Board of Directors

OFFICERS  Elected Annually
President – M Randall Gill
1st Vice President, Programs - Barbara Ready
2nd Vice President, Membership - Sheila Rousseau Taylor
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2021 - Donna Artes
2021 - Susan Oyer
2022 - Virginia Farace
2022 - Ben Lowe
2023 – Steve Anton
2023 – Heidi Bell

Non-Elected
Interim Editor, The Historian - Anne Rimler
Archivist/Facebook/Webmaster – Janet Naughton
Facebook Admin/Webmaster – Ginger Pedersen

Boynton Beach Historical Society
PO Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425
We are on the web www.boyntonhistory.org, and on Facebook @HistoricBoyntonBeach and on Twitter @BoyntonHistory.
Questions or comments: Programs? bbhsprograms@gmail.com or Membership? bbhsmembership@gmail.com.

The Historian

The Historian, the newsletter of the Society, is usually sent six times a year, October through April (except December), to dues-paid members (one per paid membership). Previous issues are posted to our website. Issues were not published Apr '20 to Jan '21 due to COVID-19. The first line on your mailing label has your dues expiration date – are yours current? If not, please mail the membership form with your dues or pay online at www.boyntonhistory.org. Dues paid at/after the last meeting of the season will be credited towards the following season.

2020-2021 Season  Mondays @7pm  Save The Date
Mar 22  Fort Lauderdale's New River, Donn R Collee, Jr
Apr 26  Annual Meeting, Excellence Awards & More!

Zoom Meetings are Recorded
Zoom Meetings are recorded and will be made available for viewing at a later date. Check our website for details.

Gift Memberships, Memberships Given in Honor, or Given in Memory Are Available
Complete the Membership Form and mail with your check or pay online securely using PayPal at www.boyntonhistory.org.

Volunteer Opportunities
Are you a fan of Boynton Beach? Invest in its future by upholding its past and volunteer with the Society! The Boynton Beach Historical Society is run entirely by its volunteer members. Let us know if you would like to join us and make history happen!

The following represents our Membership Roll to date & dues received from 2/2/2021 to 3/4/2021

Thank You to our Life Members
Candy & Doug Brueggemann  Alexander "Sandy" Simon
EasyPay Tire Stores Inc, Doug & Ruth Beseker
Robert and Jeanne Gaylor  Voncile Marshall Smith
M Randall Gill  George & Christine Weaver Terrenyi
Robert & Christian Oyer Macoviak  William & Gaye Weaver
Melear Bros., Cliff & Rick Melear  Marion Weaver Wester
Wayne & Eva Brooks Knuth Netzler  Bill & Elsie Winchester
Scott & Camilla Smith Richardson

Thank You to our Corporate Members
Dan & Regina Day, Delray Awnig  Daniel & Lisa Ames Suiter
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

Thank You to our Patrons
Ron & Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher  Billie Jo Swilley
Michael & Linda Martin Callaway  Suzie Winchester
George & Gayle Kranz Greider

Membership Renewals  Thank You!
Cecil Adderley Jr  Ben Lowe
Peter Alspuro  Sandra McGregor
Steve Anton  Diane & James McCracken
Pam Traylor Anwyll  Rosalie Morrissey
Doris Braunworth  Gerald Murray
Jackie Brant  William & Laura Orlove
David & Barrie Byron & Bit Shaw  Lillian Osguy
Bruce & Judith Carlson  Susan Oyer
Brian D Combs  Sandra & Eugene Palchanis
Don & Joanne L Combs  Isabella & Ronald Pause
Emme Cortelyou  James & Edith Pitts
Diana Dennis  Barbara Ready
Virginia Farace  Susan Merkle Shaffer
Dorothy J Ferris  John & Chadda Shelly
Robert Ganger  Joanne Miner Shoemaker
Ann Gill  Donna Fuller Smith
Mayor Steven B & Jennifer Grant  JeanAnn Thurber
Judith Merkel & Richard Howard  Barbara Traylor
Evelyn Howell  Dorothy & Paul Wenz
William James  Sarah Williams
Gladys B Knuth  Arlene VanBrunt
Charles & Elizabeth Labella

Welcome to our NEW MEMBERS  Thank You!
Kathleen & Raymond Henderson

And A Special Welcome to our BOGO Recipients*
Lois Weaver Argo  Scott & Amanda Maxwell
Ricky J Day  Cathy Pomfrey
Dolores Erickson  Norman Price
Jay & Barbara Erlichman  Barbara Saxton
Cheryl Grimes  Kathy & Rod Silverio
Susan & Dean Hillman  Joyce Waters
Leslie C Kranz  Jerry Wilcox
Marion Krutchkoff  Debbie Sutera McHenry

* BOGO Special Offer: Become a New Member or Renew your Membership and get a FREE 1-year membership for a friend! Restrictions apply. See form for details.
The Historic Boynton Beach High School

Photo courtesy of the City of Boynton Beach

Many will have had their first look at the recently restored, revitalized, and repurposed Boynton High School during the Kinetic Art Exhibit earlier this month. The school, originally opened in 1927, has been rechristened the Boynton Beach Arts & Cultural Center. The building is listed on the Boynton Beach Register of Historic Places. Still evident are many original features: the well-traveled stairwells inside and the columns and urns outside. For more photos and information, https://www.boyntonhistory.org/history/boynton-beach-high-school/

The following photos courtesy of Barbara Ready

New renovations include -

What were classrooms on the south end of the building are now mirrored and have accordion dividers which can be retracted for increased functionality.

The gymnatorium, combining the gym with the stage, has had the wooden bleachers removed to maximize floor space. The stage has been completely renovated and storage space created under the stage floor for the tables and chairs which will be used when the room hosts a function. A catering kitchen, two green rooms and a freight elevator were also added.
We recently received a new donation that I thought members might be interested in, and I thought I’d share a little more about what we do with photographs.

It’s two boxes of photographs from the attic of the house previously owned by William Beck, former owner of the Boynton Beach Star, the Deerfield Observer, and Star Printing. The Boynton Beach Star started publication in 1961 and ended in 1968. It featured stories of local politics and events, with very opinionated editorials. It also featured photography by Stan Sheets, who was also a jazz musician. His photographs are always very well composed and often quirky, with unexpected poses. These look like the photo files of the newspaper, alphabetically arranged by topic.

After getting a Deed of Gift signed by the donor (I can’t do anything to a collection until we own it!), I’ve started the long process of arrangement, rehousing, and making them accessible. Each photograph will have a number, and those scanned will be cataloged and included on FIU’s online database, and later harvested for inclusion in the Digital Public Library of America database.

There are bowling teams and civic leaders and pageant contestants and Little League teams and much more from the 1960s. It’s just a delight opening each file and seeing what’s there. Since I know they were published in the Boynton Beach Star, I also try to find the images in the newspaper that we have available online. While a few of the photographs have information on the back, the ones I can find published in the newspaper have full identifications and other information. And so the search is on, trying to find out who all the people are, and what’s going on in the photo.

As you can see, being an archivist is a pretty technical, nit-picky life, but I love the mission of making the materials of history available for those who want to do research.