



# 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 to US Hwy 441

Voncile Smith, President

Volume 2007, No 6, September, 2007

Voncile Smith, Editor

### From Voncile . . .

In May I began my sixth successive year as the Society's president. Although the five past years represent positive achievements for our group, on some issues we often are stymied.

Let's look at the gains first. The *Historian* has been mailed regularly, eight issues a year, during each of the five years I have completed. We have a website and an e-mail address. Our membership has increased substantially, and, thanks in large measure to **Janet DeVries**, our efforts for archival preservation have improved. Janet has also contributed in so many other ways including website maintenance, program facilitation, and most importantly, moral support.

I am grateful, too, for the continuing help and support of the other Officers and Board members. Two people I commend in particular are **Bev Cormany** who has been a wonderful membership chair, and **Claire Weems** who has served so faithfully as our treasurer.

A major loss for the Board was the resignation of **Stanley Weaver** (for health reasons). Stanley and the Weaver family have been so committed to the community for so many years, and Stanley's advice and continuing participation will be much missed by all of us.

A topic of continuing frustration has been the fate of the historic 1927 high school building. City officials have continued to drag their feet when it comes to assigning the building to local groups who are interested in preserving it to establish it as a cultural center. [See inside article.]

Some of the objectives I have mentioned each year still await implementation. These include the collection of more oral histories, and a more active effort to collect histories pertaining to minority groups. We continue to seek more materials—photos, letters, journals, and similar memorabilia—which will help to assure a better picture of what has helped to build our community. And there is always needed effort to prevent the destruction of historically significant sites. This last issue could be facilitated by the enactment of a City Ordinance creating an historic preservation board.

To accomplish these will require commitment, time, and legwork on the part of members of the historical society. I hope more of you can step forward to help. Our preservation efforts depend on you.

## NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUM

### WHAT:

A Presentation by the New Executive Director, Michael Hall

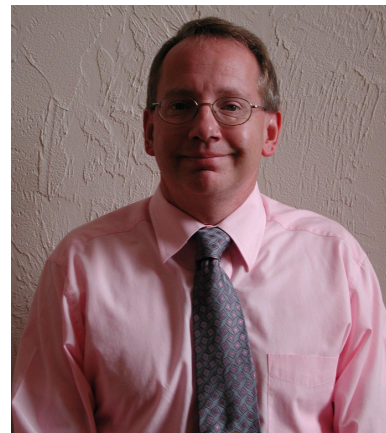
### WHEN:

Monday, September 10,  
6:30 p.m.

### WHERE:

The 1913 Schoolhouse  
Children's Museum

We begin this 1007-2008 year with a presentation at the Schoolhouse by the new museum Executive Director, **Michael David Hall**.



Michael David Hall

A native of Illinois, Michael Hall brings with him 22 years of experience in the museum field. He received his BA in American History and Business Administration and then was employed as site manager of a 3,000 acre farm and wildlife area in Illinois which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. He entered historic preservation after receiving his MA in American History and Museum Studies at Western Illinois University. He moved to Indiana and became a curator and then director of the Montgomery County Historical Society and oversaw

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**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2007-08**

**OFFICERS**

President	Voncile Smith
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Richard Philpott
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Membership	Bev Cormany
Recording Secretary	Betty Thomas
Corresponding Secretary	Wendy Franklin
Treasurer	Claire Weems

**DIRECTORS**

2008	Lucile Dickinson
2008	Fain Weems
2009	Helen Adams Bonomini
2009	Nain Weaver
2010	Gloria Turner
2010	Curtis Weaver

**TRUSTEES**

2008	Harvey Oyer, Jr
2008	Randall Gill
2009	Virginia Farace
2009	Dan Rousseau
2010	Janet DeVries
2010	Marion Weems

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.

*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. Back issues and an index prior to the current year are posted on our website.

[Michael Hall – Continued from Page 1]

five antebellum structures. During that time Michael completed his dissertation at Purdue University while working at the United States Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Hired in 2002 as executive director of the Gold Coast Railroad Museum in the Metro Zoo complex in Miami, he helped pioneer a new emphasis for the museum in children's related events. This background should be most valuable in helping the 1913 Schoolhouse Museum move ahead towards new growth.

He, his wife **Teresa**, and their seven year old son **James**, live in Miami. They enjoy family activities including snorkeling and visiting the many natural attractions of South Florida.

Scheduling our visit to the Museum to hear Michael continues a tradition the Historical Society has followed for several years where we meet periodically to receive an update on the status of the Museum.

The Cultural Center, Inc. which manages the Museum is an outgrowth of early efforts by the Boynton Beach Historical Society to preserve and put to community use this historic building. Prominent members of the Historical Society served on the early Board of the Cultural Center, and whoever is current president of the Society sits *ex officio* on the Board of the Cultural Center.

**IN MEMORIAM**

We are saddened to report that **Edythe Guthrie Hood**, a long time Boynton Beach resident and community activist died on August 21 at age 94.



Edythe Guthrie Hood

Edythe Guthrie, who was originally from Caanan, Ohio, first came with her parents to Lake Worth in 1919 . In 1935 she lived in Lake Worth with her new husband, **Charles Howard Hood**, who was from Medina, Ohio. In 1938 they moved to Boynton Beach where she continued to live throughout her lifetime.

For years Howard Hood operated a service station on Federal Highway. He served as Mayor and was also otherwise active in the community. Edythe and he had six children—**Sally Hood, Nancy McNamee, Judith Boswell, Charles Richard Hood, Thomas H. Hood, and Kathleen DeCamara**.

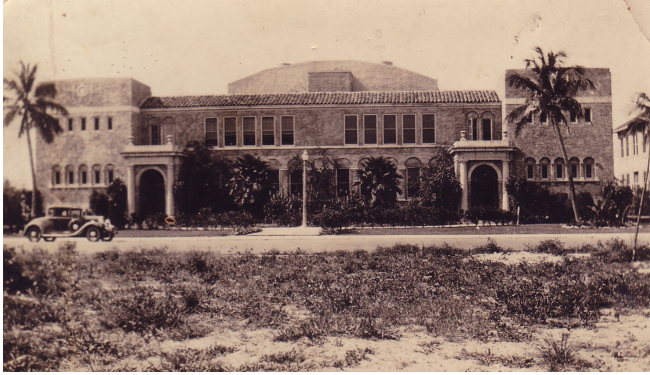
Edythe was active and involved in many civic organizations. She was a 50 year member and past president of the Boynton Woman's Club, first president of Seacrest (now Atlantic) High School PTA, and first president of St. Mark's Women's Club. She served on many City boards including the Library Board, Boynton's Disaster Board, and the first Interracial Board. She was an Election Board Clerk for 30 years.

She was active in the Daughters of the American Revolution, Colonial Dames, Founders and Patriots, and in the Court of Honor. She was a realtor for many years and served on the Board of Realtors in various capacities. She had also been a member of Bethesda Hospital's Auxiliary Board, and was a director of the Community Concert Series Board. She belonged to the Boynton Book Club and had been a long standing member of the Historical Society.

The Historical Society is grateful for the many contributions of this long-time community member. We extend our best wishes and condolences to all the members of her family—her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great grandchildren who were fortunate to share her life for so many years.



## CAN WE SAVE THIS BUILDING?



Historic 1927 Boynton High School  
[photo c. 1932, Courtesy Sue Murphy Beaman]

Once again the future of this historic building is in jeopardy. Several years ago the City Commission assigned the building to the Community Redevelopment Agency. The CRA in turn called for proposals to rehabilitate and use the facility. After deliberation over what they considered to be two viable submissions, the CRA leased the building for a token amount to Five Towns College from the Northeast which indicated they would establish a Southern campus in the building. Early this year, Five Towns College withdrew their offer.

Soon after that the City Commission disbanded the Board of the CRA and took over Board functions themselves. The hired staff of the CRA remains intact.

Currently a group of consultants is gathering information to make recommendations concerning the whole redevelopment area assigned to the CRA. This includes the Ocean Avenue corridor which, of course, includes both the 1913 Schoolhouse Children's Museum and the 1927 historic old high school.

One of the problems the Historical Society has encountered in trying to discuss its role in transforming the old school into a functional structure has been the inability or the unwillingness of some members of City government to understand that no group can go out and raise money to work on the building if they do not have some type of lease or assignment giving them control of the building. We cannot raise money, either by donation or grant, unless we, or a group we support, has control of the building.

A representative from the Florida Department of State, Division for Historic Preservation has been meeting with some of us to discuss how important it is to preserve historic sites in Florida. Unfortunately many people who have moved into Florida in more recent times appear to have no appreciation of the value of these undertakings. Sometimes these people are elected or appointed to decision making positions in government.

A mountain of separately funded studies all support the advantageous impact historical preservation and the establishment of cultural centers has on an area's economy. We have access to these studies, but the appropriate people must look at them.

There is substantial money available for historic preservation and restoration through both the state and federal government and through private foundations.

While rehabilitation of the building will be very expensive (estimates suggest \$6 to \$9 million), a comparable structure could not be built new for that amount.

Cosmetically the building is somewhat of a mess because of 16 years of neglect by the City. But two totally independent well-regarded restoration architects as well as a construction firm specializing in historic restoration have evaluated the building as still sound and worthy of reclamation.

Currently we are part of a group lobbying for control of the building. We have representatives from the Palm Beach County Arts Council and the Historical Society of Palm Beach County working with us.

Boynton Beach has only three historically significant public buildings—the 1913 Schoolhouse, the Woman's Club, and the 1927 historic old high school. The old high school was designed by William Manley King a well-respected Mediterranean Rival style architect of the 1920s. The building also has elements of an up and coming style of that period that would make South Florida famous, Art Deco. The building deserves to be saved. If it is destroyed, an important relic of the area's history as well as that of Boynton Beach will be lost forever.

## TWO 1934 GRADUATES From Boynton High School



Lou Anna Ward, Valedictorian and Alice Miller, Salutatorian  
[Photo courtesy of James Shelton – Lou Anna's son]

BoYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM, CALENDAR YEAR 2008

Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
2nd Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: INDIVIDUAL \$25.00  
FAMILY \$35.00  
PATRON \$50.00  
CORPORATE \$100 or more

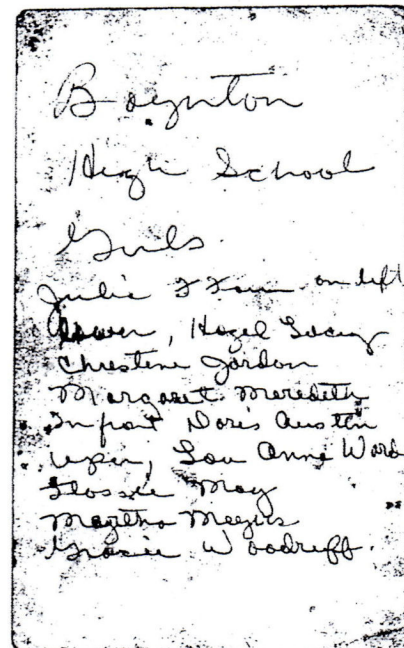
I would like to serve on the following: (Circle choices)  
Archives/Preservation, Fundraising, Hospitality, Mailings, Membership,  
Minority History, Programs/Planning, Public Relations, Seeking Sponsors,  
Telephone, Website, Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

If you are currently a member of the Society, your dues are paid until December 31, 2007. Dues notices will be mailed in November, but you may pay now if you wish. Send your check marked "2008" to P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012. New members may send the form below or a copy of the information with their checks for the amount of the desired membership. If you have an email address, please include it. We share it with no one, but if we need support for an immediate preservation issue, it is much quicker to send multiple emails than to telephone.

THE HISTORIAN  
Boynton Beach His. Soc.  
P. O. Box 12  
Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012



Boynton High School Students ca. 1930  
Julia F. Fain on left, next to Hazel Lacy, Christine Jordan, and Margaret Meridith.  
Doris Austin is seated in front. Upper row from left, Lou Anna Ward, Flossie May,  
Martha Myers, and Gracie Woodruff.  
[Photo courtesy Julia Fain's son Corky Dalton via Anne Weems Michael]



Names written on back of  
Picture at left