

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 5

May 2011

ART DECO ARCHITECTURE of the PALM BEACHES with SHARON KOSKOFF and The ANNUAL COVERED-DISH DINNER

combine to create a double-barreled May program for the Boynton Beach Historical Society. We will meet at the Boynton Woman's Club on Sunday, May 15, at 5:00 for some social interaction before dinner at 5:30. The Historical Society will furnish the main dishes and the beverages as well as the place set-ups (plates, cups, flatware, and napkins); and those attending are asked to bring a dessert, a salad, or a vegetable dish large enough to serve 8. If you cannot bring a dish, you may contribute \$6.00 per person at the door. After the meal, our speaker Architectural Historian and Mural Artist Sharon Koskoff will present Art Deco Architecture of the Palm Beaches highlighting the importance of preservation in South County. Sharon is a full time professional artist known for her Community murals, conceptual installations, vivid pastels, giant puppets

environmental designs, children's programming and love of architecture. She received her Bachelor of Arts cum laude in Fine Arts from Brooklyn College majoring in sculpture and photography. Her second degree in Color Theory is from the New York School of Interior Design. She has taught and lectured in the arts for many years and is the founding president of the historic preservation organization, Art Deco Society of the Palm Beaches.



Sharon Koskoff with her book, *Art Deco of the Palm Beaches*, which will be available for purchase.

WHAT: COVERED-DISH DINNER and
SHARON KOSKOFF on ART DECO
ARCHITECTURE OF PALM BEACHES

WHEN: SUNDAY, MAY 15, 5:00 p.m.

WHERE: BOYNTON WOMAN'S CLUB

REMEMBER: Bring a dessert, salad, or vegetable dish to serve 8 or more. Main dishes, beverages, and table place settings provided by the Society. Those who do not bring a dish may pay \$6.00 at the door.

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2011-12

OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

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

NON ELECTED

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

DIRECTORS [3 year staggered terms]

2012	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
2012	Delma Swilley
2013	Tim Bednarz
2013	Gloria Partin Turner
2014	Steve Anton
2014	Barbara Ready

TRUSTEES [3 year staggered terms]

2012	Victor Norfus
2012	Dan Rousseau
2013	Brian Edwards
2013	Virginia Farace
2014	Randall Gill
2014	Wendy Franklin

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.

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED

At the Annual Meeting in April the following officers, directors, and trustees were elected: President, Voncile Smith; 1st Vice President, Programs, Janet DeVries; 2nd Vice President, Membership, Beverly Cormany; Recording Secretary, Diana Dennis; Corresponding Secretary, Anne Watts; Treasurer, Frances McKeral; Directors until 2014, Steven Anton and Barbara Ready; Trustees until 2014, Randall Gill and Wendy Franklin.

HARVEY E. OYER, JR. MEMORIAL FUND

Gifts received since March 1st:

Robert W. Ganger
Jean Ann Thurber
Dorian Trauger
Estahakee Chapter NSDAR
[Honorarium for Harvey E. Oyer III]

To date the fund has received a total of over \$3,000. The Boynton Beach Historical Society is most grateful to everyone who has contributed to this fund to honor Harvey by their gifts to the Society.

2011 MEMBERSHIP

Unfortunately, due to seriously declining health, our membership chairman Bev Cormany was unable to mail out dues notices this year. We are grateful to those of you who responded to requests for dues published in *The Historian*, and we are including your dues expiration date on the mailing label for this edition.

Many of you have been long-time supporters of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, and we believe that you wish to maintain your membership. Therefore, for those of you who have not renewed, rather than mailing out notices at this late date, we are enclosing a membership form with this newsletter. Thank you for your help and patience.

The Society has received dues from the following people since March 1st. Memberships paid previous to that date were reported in earlier editions of *The Historian*.

PATRON

Ginger Pedersen

FAMILY

James and Marjorie Bynum
William and Barbara DuBois
Philip B. and Barbara Trayler
David G. and Ann Thomas Wilkins

INDIVIDUAL

Beverly Cormany
Ramona Somerford Davis
Brian Edwards
Wendy Franklin
Barbara Ready
Nancy Rosa
Jean Ann Thurber
Gloria Partin Turner

A special welcome to new members Ginger Pederson and David G. and Ann Thomas Wilkins.

FRIENDS OF THE CITY LIBRARY BOOK-A-YEAR ENDOWMENT

Several years ago the Boynton Beach Historical Society contributed to an endowment fund specifically to honor Wilfred Hawkins, Assistant City Manager, who had passed away suddenly. He had been a friend within the City Government who was supportive of historical preservation. Each year we receive notification of the purchase from those funds of a book for the Library in his honor. The 2010 purchase was *Black History of the White House*, by Clarence Lusane.

GOLD COAST TRAILS

[Part IV]

By Margaret Garnett Harris

[Ed. Note: Mrs. Harris, having described earlier her father's role as a "Barefoot Mailman," comments on Theodore Pratt's novel by that name.]

"It was Mr. Pratt's privilege, of course, to write fiction, but regrettable that he chose incidents which happened to certain very fine people such as Doc Brelsford from Michigan, Ed Hamilton from Kentucky, and Mrs. Voss, whose family was from Chicago, and attributed these same incidents to characters who spoke and acted in ways some define as 'poor white trash.' Also many readers have accepted such stories as that about the outlaw beachcombers as fact instead of fiction. It is hard to undo the impression of the written word, even though Mr. Pratt makes it clear in the front of his book that it is fictitious.



The Barefoot Mailman as depicted on the Boynton Beach Historical Society's Centennial Plate

"It strikes me as odd that my father, who seems to be known now as a barefoot mailman, was never called that in his lifetime of 76 years, and I never saw him go barefooted, even indoors. I have a clipping from the Wall Street Journal, dated March 1968, saying Representative Paul Rogers was trying to get a Commemorative Stamp honoring the Barefoot Mailman. Oddly enough, the Assistant Postmaster General flatly opposed the effort because it seems a few 'hippies' do work to support the drones and the post office was trying to discourage the postmen in the San Francisco area from going barefooted.

"You have heard the story of the mail route so many times I'll not recount it here, except to say the mailman rowed or sailed to the south end of the lake where the inlet is now, crossed the Hillsboro Inlet and New River in row boats, and at Baker's Haulover at the northeast part of Biscayne Bay, he used another boat to sail or row, according to the wind, to Lemon City and the settlement at the end of the Miami River. The only people between the Lake and Biscayne Bay he would likely see would be at the two 'Houses of Refuge,' one

at Delray and one at New River, where Ft. Lauderdale is now. Men who wanted to make the trip walked with the mailman in order to use his boats - for which a fee was paid. The mail carrier and the walking, boating passengers, if any, slept at the Houses of Refuge - for which a charge was made.

"This route lasted from 1885 to 1893 when a hack line was begun between Lantana and Lemon City, now north of Miami, over an unpaved road. The little narrow gauge 'Celestial Railroad,' as it was nicknamed, took people from Jupiter to Juno, then backed up because there was no provision for turning it around. It was largely because Juno had a railroad that the County seat was moved there in 1890. From Juno, passengers, if any, went by steamer down Lake Worth to Lantana, then by wagon or hack from Lantana to Lemon City, spending the night at Stranahan's Camp in present day Ft. Lauderdale.

"The Stranahans, early settlers, had a trading post for Indians. Also Miss or maybe Mrs. Stranahan was a pioneer school 'marm.' The same Guy Metcalf ran the hack line.

"The hack line was also short-lived. The Florida East Coast Railroad arrived in West Palm Beach in 1894 and in Miami in 1896. The Intracoastal Waterway was completed to Miami in the middle 1890s.



Miami ca. 1900. [Photo courtesy Margaret Garnett Harris]

"I do not know when U.S. #1, which was highly touted as the highway from Maine to Key West, was built as far as Miami, but I can remember probably as far back as 1914 when we got up very early in order to leave at daybreak to drive to Miami. We called it 'the rock road' because that is what it was - white shell rock. It was one lane with wide places, or 'turn-outs' we called them, for meeting cars. There were right and left angle turns as if following property lines when we would cross the railroad at frequent intervals. I also remember a sign on the highway just south of the driveway we had built to our home on the Lake shore - 'Sound Klaxon.' In other words, anyone driving north on U. S. #1 should blow his horn because of this

(Continued on page 4)

[Gold Coast Trails - continued from page 3]

danger spot - our driveway and the slight curve at my uncle's place adjoining ours to the north.

"Incidentally, my aunt, Mrs. James L. Garnett, is still living there in the same house to which y uncle brought her as a bride in 1900. She was 95 years old in April [1969]. Isn't that something of a record for this area? The house was originally on the Lake front next to ours, but they moved it after the rock road was built. The Vosses and the Porters had already built their home to be near the railroad, believe it or not!

ways we have now to travel to Miami; still inadequate in this impatient age. Perhaps we need another Flagler to build a monorail or to set up hydrofoil service.

"I do not want to close without paying tribute to the many good, quiet folk who settled in this area. Last month you heard of Henry Flagler who was famous, brilliant, energetic, rich and powerful. The Hannas, historians, and author of the excellent non fiction 'Florida's Golden Sands,' state, 'The men (of this settlement, which was to become Palm Beach) kept a firm hand on events, made and enforced their own laws and saw to it that undesirables left the community - The pioneers on the whole were earnest, respectable, responsible folk who made a living, enjoyed themselves and their neighbors and built up small communities. Some of the most valuable contributions to the East Coast were made from their work and out of their individual lives.'

"My mother, who truly loved people, said of so many Boynton people, especially women, 'She is a lovely woman,' or 'She is a good woman,' etc. - that if I were to quote the names I so distinctly remember, it would sound like a roll call of your pioneers.

"My early associations through membership in the Methodist Church until I was married and our association with the Boynton people during the time my husband and I had a home here from 1940 to 1948 have made Boynton a treasured part of my memories."



Harris home at 331 NW 1st Avenue, Boynton Beach ca. 1940.

MORE ABOUT MARGARET HARRIS

The former Harris two-story stucco duplex where Margaret and Clyde lived from 1940-1948 is currently owned by Audrey Gerger. Audrey has very kindly shared with us some photographs and comments Margaret came by and gave to her several years ago.

Audrey lives in the east half of the house in the portion where the Harrises lived. She rents the west half to a tenant.

Clyde Harris became principal of the Boynton schools [the 1927 high school and the 1913 elementary school] on Ocean Avenue in 1940 when all 12 grades were housed in the two buildings and administered by one principal. His predecessor as principal was Leslie Crane, and the Harrises bought the stucco house at 331 N.W 1st Avenue from Mr. Crane in 1940.

Margaret and Clyde had two small children when they resided here; Kendall born in January, 1939, and Paul born in August, 1940 about the time they moved in.



Clyde Harris was photographed in July, 1941 with his sons Kendall and Paul. Margaret identifies the house shown here in the background as the Leverenz home across the street and one house east of the Harris house.

Audrey Gerger has modernized the interior, putting in more up-to-date windows, and creating beautiful gardens around the house. She conducted a tour through the building for your editor revealing what a charming home it continues to be.

IN MEMORIAM

BEVERLY CORMANY— We are sad to report that Beverly passed away Sunday, May 1, 2011. She had just been reelected 2nd Vice President for Membership in April. Beverly was a very private person who sought to continue activities to make a contribution to the community as long as she could muster the strength.

Born in Albuquerque, New Mexico, she grew up in Colorado, but had spent part of her life in the Northeast. She had lived in Florida for many years. She had been a flight attendant for United Airlines when the position was still called "Stewardess." She also was an avid collector of teddy bear paraphernalia, and at one time had a shop where she made and sold bear items. She continued active in teddy bear organizations.

Our condolences and best wishes to her children Bruce who lives in California, Erin from Colorado, and James and Laura who live in Boynton Beach. In accordance with her wishes her body was cremated and no funeral or memorial service is planned.

MAY FOY DILLON—May Dillon, age 91, who lived in Okeechobee, but was born in Boynton November 16, 1919 and had lived here for many years, passed away on April 1, 2011. She maintained a membership in the Boynton Beach Historical Society. Her family had owned a dairy in the Boynton area, and her sister, Katherine Foy Thompson, also a member of the Historical Society, still lives in Boynton. May was a member of the Boynton Woman's Club, and considered her primary occupation that of a homemaker. She enjoyed sewing, needlepoint and gardening. Our best wishes go to her many family members—children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and two great great grandsons, nieces, cousins, and long-time friends.

DOROTHY LOUISE JAMES TURNER—Dorothy Turner was the oldest child of Godfrey and Margaret James. The family moved to Delray, Florida in 1925 from Penrod, Kentucky where their first four children were born. In 1926 they moved to Boynton. They would have four more children in Florida.

Dorothy began school in a one-room schoolhouse in Kentucky, but she graduated from the 1927 Boynton High School in Ocean Avenue. She and her friends often walked the one and one-half miles to the ocean and enjoyed playing on the beach. Before World War II she moved to Washington D.C. where she attended business college. While working for the Department of Labor she visited recuperating veterans at Walter Reed Hospital where she met J.W. "Jack" Turner whom she later married and moved with to Utah. She eventually

moved to Arizona where she died on March 9, 2011 at the age of 93. Her daughter, Margaret Gooch, sent us a copy of her obituary and the program for her memorial service. Many family members participated in the service. We wish them all well and extend our sorrow for their loss. We are most grateful that they sent us information about this current and long time member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.



Dorothy James Turner

MORE ON 1927 BOYNTON HIGH SCHOOL

In the April issue of *The Historian*, we reported on the charette [or 'workshop'] that some of our members had attended.

At the City Commission meeting on April 17, the Assistant City Manager, Lori LaVerriere, reported on that charette held on March 26 to find how best to restore and use the historic old building. In a survey completed by 173 people in conjunction with the workshop, eight in 10 said they wanted the school saved and turned into an active destination. Four in 10 indicated they even favored raising taxes for the "right project." LaVerriere commented that there was definitely a consensus to redevelop the high school. She called it "overwhelming."

Those attending the workshop see the school as the cornerstone for a vibrant new city complex., but all understand the reality that it cannot be totally supported and funded by City resources.

REG Architects and the IBI group whom the City hired to plan the renovation will present a full report at the City Commission meeting on May 17.

The Boynton Beach Historical Society urges all who read this to attend that May 17 meeting, if possible. We need to show the Commission that we continue to support saving and restoring this historic structure.

THE JAMES/MOSELEY FAMILY

[Ed. Note: I talked to Bill James at length about his family. He also loaned me a genealogy put together by his sister, Dorothy James Turner. I have selected to summarize some portions of Dorothy's manuscript which relate to their life in Florida, but others I quote verbatim as she describes her childhood adventures.]

The family of Godfrey Hunter James and Margaret Elizabeth Moseley James moved to Florida from Penrod, Kentucky in 1925.



Margaret Moseley James



Godfrey Hunter James

Their daughter Dorothy and her next three siblings were born in Kentucky. Dorothy writes, "There was nowhere to shop for clothes. So mother ordered clothes from the closest town where they had a department store. The clothes she ordered would come out on the train. We would pick out what we wanted and send the rest back."

"I started school there in a one-room schoolhouse. A man taught us, grade by grade he would call us up. When he taught the first grade, they'd come to the front of the room and sit on a bench. When they were done, they went back to their seats and the next grade would come forward and sit on the benches. We all drank out of the same bucket of water with the same ladle, and at recess we played in the dirt by the river."

"My dad had a model T-Ford which we rode around the rough roads in."

"In 1925 we moved to Florida. During our move, we were in the Model T-Ford somewhere in Georgia when something in the engine caught fire. We all got out and sat on the bank while Dad fixed it. Then we filed back in and kept on going. Me, Anne and George sat in the back. Mom held Maryon on her lap and Dad drove."

When the James family first arrived in Florida, they lived with Margaret's parents in Delray. Her father had bought his house from an old sea captain who had surrounded the house with a variety of exotic plants from his travels. These included a sapodilla, a Japanese plum, and several varieties of mangos and avocados. Her father also had a goat which chased the children all over the landscape. Those children old enough for school went briefly in Delray. Dorothy

writes, "All I remember is that we only went for a half day because there were too many students, they had to take shifts."

After a brief stay in Delray, the family moved to Boca Raton. Dorothy said she learned to roller skate around the Boca Raton Club. Her father was a bookkeeper for a large garage "outfit." She writes, "That's where I think he got the idea to open his own garage."



The James Garage just past Hood's Service Station, 1930s, Town of Boynton [Photo courtesy of Sally Hood]

The family moved to Boynton in 1926. Four more James children were born in Boynton—Robert, William, Arthur and Nancy which brought the total to 8. Their first house was in what is now the 500 block on North Seacrest. The house was demolished two years ago.



The house shortly before demolition was the James home when William and some of their other children were born.

[Continued on page 7.]

[The James/Moseley Family - continued from page 6.]

Dorothy writes, "We lived there [in Boynton] from 1926 until I graduated from high School. Actually it has only been in the last 10 years that they sold the house where we all grew up."

"Those times in Florida were bad because of the Depression and also hurricanes. Father had several places where he was trying to make a business and the hurricanes totally wiped them out, a garage and a place that stored cars."

West of where the family lived, farmers grew winter vegetables for northern markets—peppers, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. In South Florida most farmers had pumps made from old automobile engines which were used to irrigate the crops, but if rains were too heavy, they had to reverse the drive and pump the water off.

"All the farmers had these pumps which my Dad knew how to repair. He was like a doctor—a farmer would come by in the middle of the night and say 'James I need help. The pumps are broken and I need to get water off the fields.' One winter the crops failed. Several of the farmers had no money and couldn't repay Dad for the work he'd done. Only one person came and paid him, the rest never did."

Sadly, Margaret James died in 1945 leaving behind teenage children who had not finished school. Some of them went to Washington, D. C. to live with their mother's sister, "Aunt Martine." They were orphaned when Godfrey James died in 1949. Bill James returned from Washington, finished high school in Delray, attended the University of Florida, was commissioned and served in the 82nd Airborne during the Korean War, returned and opened an insurance firm in Delray and served several terms in the Florida House of Representatives. He has been widowed twice. His first wife was Bobbie McFee, a sister to Billie Jo McFee Swilley. After Bobbie's death, he married Erma Pickel Obermayr who died last year. At present, of the 8 James children, only he and Arthur, who lives in Jacksonville with his wife Jean, survive.



In the 1940s the James Family lived in this house in the 400 block of West Boynton Beach Boulevard [then usually referred to as Boynton Road].

ANOTHER MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPH



We have a number of pictures in the Archives that are unmarked. This is one such example. Can any of you who are reading this help us at all? We would like to know where? When? and with Whom? this photo was made. Was the building perhaps a new produce building? Perhaps your family has a copy?

THE BOYNTON WOMAN'S CLUB MAY GIVE ITS BUILDING TO THE CITY.

As insurance and other costs continue to rise, the members of the Boynton Woman's Club wonder whether they can continue to support the building. Several years ago discussions ultimately went nowhere when the Club began negotiating with the City to have them buy the building.

This is the only building in the City designed by Addison Mizner. The Boynton family underwrote the original cost for the Mediterranean style, two story structure. The Club sponsored Boynton's first public library and over the years it has been the cultural center for the City. It was the initial meeting place for several civic service organizations, church groups, political events, recitals, balls and tea parties.



Boynton Woman's Club, ca. 1950

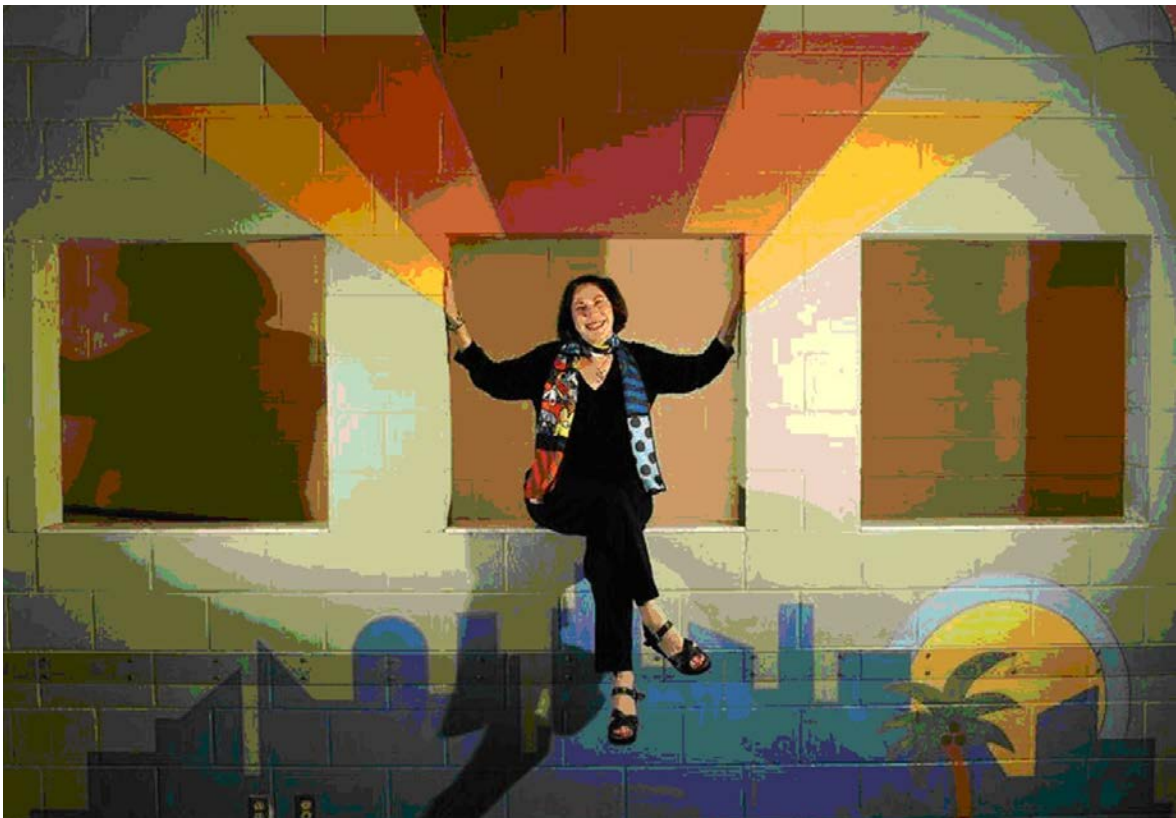
We are proud to serve Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulf Stream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, Briny Breezes, and all areas west of Boynton Beach to U.S. Hwy 441, and, on occasion, greater Palm Beach County.

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

Telephone e-mail
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 Street
 Name
 2nd Member's
 Name
 Member's

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

THE HISTORIAN
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Sharon Koskoff at Palm Springs Middle Inside History