



The Historian

The Newsletter of The Boynton Beach Historical Society

Voncile Smith, President

Volume 2007, No 5, May, 2007

Voncile Smith, Editor

ANNUAL COVERED-DISH DINNER MAY 20

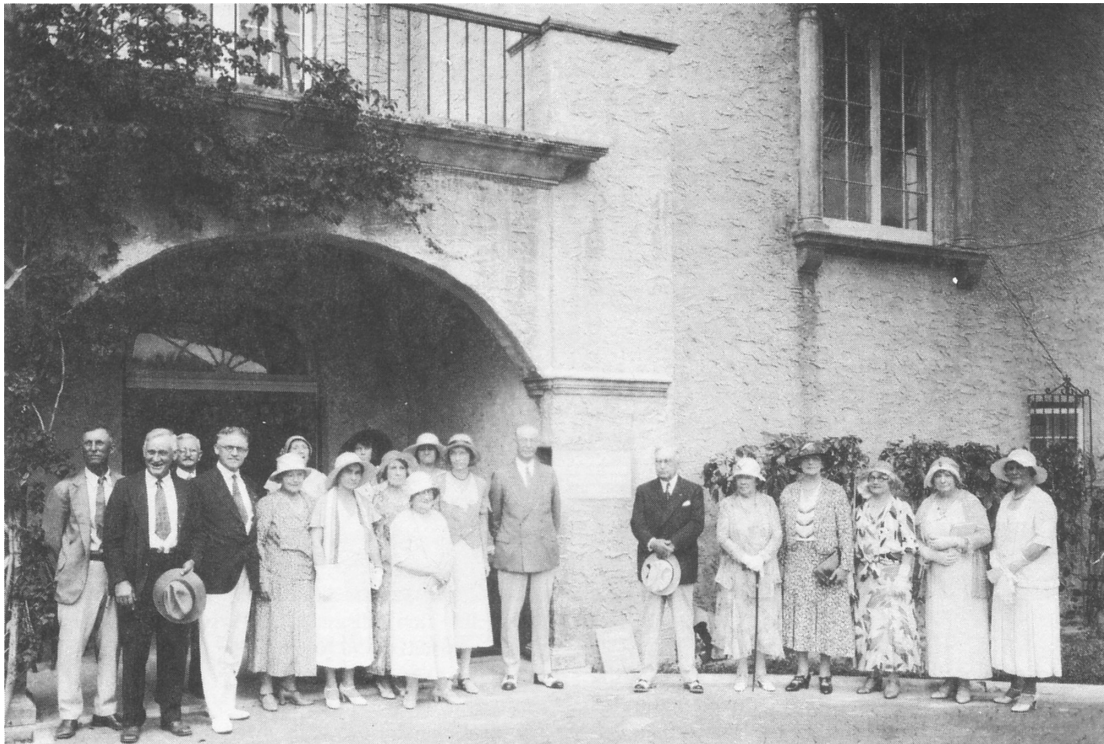
After our Annual Meeting, which occurred in April this year, we have traditionally held a covered-dish dinner on a Sunday at the Boynton Woman's Club. For several years we have co-hosted this event with the **Mizner Foundation**. At the request of the members, we schedule no program for this meeting, but hope that members and our guests will share memories and learn about our city and area through conversation and fellowship. The Historical Society and the Mizner Foundation supply the meat dishes, the beverages, and place settings, but ask that those who attend bring a salad, vegetable dish, or dessert sufficient to serve eight. Come join us for a pleasant figurative stroll through the past in this historic setting as we relax and enjoy good food.

WHAT: Covered-Dish Dinner
Please bring Salad,
Vegetable, or Dessert

TOPIC: Becoming Acquainted
through Conversation
and Fellowship

WHERE: Boynton Woman's
Club, 1010 S. Federal

DATE: SUNDAY, May 20
& TIME: 5:00 p.m.



Boynton Woman's Club Dedication Ceremony and Laying of the Cornerstone April 16, 1932. L to R: Samuel Adams (Contractor), O.S. Heaton (Contractor), Charles I. Pierce (Postmaster), Rev. L. E. Wright (Methodist minister), Mrs. O.C. Knuth, Miss Dorothy Shepperd, Mrs. Marion A. Weaver, Mrs. Minnie Paulle, Mrs. Anna Meredith, Mrs. J.C. Powell, Mrs. Ethel Pierce, Mrs. H.T. Holloway, Mr. George Boynton (son of Maj. Boynton), Mr. A.E. Parker, Mrs. A.E. Parker (daughter of Maj. Boynton), Mrs. Frances Patterson (daughter of Maj. Boynton), Mrs. Charles Stitts, Mrs. Emily Atwater, Mrs. Bertha Williams (Chadwell)

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org. You can contact us at our e-mail address boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com or mail inquiries or information to our mailbox at P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012.

NEW FACES ON OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Two new faces on the Board of Directors for the coming year are **Richard Philpott** who was elected First Vice President, Programs, and **Wendy Franklin** who is the Corresponding Secretary. Rev. **Randall Gill** is now a Trustee completing the last year of **Stanley Weaver's** term. Stanley resigned because of health problems. Other officers, Directors and Trustees were reelected for another term. We look forward to new ideas and enthusiasm for the coming year.

LYMAN INFLUENCE CONTINUES

New Fishing Exhibit

The *Schoolhouse Children's Museum* is planning a new permanent exhibit "Get Hooked on Boynton: The REEL History of Saltwater Fishing" reflecting the Sports Fishing Industry. The Boynton Inlet and its close proximity to the Gulf Stream have earned Boynton the nickname "Gateway to The Gulf Stream."

The interactive exhibit will chronicle the rich and unique history and lifestyle of a Fishing Village. Visitors will learn the process of catching a fish as well as the importance of

releasing it, the migration habits of fish, how to read the weather signs, and how to navigate by compass and stars. Conservation of the natural reefs, fish habitats and breeding grounds will be paramount, as well as identifying sea turtles, birds, and fish.

The exhibit will recapture the flavor of the time in our history when life revolved around the fishing and tourist industry and the town had a "Heart" because the fishing families stuck together and had fish frys, parades, and fishing tournaments as family entertainment. The exhibit is in the conceptual stage and donations of money as well as items reflecting our fishing heritage are being accepted. For more information about the REEL History Exhibit please Call **Janet DeVries** at 561-742-6397 or **Cindy Lyman Jamison**, Project Coordinator at 561-732-9720. Information about the Schoolhouse Children's Museum, is available at www.schoolhousemuseum.org or by calling 561-742-6780.

New Book on Fishing

Janet DeVries is compiling a new book on the local history and roots of sport fishing in the Palm Beaches. It follows two earlier works, *Postcard History Series: Around Boynton Beach* and *Images of America: Boynton Beach* (with **Randall Gill**) by Janet in conjunction with the Boynton Beach City Library with all proceeds from the book going to the REEL History Fishing Exhibit at the Schoolhouse Children's Museum mentioned above.

This 128-page 220-image "photographic journey in the past" lends you the opportunity to share your pictures and memories. The working title of the book is "Sport Fishing in Palm Beach County." To have your "story" added to the book, please call Janet at the Boynton Beach City Library at 561-742-6397.

WE BREAK FOR SUMMER

This is the last issue of *The Historian* until September when we will mail you Volume 2007, Number 6. Our program meetings also resume in September. Although the programs for next year have not been scheduled at this time, we hope to have more speakers from the Florida Humanities Council as well as several local people who have special expertise.

MORE ON 1940 ROTARY MEMBERS



Boynton Rotary Club, December 9, 1940

Last month we printed this picture with the names of some of the people who had been identified. We had responses from several members offering help with some of the others. We now have a name for each of those pictured. Unfortunately we have several names for a few.

Thanks to Sandy McGregor, Lenore Benson Boonstra, James Shelton, and Frances Tuite McKeral for their contributions.

The names we have are Back Row L to R: Mr. Polton; 2nd from L. is Mr. Stein or Cameron or Atwater; 3rd from L. Homer Shelton; 4th, Rev. M.B. Ware; 5th Curtis Wright; 6th, Leslie B. Crane; 7th, Bert Peterson; 8th, Dr. N.M. Weems, Sr.; 9th, Paul Mercer; 10th, Howard Hood; 11th, M.A. Weaver; 12th, James P. Bowen, and 13th, Mr. Cameron or Atwater.

Kneeling, L to R: Walter Lyman, Roy O. Myers; Fred Benson; Jean Merkel; Harry Benson, George Henderson, J. J. Williams; W.O. Plunkett; Oscar Winchester; Roland L.Owen or Doug Gandy. So there are three individuals who have been identified by more than one name. If anyone has further information, please let us know.

LEE HOUSE OR LEE MANOR INN?

Your editor was confused. At our last program meeting she learned that these terms represent two entirely different buildings that were part of Boynton Beach's history. The following should help clarify the distinctions for anyone else, not only between the names, but in the differences in clientele and purpose.

The Lee House

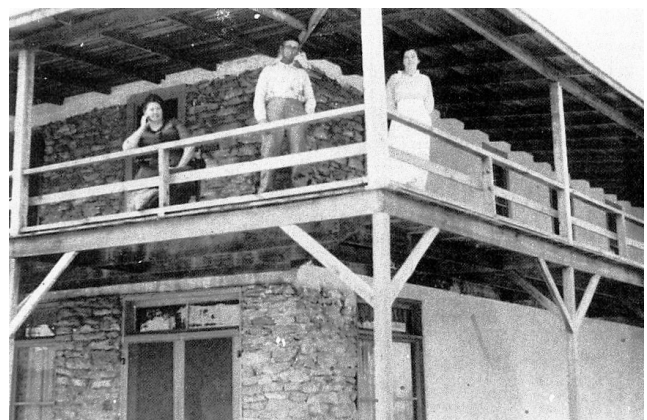
Lee House was situated on what is now Boynton Beach Boulevard and the current location of Fred and Joe's Automotive Shop, a one story, concrete block structure painted a very bright yellow.

Lee House was by the standards of the day a boarding house (sometimes called a rooming house or lodging house). Boarding houses were often private homes that rented out

rooms, usually to single individuals who were working in the area. They provided "room and board" which meant they had dining rooms and served meals in addition to providing lodging, both together, usually for a flat fee.

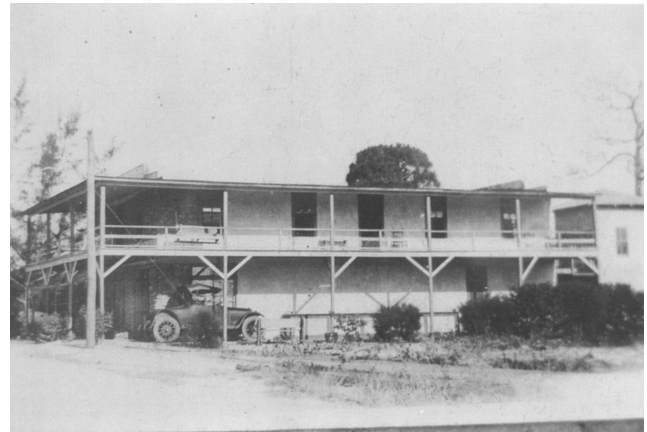
Lee House was owned and operated by Barbara Ann Lee and her husband David Daniel Lee. Mrs. Lee was a sister to Katherine Ford Rousseau and was among the early arrivals in the Boynton area. Lee House was a two-story building with a balcony porch running around much of the second floor. It had a dining room which featured a huge lazy Susan.

(The lazy Susan from the old Lee House was moved to LaBelle by Forey family relatives of Mrs. Lee and can currently be seen in Flora and Ella's Restaurant in LaBelle.)



Lee House

L to R are Estelle Lofton Foy, an employee who helped Mrs. Lee run the house; David Lee and Barbara Ann Ford Lee.



Lee House

Note the 1920s car under the balcony porch
[Photos courtesy of Frances Tuite McKeral]

Lee Manor Inn

Lee Manor Inn was an upscale resort which operated seasonally to provide lodging to winter visitors. It was built in the early 1930s after the land boom had ended, but before massive bank closures occurred.

The lead carpenter for its construction was

[Continued on Page 4]

Page 3

[Continued from Page 3]

Harry Offerman. [Harry's wife Birdie Tuck Offerman was a sister to Lucille Tuck Scott known for her role as a partner with husband Otley Scott in founding and operating "Lucille and Otley's" restaurant.]

Lee Manor Inn was owned by Roland Anderson.

The property ran from the highway [U.S 1] to the intracoastal canal. There were the main house and bungalows in the back which were also rented to seasonal tourists during the winter. The house contained a dining room. At the time it was built nearly all land south from Boynton Beach Boulevard on the east side of the highway was occupied by nurseries. This little resort was designed to attract "people of means" to a quiet, sub-tropical setting.

It is now within a subdivision named for it—Lee Manor Isles.

The property has been used for several purposes since it closed as a resort. The land next to the intracoastal canal has been sold separately, and the bungalows are long gone.

Currently the building is an upscale girls' boutique known as "The Pink Princess." It is painted pink with lavender trim to reflect its present mission. In retrospect its current owners describe its earlier function as a "bed and breakfast," and the prices charged at the time it operated as an inn were probably comparable by today's standards to many upscale bed and breakfast establishments in parts of Florida. However, a fully functioning dining room serving several meals a day exceeds what almost any contemporary bed and breakfast establishment provides.



"The Pink Princess," a girls boutique, formerly Lee Manor Inn

WE WERE ONCE DADE COUNTY

[In 2009 Palm Beach County celebrates one hundred years as a county. Prior to 1909, this area was a part of Dade County.]

Many of the internet accounts of the history of Dade County (now Miami-Dade County) suggest that its history really begins about 1890. But there is a rather fascinating story concerning its creation in 1836.

Spain ceded Florida to the United States in 1821. Congress approved Florida as a U.S. Territory that same year. On March 25, 1822, Lt. M.C. Perry took physical possession of Key West and planted a U.S. flag to prevent any disagreement over whether or not the Keys were part of Florida.

To control piracy and other threats to shipping, Congress passed the Federal Wrecking Act in 1825 which prescribed that all property in these sites had to be brought to a U.S. port of entry. In 1828 the U.S. established a superior court in Key West with admiralty jurisdiction. The only other east coast court in Florida was at St. Augustine, so most Florida Keys wrecking property had to be taken to Key West.

Wrecking (salvaging) was a major industry at the time, but some wreckers were known to be rather unscrupulous. One such disreputable captain was Jacob Housman who disliked dealing with the customs court in Key West. Housman began seeking to establish a more favorable port of entry, an admiralty court, and a customs house somewhere else.

He found Indian Key, a little 10-acre island near Matacumbe in the middle Keys. A writer for *Harper's Magazine* in 1871 noted that "Indian Key is one of the few islands of the Reef that can be called inhabited. Here for many years the wreckers have resorted, as it is convenient as a midway station and the safest harbor in heavy weather. . ."

In 1830 Housman began acquiring property on Indian Key. Over the next few years, he bought buildings and stores, a two-story house, and 9-pin bowling alley, billiard room and guest house with a kitchen. After additional purchases he had a mini-empire under his control.

He had friends in the Territorial Legislature and lobbied them to divide Monroe County

(Continued on Page 5)

(Continued from Page 4)

which included most of South Florida into two parts. On February 4, 1836 Dade County was created with Indian Key designated as the county seat. The new county was named after Major Francis Langhorne Dade who was killed a few months earlier in a Seminole battle on December 28, 1835 after he became lost on a march in north central Florida from Tampa to Fort King (near Ocala).



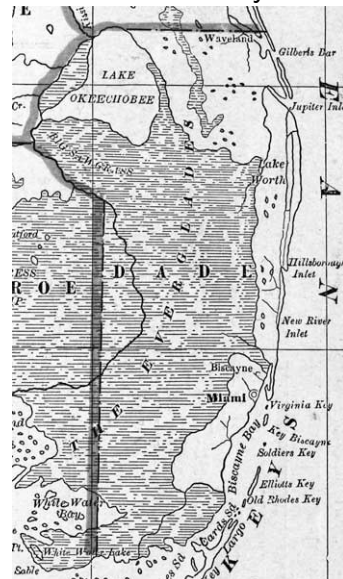
An 1839 map of newly created Dade County. Note the northern boundary which begins near the Hillsborough Inlet and runs diagonally to Lake Okeechobee. Indian Key is near the southern boundary.

The Second Seminole War was also creating tension in the Keys. Indian raids on Cape Florida Lighthouse on Key Biscayne and the Caryfort lightship in which several people were killed unnerved Keys residents. Housman formed his own militia of 38 men with himself as commander, but it was disbanded in 1838 when relieved by the Cutter *Dexter* under the command of Naval Captain Rudolph. On August 7, 1840, when the naval contingent had taken every man possible to the west coast to look for Seminoles, the Indians attacked Indian Key and massacred seven people, including famous botanist and physician Dr. Henry Perrine.

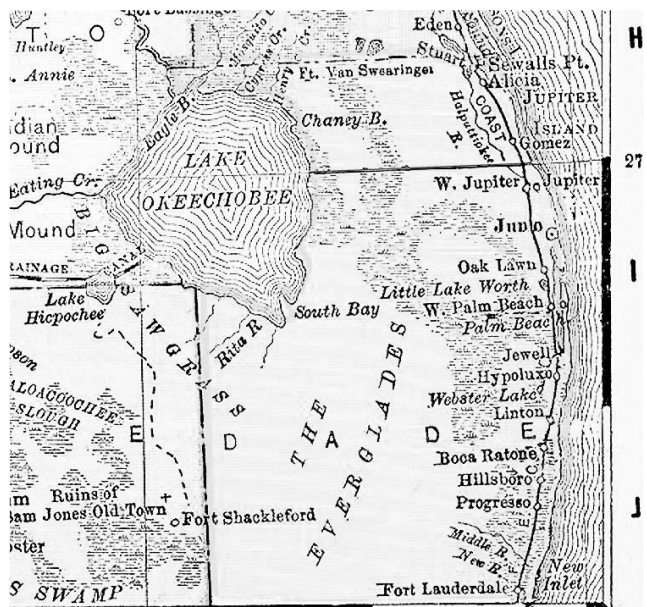
The massacre and legal problems undid Housman's little empire, and by 1840 he was bankrupt. He was killed in a boat accident a year later.

It was half a century before the northern boundary of Dade County was extended to include the coast part of what is now Palm

Beach County. By then Indian Key was no longer the county seat, and Monroe County had reclaimed the middle Keys.



An 1886 map showing the boundaries of Dade County. Note that the mapmaker included all of Lake Okeechobee and extended the northern line north of Jupiter. Most of the Keys south of Key Largo had reverted to Monroe County.



This 1895 map shows the northern part of Dade County as it was before Palm Beach County was created in 1909. Little Lake Worth refers to the Lake, not the town which was established later. Palm Beach County at first included the northern part of what is now Broward County. Broward was created in 1915. Brevard County was the area above Dade County until St. Lucie County was created in 1905. Martin and Indian River Counties were formed later from St. Lucie and, for Martin, part of northern Palm Beach County.

Before Palm Beach County existed, elected officials from the northern part of Dade County moved the county seat to Juno in 1890. After new Dade commissioners were elected, they moved the county seat back to Miami in 1900.



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

The historian

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.

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.

