



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.

2019 VOLUME 5

May 2019

AWARD of EXCELLENCE to BARBARA READY; SPEAKER LAKE WORTH WATERKEEPER, REYNALDO DIAZ; and OUR MEMBERS SHARE a DINNER

Those are the events the Boynton Beach Historical Society has in store for those of you who come to share our final spring/summer meeting on Sunday, May 19. **WELCOME MEMBERS and GUESTS.**

[1] The Board of Directors is honored to present this year's **2019 EXCELLENCE AWARD** to **BARBARA READY** for her significant contributions to Boynton Beach.

[2] **LAKE WORTH WATERKEEPER: Keeping Tabs on Our Lagoon's History in the Making** is the topic **REYNALDO DIAZ** will address. Reynaldo is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance and an advocate for the Lake Worth Lagoon and its watershed. The Lagoon, a coastal estuary running along the eastern edge of Palm Beach County, is considered the northern reach of the Everglades, and extends from Lake Okeechobee to the beaches. Reynaldo will discuss the mission of the Waterkeepers which is to protect and restore the historic Lake Worth Lagoon and its surrounding waters from Lake Okeechobee to offshore waters. The goal is to build a new ecosystem by examining the issues and the Waterkeepers' role in that effort.



Reynaldo Diaz



[3] Immediately following the Award Presentation and our speaker, we will enjoy our **COVERED-DISH DINNER**. Please **bring a side dish [salad, dessert or vegetable casserole]** to serve 8 or donate \$10 per person at door. The Historical Society provides entrée, beverages and place settings.

WHAT:	EXCELLENCE AWARD, LAKE WORTH WATERKEEPER REYNALDO DIAZ, ANNUAL MEMBER DINNER
WHEN:	SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2019, DOORS OPEN 4:30p, Program & Dinner 5:00 – 6:30
WHERE:	FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, Pratt Hall, 235 SW 6 th Ave [2 blocks west of Seacrest]

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2019-20**

OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Randall Gill
1 st Vice President, Programs	Barbara Ready
2 nd Vice President, Membership	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
Secretary	Anne Rimler
Treasurer	Voncile Marshall Smith

[Non-Elected]

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

DIRECTORS [all Directors positions to terminate on or before 2022]

2020	Steven Anton
2020	Jeffrey Fine
2021	Heidi Bell

TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2020	Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher
2020	Diana Dennis
2021	Donna Artes
2021	Susan Oyer
2022	Virginia Farace
2022	Ben Lowe

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

P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach



www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory



The Historian is usually mailed seven 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
Candice Tomei Brueggemann, P.A. Real Estate
Easy Pay Tire Stores, Inc. Doug Besecker, Ruth Besecker
Robert and Jeanne Gaylor
Randall Gill
Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak
Melear Bros., Inc. - Cliff and Rick Melear
Wayne and Eva Brooks Knuth Netzler
Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson
Alexander "Sandy" Simon
Ernest G. Simon
Voncile Marshall Smith
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi
Dorian Beck Trauger
Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

CORPORATE MEMBERS - 2019

Delray Awning, Inc., Don and Regina Day
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory
Daniel and Lisa Ames Suiter

MORE MEMBERSHIPS

The following who have joined or renewed the Boynton Beach Historical Society for 2019 and have not been listed previously are below.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP:

Robert and Jeanne Gaylor

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP:

Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home & Crematory

PATRON MEMBERSHIP:

Donna Artes

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:

Benoit Mailloux and Ben Lowe
Sheldon, Terri and David Voss

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:

David Bludworth
Jeffrey Fine
Robert Ganger
Marcia Levine
Jayedda Marsh
Debra Tucker
Michael Wilson

We are grateful for all our 2019 members and hope all you enjoy sharing Boynton Beach's history with us. The Gaylors, our newest Life Members, had held a family membership for many years and paid for one this year before deciding to make a larger contribution to the Society through the Life Membership. Thank all of you for your help to the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

NEW BYLAWS PASSED

At the Annual Meeting in April, the members present, who constituted a quorum, passed the proposed revisions to the Bylaws of the Society. The major changes were a reorganization of the Board of Directors reducing it from 18 members to 11. The positions known as "Directors" will gradually be phased out and by 2022 only the Officers and the five Trustees will constitute the new Board. Also the positions of Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary were combined as Secretary. An Auditing Committee was created and the Museum Committee eliminated. Other changes were minor or merely editorial. Copies may be obtained by contacting us at boyntonhistory@gmail.com or P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425.

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

The other item of business at the Annual Meeting in April was the election of Officers and Trustees who together with the remaining previously elected Directors comprise the Board of Directors for the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

Randall Gill was reelected as President; Barbara Ready moved from a position as Director to become 1st Vice President where she will be responsible for selecting and scheduling speakers for our programs for the coming year; Sheila Taylor Rousseau was reelected to continue serving as 2nd Vice President in charge of Membership; Anne Rimler moved from 1st Vice President to the newly created position of Secretary which combines the duties previously split between the Recording and Corresponding Secretaries; Voncile Smith moved from Trustee to replace Fran McKeral as Treasurer.

As the new Bylaws require, we did not elect any new "Directors," but we did reelect Virginia Farace as Trustee and Florida Atlantic University history professor Ben Lowe was elected to fill the Trustee spot vacated by Susan Merkel Shaffer.

Voncile's move to the position Treasurer created another vacancy on the Board of Trustees, and the Board, at its April meeting after the Annual Meeting, voted to move Director Donna Artes into that Trustee position which expires in two years in 2021. Jeffrey Fine, who was Recording Secretary and has been seriously ill for the past several months, was moved into the Director's position previously held by Barbara Ready.

All these positions are listed on the masthead on page 2,

IN MEMORIAM

Mary Lou Muster Ryder: We are sad to report the passing of Mary Lou Muster Ryder in Tampa several weeks ago. Mary Lou was a granddaughter of H. B. Murray who arrived here from Michigan in the 1890s to help Nathan Boynton build his ocean front hotel and would later become the first Mayor of Boynton. Mary Lou was born in Boynton to Rose Murray and P.T. Muster, Sr. She attended Boynton schools and graduated from the historic 1927 high school in 1947. Her mother had three children, Cheryl, Mary Lou, and Paul T. Muster, Jr, who are now all deceased. Rose's third daughter, Ramona Somerford, was born of a later marriage and is a current member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.



A recent picture of Mary Lou at Museum of Science & Technology

Mary Lou's daughter, Lee Anne Ryder, wrote the Society of her mother's death, and later sent the following to the Editor of The Historian:

"In her last few years she suffered from dementia and I [Lee Anne] was her caregiver. The events from her long past that were mentioned in your newsletter were things she could easily remember and gave her such happiness.

"As you requested here is a little bit about my family: After Mom graduated from FSU, she worked as a journalist. She met my father, Herboth S. Ryder, while they were both studying at FSU. She traveled to Germany to marry him while he was stationed there in the military.

"After their return to Florida, Dad completed Law School at the University of Florida. He initially worked as an attorney, but then he became a Circuit Court Judge in Tampa and later became an Appellate Court Judge for Florida's Second Court of Appeal. My mom worked as a high school English teacher.

"My parents had two children. My sister, Stacy Ryder Miller, is now a social worker living in Tallahassee. I, Lee Anne Ryder, am a registered nurse and live in Tampa. My father died in 2003. My mother suffered a fall and never regained consciousness, but her official cause of death was deemed cardiac arrest."



Lee Anne Ryder with her Mom Mary Lou Muster Ryder

"SETTLEMENT OF BOYNTON, FLORIDA' As TOLD by H.B. Murray, First Settler"

[As a memorial to Mary Lou Ryder, we include this excerpt of the founding of Boynton in the words of her grandfather, H.B. Murray. This is from a manuscript donated by Mr. & Mrs. Andrew N. Huston from material on file at the Historical Society of Palm Beach County.]

"I came to Boynton in the fall of 1895 at the invitation of Major N.S. Boynton, head of the Order of Maccabees and whom I had met while I was secretary of the local lodge at Port Huron, Mich.

"Major Boynton had become interested with Congressman W.S. Linton of Michigan, in establishing colonies of northern people on the lower east coast and bought with Linton and later from him the land on Boynton Beach on which he built the Boynton Hotel, Linton promoting the Townsite of Linton which afterwards became Delray.

"When I arrived there were a few tents and one or two small houses. I took charge of the construction of the hotel and when Fred Dewey opened up and put on sale in 1897 tracts of muck land and lots in the original townsite west of what afterwards became the Dixie Highway, I bought two tracts of 2 1/2 acres each and two lots in the townsite. Frank Cox had the first store and was the first postmaster.

"The east coast canal was opened in 1895 providing transportation with Lake Worth and the north. George C. Butler and Franklin Sheen surveyed the farm lands and the Townsite of Boynton. We raised vegetables for home use and for sale in a small way. Fred Dewey was the original developer of the townsite and Major Boynton set the orange and grapefruit groves on the east side of the canal about the time he finished the hotel. Until the railroad and the canal were opened for business in 1895, the only means of transportation was by the beach and a stage route which required two day from Lantana to Fort Lauderdale."

[See the pictures of two H.B. Murray homes in the April 2019 Historian.]

PINEAPPLE FARMING IN THE BOYNTON AREA

In the early summer of 1879 a boat with a load of pineapple slips arrived from Key West. Several thousand of the slips which were used to start pineapple plants were purchased by the settlers. What resulted was referred to as "pineapple fever," and although no one had ever grown them before, most who bought them were convinced that they would produce an extra source of income.

Those slips that were planted on hammocks did not need fertilizer because of the peat humus which was more fertile than some of the surrounding sandy soil. But clearing a hammock field took time and the fields were limited in size, often to an acre or less. The centers, or hearts, of many of the plants filled with sand. The pineapple growers to control this initially placed around the plants a coarse bunch grass which grew around the shore of the lake, but the grass was time consuming to collect and apply.



Pineapples – Spring of 1930

We printed this picture in *The Historian* 15 years ago, and it prompted a response from one of our members Ralph E. Myers who is still, although living in North Carolina, a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. He comments, "The people in the picture are from L to R my uncle Tom Woolbright, my aunt Lone Woolbright, my aunt Anna Meredith, my father Roy O. Myers and my mother Rachel Meredith Myers."

"Uncle Tom Woolbright was a large grower of pineapples and grew them in about fifteen acres of hillside just west and north of his home on the hill that is now the Woolbright intersection of I-95. I was born March 4, 1923 and my mother told me that Uncle Tom Woolbright was growing pineapples there when I was born. I remember seeing pictures of the big packing plant building he had just east of the field with many people harvesting and packing the fruit for the northern markets."



The Winchesters—Bill, Oscar and Jim in the 1950s

The Winchester Pineapple Plantation covered many acres off Military Trail north of Boynton Beach Boulevard. At one time Oscar Winchester was the largest producer of pineapples in the United States. Oscar and Jim are both deceased, but Bill Winchester still engages in some farming activity in the Boynton area. He regularly runs cattle in a SW lot off Knuth Road and Boynton Beach Boulevard. Bill and his daughter Suzy are both members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.



1905 – Pineapple Field on Ridge West of Boynton

Pineapples are a summer crop, but after more than a year the plants are only a little more than half grown. A field worker had to take precautions to dress appropriately to deal with the sharp, curved spines on each side of every pineapple leaf. Strong canvas gloves protected the hands, and most workers wore two shirts and two pairs of pants to save their bodies from the thorns. Mosquitos were often another problem.

Originally the most common point for shipment was Titusville which had to be reached by boat. From there the pineapples were carried by wagon eight miles to a lake port to be shipped up the St. Johns River by steamboat to Jacksonville. After 1913 the Florida East Coast Railway was used to move them to North Florida and to other states.

Much of the land that now makes up the cities of Boynton Beach, Lake Worth Beach, Lantana and Hypoluxo was once pineapple fields. Pineapples were also grown in the Fort Pierce, Stuart, West Palm Beach and Delray areas.

Sometime in the 1920s, pineapple growing began to suffer setbacks. The beginning of drainage of the Everglades was a contributing factor. Another was the growth of pineapple production in Cuba and later in Central America where labor costs were lower, and growth of the plants more rapid.

Finally, the land boom in Florida made property more valuable for building development than pineapple growth.

ANOTHER PINEAPPLE STORY "CHARLIE EARNS HIS FIDDLE"

[This story was adapted for "The Brown Wrapper" of the *Palm Beach Post* by W. White from *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida* by Charles Pierce.]



A Studio Picture of Charles Pierce apparently taken in New York in the 1860s before the family came to Florida in 1873

"During the Christmas season of 1879 after the pineapple slips had arrived, all the settlers around the Lake (the lake known as Lake Worth) held a grand get together at Captain Dimmick's Hotel. Young Charles Pierce was totally fascinated with the music of the event, especially with the fiddlers. He then decided that he had to own a fiddle of his own.

"Alec Carlisle, who was the assistant lighthouse keeper at the Jupiter Lighthouse, had a fiddle and offered to sell it to Charles for the price of six dollars. Unfortunately, Charles had spent all of his money he had earned by plume hunting [!] and would not have any other income until next spring.

"Charles' uncle Will Moore stated that he would hire Charles to plant pineapple slips if Charles did not charge him too much for labor. Uncle Will and Hamilton Pierce had gone to Key West to pick up another ship load of slips before the Christmas bash. Uncle Will had six thousand slips that he wanted planted at his homestead.

"Charles had no idea how long it would take for him to plant six thousand slips, but he wanted that fiddle, so he agreed to do the planting for the total charge of six dollars. Early the next morning, Charles started trimming the slips and by noon he had trimmed one thousand. After a hearty lunch, he started setting the plants. This was done by stretching a line, with pieces of cloth tied every eighteen inches, over one row to be planted. A plant was dropped at each of these pieces of cloth, then with a short thick stick called a dibber were pushed into the ground. He kept steadily at this, and by a half hour before sunset had the first thousand plants set. For six days, Charles labored at this chore of setting pineapple plants and on the seventh day he went hunting. Six thousand pineapple plants were in the ground and Charles had earned his fiddle."

LOCAL PIONEER FOODS

[In 1969 Lillian "Freda" Voss Oyer, a niece of Charles Pierce, the aspiring fiddler discussed in the article on the left, wrote a brief history of Boynton Beach. The following is an excerpt that pertains to the food she, her parents and grandparents had in her childhood. Freda was born on Hypoluxo Island, but her parents lived in Hypoluxo three miles north of Boynton during her girlhood.]

"To the women in pioneer days the problems of food and housekeeping were greater even than the loneliness and work. This was made more difficult because almost without exception the families who came to South Florida were from cities and towns. They were accustomed to all the conveniences of that time.

"As for actual food, nature provided it plentifully except for the staples such as flour, sugar, spices or seasonings, milk and butter.

"The lake was teeming with fish, oysters and ducks. There were turtles on the beach to provide additional items of diet while turtle egg pancakes were a treat. These were made with a quantity of the egg whites beaten stiff and folded into the batter. Venison and turkey were in the woods.

"Grapes and huckleberries grew in abundance. There were wild mulberry trees, pawpaws and the sapadillo with its dead-sweet, brown fruit dripping with syrup when broken open. Along the banks of the canal and in the low damp ground the elderberry bushes grew. They were attractive shrubs with great clusters of white bloom. Later, the quantities of berries furnished many delicious pies. Some of the men would tell you they also made delicious wine.

"Besides the berry pies, in the very early days here my Grandmother Pierce made cactus pies. Cactus here in this part of the state grow close to the ground. The blossom is flat, as large as a teacup and gleaming like golden satin. After the blossom dies, a fruit develops. It is round, about the size of a small guava, and covered with small sharp spines. Using a long-handled fork for piercing the fruit and a long knife for cutting it off and peeling, still Grandmother always got some cactus spines in her fingers.

"Jellies and jams were made from huckleberry, grapes and seagrapes. Although the wild grapes and the quantity of huckleberries have all vanished before the builders, the seagrapes yet grow on the beach ridge. They are attractive shrubs and trees, so often they are now planted in yards for looks, not jelly.

"The first to come to the shores of Lake Worth had only one vegetable – palmetto cabbage. Today hearts of palm is rather a gourmet item, but then cabbage cooked with white bacon was ordinary food. Of course, getting the palmetto cabbage killed the tree. Indeed, the tree was usually chopped down. But who cared? There were hundreds growing everywhere.

"Many of the fruits and flowers which grew in bountiful profusion were native, but undoubtedly some were from seeds borne on the high winds or washed ashore from ships."

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Member's
Name _____

2nd Member's Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

E-mail _____

The Society is a 501(c)(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

Membership year is January 1 to December 31. Dues are not pro-rated. Membership Expiration Date on Mailing Label.

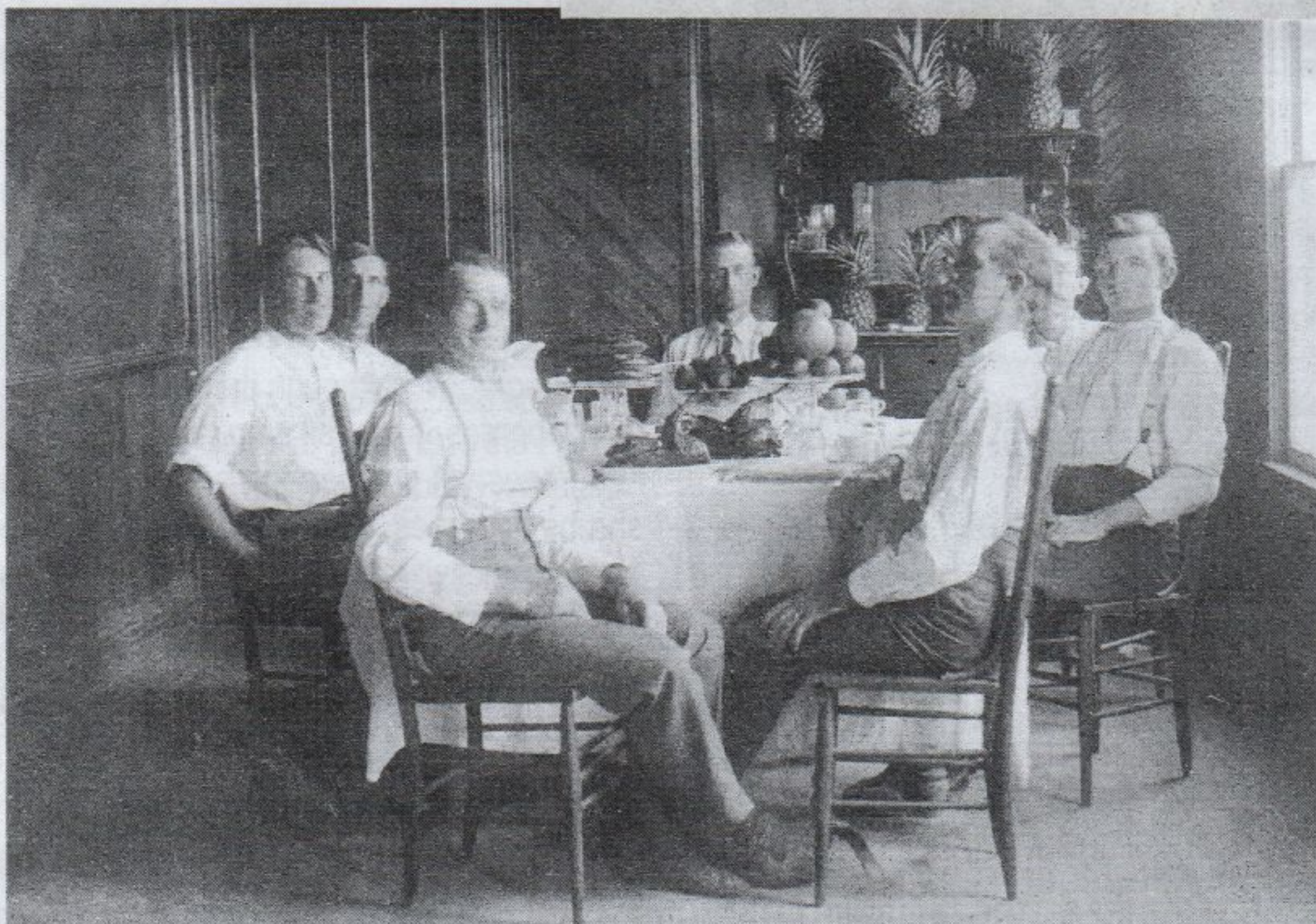
Complete this form and mail with payment to

Boynton Beach Historical Society

P.O. Box 12345781633 R051

Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012

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Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012



We've printed this picture of pineapples and prosperity before. We do not know where it was taken or who any of the men shown are, but it seems to be reflective of the good things pineapple crops provided.