



# *The Historian*

*The Newsletter of The Boynton Beach Historical Society*

Voncile Smith, President

Volume 2007, No 3, March 2007

Voncile Smith, Editor

## **FAITH, SCHOLARSHIP, SERVICE: DR. MARY McLEOD BETHUNE**

is the topic for the March meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. We are fortunate to be able to offer another of the wonderful programs sponsored by the **Florida Humanities Council**. Dr. Bethune is portrayed by **Ersula Knox Odom**, independent scholar and Chautauqua performer.

**Mary McLeod Bethune** was one of the great educators of this country. She was a leader of women, an adviser to several American presidents, and a powerful champion for racial equality. Her parents were former slaves who had a farm in Mayesville, South Carolina. The 15<sup>th</sup> of 17 children, she first entered a mission school when she was 11 years old and then went on to Scotia Seminary, a school for girls of African descent. Later she attended Moody Bible Institute, and after graduating she taught in several schools in South Carolina and Georgia before renting a two-story frame building in Daytona Beach where she established the Daytona Literary and Industrial School for Training Negro Girls which opened in 1904. Education for African American children was a rarity at that time.

In 1912, after years of financial struggle to operate the school, Bethune was able to interest James M. Gamble of the Proctor and Gamble Company to contribute financially to the school. Gamble served as chairman of the school's board of trustees for the remainder of his life.

In 1923 the school for girls combined with a school for boys, the Cookman Institute of Jacksonville, FL, to become the Bethune-Cookman Collegiate Institute which was soon renamed Bethune-Cookman College. Bethune served as its president until 1942, and continued as a trustee until her death in 1955. By that time the college had a faculty of 100 and an enrollment of over 1,000. Since 1924 it has been a **United Methodist Church** related institution. On February 14, 2007 it became **Bethune - Cookman University**.

**Ersula Knox Odom** will share stories about Mary McLeod Bethune's life and accomplishments, as well as her thoughts on the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision.



Ursula Knox Odom

**WHAT:** Dramatic Portrayal of the life of  
Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune by Ursula  
Knox Odom

**WHERE:** Boynton City Library  
208 South Seacrest Blvd

**TOPIC:** Faith, Scholarship, Service:  
Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune

**DATE** Monday, March 12, 2007  
**& TIME:** 6:30 p.m.

**ALL PROGRAMS OF THE BOYNTON BEACH  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARE FREE AND OPEN TO  
THE PUBLIC.**

Program sponsored by the Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Mary McLeod Bethune  
(Photo from [www.bethune.cookman.edu](http://www.bethune.cookman.edu))



Mary McLeod Bethune as a teacher  
(Photo from [www.bethune.cookman.edu](http://www.bethune.cookman.edu))

#### BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2006-07

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The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is [boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org](http://boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org). You can contact us at our e-mail address [boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com](mailto:boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com) or mail inquiries or information to our mailbox at P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012.

#### A REMINDER

The Annual Meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society is scheduled for April. At this meeting we elect new officers, directors and trustees. We will hold a brief business meeting to complete the election process followed by our program meeting. **Frances Tuite McKeral** is scheduled to speak and show memorabilia from discoveries she has made from the files and records of her mother, **Mabel Rousseau Tuite**. The program is titled "What I Found in My Mother's Closet."

#### IN MEMORIAM

In the February issue of *The Historian* we were sad to report the death of **Ethel Powell Miner**, but right after we had copies run of that issue, Mrs. Minor's sister, **Helen "Penny" Powell Lyman** passed away too. Just a few days ago, **Kenny Lyman**, the husband of Penny, also lost the battle to cancer. Both the Lyman and Powell families have deep roots in the history of Boynton Beach. Many of their kin and descendents still live in the area.

Kenny Lyman and his father Walter Lyman were major representatives in what was once a major factor in the Boynton economy—tourist and commercial fishing. Beginning on page 3 is a report of a portion of the Lyman family history including mention of the many contributions the members made to Palm Beach County.

On behalf of the members of the Historical Society, we extend our best wishes and condolences to the survivors of these two important early families.

#### MARCH BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Directors of the Historical Society is scheduled for Wednesday March 21, 2007 at the Boynton Woman's Club at 5:30 p.m. The Board consists of all the Officers, Directors, and Trustees, but any member in good standing is welcome to attend. We will publish a preliminary agenda on the website several days before the meeting.

## THE LYMAN FAMILY

The patriarch of the Lyman family was Morris Benson Lyman. He was born September 22, 1860 in Ontario, Canada where his father was a school teacher.

Morris represented the tenth generation of a family that had immigrated to Massachusetts from England in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. A portion of the family emigrated from New England to Canada just before and just after the American Revolutionary War. Morris' early school years were in the Canadian district where he lived, but by the age of 12 he was dividing his time between school and working in his father's store. The store was not successful, however, and in 1877 the family moved to an undeveloped part of Ontario known as the Muskoka district. Young Morris became a carpenter and a boat builder. In 1883 the family moved to Michigan. Morris disliked the cold weather and decided to head south. In late 1883 he started out for Birmingham, Alabama, but apparently changed his mind and went to Jacksonville, Florida.

In June 1884 he sailed on the schooner *Bessie B.* from Jacksonville for Lake Worth. Before reaching their destination, they encountered a heavy storm of three days' duration that had winds strong enough to throw a 50 pound grindstone off the deck. They arrived safely at Lake Worth, but the boat could not get over the sand bar into the Lake, so they went to where Palm Beach is now located.

For the first six months he lived with Mr. A. Geer, and worked to build Delmore Cottage for R.B. Moore. In fall of 1884 he erected the frame for the first store building in Lake Worth for the Brelsford Brothers firm.

Then he took passage back to Jacksonville where he found steady work. His father joined him that first winter and later the remainder of the family came down from Michigan. In December 1884 he married Mary A. Beltz on Christmas Eve. He worked in Jacksonville until 1886, when he returned to Lake Worth as a utility man for Brelsford Brothers.

In 1887 work again took him to Jacksonville. In 1888 yellow fever was declared an epidemic, and with his wife and two children he went over to Mayport where he camped for 21 days, and through the cooperation of a doctor got health papers to return to Lake Worth.

By September 1888 having overcome difficulties with health officials and numerous delays, and the family arrived in Lantana on September 22, 1888.

They had no house to live in, but he secured a small amount of lumber and built his own house, using pine poles for a frame and cabbage palmetto for a roof. He immediately found construction work, and took charge of rebuilding the steamer *Lake*

*Worth* owned by Capt. N.D. Henrickson, which Lyman had first built in 1886. Later he bought the schooner *Bessie B* from the Brelsford Brothers and took up the run between Lake Worth and Jacksonville. This run was a success from the beginning. They ran regular trips during the season which took from 15 to 20 days.

In the summer of 1889 he engaged in mercantile business on a small scale at Lantana in what was to become the third mercantile establishment on Lake Worth. This became the M. B. Lyman Company, Inc. dealers in general merchandise, fertilizers, crate material, and paper.

Morris Lyman was considered to be a hard-working and enterprising man. He was willing to turn his hand at anything from building a boat to running a freight line, to selling merchandise to building his own house with his own hands.

His family of five sons and one daughter were all Florida born. They were George G.; Edgar B.; Arthur R.; Walter H.; Frank B.; and Rachel M. The house M.B. Lyman built in 1889 is the second oldest house in Lantana. It is still standing and operates as the Old Key Lime House Restaurant.

Not only did he head M.B. Lyman company, but he was Treasurer of Stranahan and Company of Fort Lauderdale, and was appointed Treasurer of the newly created Palm Beach County on July 26, 1909 by Governor Albert W. Gilchrist. He operated the Indian Trading Post and post office. As postmaster he named the post office *Lantana Point* after the wild lantana plant growing in the area. The word *Point* was later dropped. Another of his businesses was the Lantana Fish Company, and in the early 1900s the gathering and marketing of oysters became a leading industry for the Town. The town was incorporated in 1921. The M.B. Lyman family is credited with founding the town.



yours Truly  
M.B. Lyman

## WALTER H. LYMAN and KENNY LYMAN

M.B. Lyman's fourth son, Walter H. Lyman was born May 28, 1891. He married Nellie Viola Austin, who was a sister to Charlie Austin who owned Austin Supply Company, a store sitting next to the FEC tracks on Boynton Beach Boulevard where Bud's Chicken Take-Out is currently located. Walter and Nellie had two sons, Kenny and Harold.

Walter Lyman owned his own boat and was a commercial fisherman. At one time he furnished fresh fish to a fish market housed in the old Boynton Hotel building on Ocean Avenue. Later he moved the market further east on Ocean Avenue to property where two high rise condominiums were built in 2005. The Walter Lyman home was located on that property which is west of what are now the Sea Mist docks and the Two Georges Restaurant. Unlike his commercial fisherman father, Kenny Lyman was a recreational fishing boat captain. Kenny Lyman's Sport Fishing Docks on the Boynton Inlet were part of that property. Kenny sold the docks in the 1970s.



Captain Kenny Lyman is on the far right.

Kenny Lyman said that he had always loved to fish. He called himself "a cowboy of the sea." After the attack on Pearl Harbor, he tried to enlist in the Navy during World War II, but was declared 4-F because of a broken foot. He went into the Merchant Marine instead.

After the war, he loaded cargo onto ships, and when he came home he had a charter boat built which he called *The Lucky Penny* to honor his wife, Penny Powell. That was when he began his charter fishing business in Boynton Beach. With his brother Harold he built Lyman's Sport Fishing Docks in the 1950s. Later he bought out his brother's share of the business. At one time Lyman's Fishing Docks was very popular as a tourist attraction. It hosted dozens of fishing competitions, numerous beauty queen competitions, and many fish fries.



Penny Lyman with her orchids.

Kenny and Penny lived for many years in a 1920s era home that had once belonged to Kenny's grandmother, Alice Austin.



The home of Kenny and Penny Lyman on S.E. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street

Helen C. Powell shared 63 years of marriage with Kenny Lyman. Penny's family had moved to Boynton Beach in the early 1920s and her father, J.C. Powell, was the bridge tender for the span on Ocean Avenue crossing what is now called the Intracoastal Canal. The Lymans had two children, Walter "Skip" Lyman and Cindy Lyman Jamison, and lived to see the advent of four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.



Kenny Lyman at age 90

## 2007 MEMBERS

The following list contains the names of all paid memberships that have been received for 2007 through February 28, 2007.

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Randy Rau (Decorating Center)  
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Carol G. Smith





*The Historian*  
Boynton Beach Historical Society  
Post Office Box 12  
Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012

If you have not sent in your dues, why not take a few minutes, write out your check and mail it to us. Thank you!

## JOIN NOW FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2007

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE

## BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Memberships are for the Calendar year, January 1 to December 31. Check the appropriate line and return this form with the dues for that category to The Boynton Beach Historical Society, P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012. If you have questions, please contact Voncile Smith, 561-734-5653, or e-mail [smithvm@bellsouth.net](mailto:smithvm@bellsouth.net).

Individual Membership     \$25.00 \_\_\_\_\_     Family Membership     \$35.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate Membership     \$ 100.00 \_\_\_\_\_     Patron Membership     \$50.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Members Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Telephone/E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If you would be willing to serve on a Committee for the Society, please check all that apply:

Public Relations \_\_\_\_\_ Educational \_\_\_\_\_ Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Minority History \_\_\_\_\_  
Refreshments \_\_\_\_\_ Archives/ Preservation \_\_\_\_\_ Fund Raising \_\_\_\_\_ Program \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the Society is to act as a living repository for the traditions and history of Boynton Beach, to interpret items of historical and antiquarian significance, and to promote a better understanding of history. We are proud to serve Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf, Briney Breezes, and all areas west of Boynton Beach to U.S. Hwy 441, and, on occasion, greater Palm Beach County.