



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.

2011 Number 2

February 2011

PUBLIC BROADCASTING IN PALM BEACH COUNTY

Public Broadcasting in Palm Beach County began in Boynton Beach. The history of its development will be revealed by Gillian Davis who was an active volunteer in helping to establish WHRS, the forerunner of WXEL. Founded in 1968 at Hagen Ranch School for migrants, WHRS was the first radio station designed to bridge the gap between migrant workers and the middle class. At the time, it was an innovative learning tool for migrant children and their parents as well. The children received FM receivers to take home so that whole families could hear educational broadcasts in their native tongue. In time the schedule was expanded to include music and English language programs as well. The station later moved to the school board's instructional television center south of Congress Middle School. By 1977 WHR had boosted its power to reach all of Palm Beach County. In 1985 the call letters were changed to WXEL.



Gillian Davis acting as a DJ at WHRS ca. 1970s
Better known as "Miss Gillian," who operated a dance studio in Boynton Beach for many years, Mrs. Davis was able to offer a rich knowledge of

music and the other arts in an advisory capacity to the station.

WHAT: The History of Public Broadcasting in Palm Beach County, a talk by Gillian Davis

WHERE: Boynton Beach City Library
Program Room

WHEN: Monday, February 14, 2011
6:30 p.m.

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

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2010-11

OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Voncile Smith
1 st Vice President, Programs	Janet DeVries
2 nd Vice President, Membership	Bev Cormany
Recording Secretary	Anne Watts
Corresponding Secretary	Diana Dennis
Treasurer	Frances McKeral

NON ELECTED

Editor <i>The Historian</i>	Voncile Smith
Archivist and Webmaster	Janet DeVries

DIRECTORS [3 year staggered terms]

2011	Steve Anton
2011	Sally Dye
2012	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
2012	Delma Swilley
2013	Tim Bednarz
2013	Gloria Partin Turner

TRUSTEES [3 year staggered terms]

2011	Randall Gill
2011	Wendy Franklin
2012	Victor Norfus
2012	Dan Rousseau
2013	Brian Edwards
2013	Virginia Farace

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. Voncile can be reached at 561-734-5653.

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.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, January Meeting

The members of the Board selected Wendy Franklin to complete the term as Trustee of Harvey E. Oyer, Jr. who passed away in December. The term expires in April, 2011.

Historical Society member Barbara Ready presented a report about the City's Ad Hoc Committee for Historic Preservation. The City Commissioners have approved hiring a full-time Historic Preservation Planner to help develop a historic preservation board and to identify criteria for determining which properties qualify for historic status. This is a tremendous step forward for saving historic Boynton Beach. Both Barbara and Janet DeVries serve on the Ad Hoc Committee for Historic Preservation.

The Board also began discussion on how memorial funds contributed in the name of Harvey E. Oyer, Jr. should be used. Harvey's

children will be invited to participate in later discussions.

The Board is considering enrolling in PayPal to permit people to join or contribute to the Society on line. Some members feel internet payment through our website would be attractive to potential younger members.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING, February

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 28, 2011, 6:30 p.m. at the Boynton Woman's Club. Any member of the Historical Society is welcome to attend any Board of Directors Meeting and participate in the discussion. Only members of the Board may vote on motions, however.

COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM at FAU



Richard Davis with some of his manuscripts

In 1989 Richard and Gillian Davis gave to Florida Atlantic University a collection of rare 18th and 19th century scores including masterworks by Haydn, Beethoven and Wagner.

Gillian Davis has announced a special commemorative program honoring the Davis Collection.

**FAU CHAMBER SOLOISTS:
GEMS FROM the DAVIS COLLECTION
Sunday, February 20, 2011, 3:00 p.m.
UNIVERSITY THEATRE
Boca Raton, Florida**

HARVEY E. OYER MEMORIAL FUND

The Boynton Beach Historical Society is grateful to Susan E. Oyer, Harvey E. Oyer III, and Christian Oyer Macoviak for asking that gifts commemorating their father be sent to the Society.

Gifts have been received from the following:

Agency Marketing Services, Inc., St. Petersburg, FL
Bonomini, Helen Adams
Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches
Cypress Realty of Florida, LLC, Jupiter, FL
Davis, Gillian
Elhilow Family Office, LLC
Elhilow, Mark and Susan
Farish, Loreen B., Hobe Sound, FL
Howard, Judith M. and Richard V.
James, William
Layman, Kelly, Tallahassee, FL
Mackay, Dr. Adele, Palm Beach Gardens, FL
McNiece, Dorothy J.
Mounts, Priscilla S. (Polly)
Norman, Marcia Ann Voss, Davie, FL
Orlove, William
Oyer, Charlotte, Tucson, AZ
Oyer, Susan E.
Palm Beach Flagler Rotary Foundation for Phil
Whitacre
Pressly, P. Kristy and James G.
Richardson, J. Scott and Camilla Smith, Allen, TX
Rousseau, Sheila M. and Robert B. Taylor, Jr.
Scobee-Combs-Bowden Funeral Home and
Crematory
Shriberg, L. A. and F. A.
Shutts & Bowen, LLP, Miami, FL
Smith, Voncile Marshall
Stabile, Linda
Ternenyi, George S. and Christine Weaver
Thomas, Betty M.
Voss, Stephen H. and Gay, Boca Raton, FL
Wrighton, Randolph S., Dallas, TX

The Society wishes to thank all these contributors to the fund. We have received over \$2,800 to date.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Donald Curl, retired Florida Atlantic University Professor of History, died in December, 2010. Donn, as he was known, had presented several programs to the Boynton Beach Historical Society in years past. He was an expert on the architecture of Addison Mizner.

But, one of his major contributions was providing what was almost forgotten information about life in early Palm Beach County. For years Donn taught Florida History at FAU, and one text he used was *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida*. This book was edited by Donn from a relatively unknown 700 page manuscript by Charles W. Pierce covering the period from 1873, when Pierce arrived as a eight year old in the area around Lake Worth (the lake, not the town) with his family, to 1894. Pierce's manuscript is a primary source of information about the region's early years. Donn's edition was first published in 1970 by the University of Miami Press. It is no longer in print, but used copies may be available from Amazon or other sources.

FIRST SCHOOLHOUSE IN DADE COUNTY

On January 22, 2011 an historic marker, provided by the Colonial Dames of America, was unveiled on the eastern side of AIA in Palm Beach in front of Phipp's Park to commemorate the County's first school house. When the school was built in 1886, Palm Beach County did not exist but the area was part of Dade County until 1909. The one room school building originally was located near Lake Trail in Palm Beach, but was moved to Phipps Park in recent years in order to preserve it.

Charles Pierce writes: "In 1886 fourteen years had elapsed since the first settlers had arrived. In all that time there had been no attempt to start a school in any part of the county. In the summer of 1886 the heads of families living on the lake decided it was time to act. They took their case to the county commissioners, and it was finally agreed that the county would pay a teacher if the people of the lake would donate the land, build the schoolhouse, and equip it.

"That was not much of a concession by the county officials, and perhaps they thought it would settle the question until some future time. If so, they did not know the kind of men who lived on Lake Worth. Squire Hoagland and David Brown gave the land, the lumber was bought by subscription and came freight free by schooner from Jacksonville.

"In the fall of 1886 the new schoolhouse opened with an enrollment of eight and with Miss Hattie Gale as teacher." [from *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida*, p. 237.]

Today school children on field trips visit the school and have lessons from a park employee acting as a teacher. Each child selects an early county settler to role play as they pretend to experience life in the 1880s.

GOLD COAST TRAILS

By Margaret Garnett Harris

[Margaret Garnett Harris, who was born in this area in 1908, wrote her recollections of Boynton history in 1969 for the Boynton Beach Historical Society soon after it was organized. *The Historian* will feature her paper in 3 parts to be printed in consecutive months.]



Margaret Garnett Harris

[Part I]

May I do a little recollecting and rambling before I get into my topic, "Gold Coast Trails," which is quite brief. My father, Andrew Garnett, when only 20 years old, came from Kentucky to Hypoluxo in 1885. Death had claimed both his parents, and he chose to stake his small inheritance in Florida's future. Eleven years later he went back to marry the young lady who had been rooming and teaching with his sister. My mother always said she was not a true pioneer. The real pioneers were those who suffered the cold weather in the northwest, (she disliked the cold) or those like Mrs. Pierce, Mrs. Voss's mother, who had already lived many years on Hypoluxo Island, and who was glad to see even an Indian -- 'tho' there couldn't have been much conversation with the language barrier.

Certainly, I do not consider myself a pioneer. My older brothers tell of the horse and buggy days which I do not remember at all, because by the time I was born we had an auto car -- that was really its name, and also electric lights by virtue of adding onto the house and putting a Delco light plant in it, also, indoor plumbing if you please. It was really because I broke my arm in a fall from the hay loft where I was playing with my brothers when I was three years old, that I have a visual image of that car, as I do all the other exciting events of that day when work ceased on the Garnett place and I was center stage -- even to the ball Dr. Peek gave me because I was good, and the way the mashed potatoes looked and tasted in the pretty casserole dish that Delia, the cook next door to the doctor's home and office had fixed. Mr.

and Mrs. Peck had inquired as to what had happened to Margaret and invited us to dinner. The auto car was manufactured by the Clark Company in Philadelphia. The Clark family still live in Palm Beach. Ours was one of the first cars in the county. It didn't have a top. The front seats were separate. You walked between the front seats to get to the rear seat.

Besides our neighborhood, there was school and town and church -- tho' not necessarily in that order. School was to me, Hypoluxo through the 5th grade, and then our school with one teacher for eight grades was closed and we were bussed to Lake Worth where the City Hall is now. My older brothers and their contemporaries in Boynton had to go to Palm Beach High School, but mine was the first class going all the way through Lake Worth High School, graduating in 1926.

When we said we were going to town, we meant going to West Palm Beach. Church, however, was Boynton. The Boynton Methodist Church was a very important part of our lives. Every Sunday all seven of us went to Sunday School, Church, Epworth League, and Church again. I still don't know how we had room to pack in a few more along the way, or how my mother had the strength to always, so it seemed to me, entertain the presiding elder, now called district superintendent, or any other visiting minister and his family for chicken dinner, as well as my friends, if I wished to bring them home with me. Since the Methodist Church was the only church here for many years, my church friends included even a Catholic family and a Jewish girl.



Boynton Methodist-Episcopal Church, South, Built in 1908

I remember the old stone church on the main intersection where Standard Gas Station was later. Mr. Charlie Pierce used to play his violin along with the choir's performance. His son, young Charlie or "Chuck," was the first white boy, and Marjorie Rousseau was the first white girl born in Boynton. Marjorie and her husband, Mike Jackson, sang in the choir. Marjorie attends the same church we do in West Palm Beach when she comes from New Jersey to visit her sister, Alice Faust. [to be continued in March]

2011 MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships for the calendar year 2011 are due now. We are most grateful to those of you who have responded to our request to help us avoid sending dues notices by sending in your checks for renewal. In the November and January Historians we acknowledged those who had paid by the times those issues were composed.. The list below contains the names of additional renewals we have received between January 1st and February 1st. Thank all of you so very much!

CORPORATE

Oyer, Charlotte

PATRON

Dooley, Lois Oyer

Howell, Evelyn C.

Weaver, Charlotte Tatum

Weaver, Curtis and Nainie Weems

FAMILY

Bollenbacher, Ron and Sarah Thomas

Combs, L. Don and Jeanne

Gill, M. Randall and Ann

Morgan, Jeff

Marcacci, William and Theresa

Raulerson, James "Topy" and Georgie

Senior, Helen, Charles, and Fred

Swilley, Delma W. and Billie Jo

Voss, Stephen and Gay

INDIVIDUAL

Anton, Steven M.

Besecker, Ruth

Bonomini, Helen Adams

Braunworth, Doris

Clark, Marion Weaver Wester

Davis, Gillian

Dennis, Diana

DeVries, Janet

DuBois, Joy

Dye, Sally

Edge, Donald

Farace, Virginia

McGregor, Sandra L.

McKeral, Frances

Morrissey, Rosalie Alvaroe

Nelson, Marjorie

Nitzsche, Marianne

Orr, Esther M.

Oyer, Susan E.

Raulerson, Evelyn Brant

Rousseau, Marilyn K.

Scott, Barbara G.

Shoemaker, Joanne

Stabile, Linda Louise

Thomas, Betty

Weeks, J. H. "Gym"

Weeks, Raymond E.

We extend a special welcome to new members Dr. Marilyn Rousseau and Donald Edge. We are happy you have joined us.

HONORING BOB AND J.C. SWILLEY

Delma and Billie Jo Swilley have presented a cash gift to the Boynton Beach Historical Society to honor Delma's two brothers who both passed away this past year. The four children, J.C, Delma, Peggy, and Bob, of Collice and Versie Swilley were all born and reared in the Boynton area. Peggy died several years ago.

The Society is most grateful to members Delma and Billie Jo for their thoughtfulness and generosity to the Society. We are pleased to honor these two long time residents as we extend our sympathy to Delma, Billie Jo and the other family members on their loss.

Thank you for this remembrance to the Society.

UPCOMING ELECTION

According to the Bylaws, the Boynton Beach Historical Society elects new officers, two directors and two trustees each April at the annual meeting. The Board of Directors consists of the elected officers, 6 directors and 6 trustees. Directors and Trustees serve 3 year staggered terms. All officers are elected annually. The Nominating Committee will be announced in the March *Historian*.

Please consider serving in one of these positions. The Board would welcome some new ideas and some new energy. The Board usually meets 4 to 6 times a year for 1 to 1 1/2 hours each time.

If you would be willing to serve in one of these positions, please e-mail our website, write to our P.O. Box or call Voncile or Janet and we will submit your name to the Nominating Committee. For additional information, check page 2 of this newsletter.

We are proud to serve Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, Briny Breezes, and all areas west of Boynton Beach to U.S. Hwy 441, and, on occasion, greater Palm Beach County.

Other (Specify): _____
 Minority History Seeking Sponsors Fundraising
 Telephone Hospitality Membership Public Relations
 Archives/Preservation Program/Planning Mailings
 choices):

I will be willing to serve on the following committees (Circle
 PATRON (\$50.00) _____ CORPORATE (\$100 or more) _____

INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) _____ FAMILY \$35.00) _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: _____
 Telephone _____ e-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Street _____

Name _____

2nd Member's Name _____

Members' Name _____

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

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



The Boynton Beach City Council — (l to r) Ezell Hester Jr., James R. Warnke, Vice Mayor Bob Ferrell, Carl Zimmerman and Mayor Nick Cassandra.

BOYNTON BEACH CITY COUNCIL 1985