



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 3

March 2011

WEEDS and SEEDS: A HISTORY OF DINING in SOUTH FLORIDA

is the title for the program scheduled for March 14. Dr. Michele Williams Director for the Southeastern Region of Florida Public Archaeology Network at Florida Atlantic University will be our speaker. She will examine various plants utilized by early Floridians as well as some of the "meatier" issues of early diet in South Florida. The discussion will also consider how the wealth of natural resources in southern Florida has made it a unique dining experience for over 10,000 years.

The Florida Public Archaeology Network [FPAN] seeks to halt the rapid deterioration of Florida's buried and submerged past through education and action. The Southeast Regional Center is headquartered in Fort Lauderdale at Florida Atlantic University and services Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties. The FPAN provides various services for the community, including presenting talks and educational programs on a variety of subjects as well as acting as a liaison with state agencies to help uncover information about known archeological sites in a particular area. Dr. Williams has participated in excavations throughout the southeastern United States for the past 20 years. Her specialty within archaeology is the use of plants by prehistoric Native Americans.



Michele Williams

WHAT: WEEDS and SEEDS: a HISTORY
of DINING in SOUTH FLORIDA
Lecture and Discussion
Dr. Michele Williams

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

WHERE: Boynton Beach City Library
Program Room
208 South Seacrest Boulevard

**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.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

In accordance with the Bylaws of the Society, a nominating committee will submit names at the Annual Meeting in April to fill offices for the 2011-12 term. The following members have been asked to serve on that committee: Virginia Farace, Chair; Beverly Cormany, Wendy Franklin, Richard Philpott, and Judith Howard.

The offices to be filled include those of all officers, two directors, and two trustees. All officers are elected annually for one year terms. Directors and Trustees serve for 3 year staggered terms.

If you would be willing to serve in one of these positions, please notify Virginia at 965-9426 or at FARACE_V@popmail.firn.edu. If you wish to know more about the duties and the time commitment required, contact Virginia or call Voncile at 734-5653.

UPDATE HISTORIC 1927 HIGH SCHOOL TO ALL READERS WHO WANT TO SEE THIS BUILDING PRESERVED FOR COMMUNITY USE. YOU NEED TO ACT NOW!

The professional consultants who are working on the Financial Feasibility Study for our Old School are seeking public input via a survey that can be taken on the City of Boynton Beach's website [<http://boynton-beach.org>], or a paper copy of this survey can be obtained at the Library as well. The online survey can only be submitted once, but the paper copies can be copied and passed on to family and as many friends of the Old School as you can reach. Respondents need not live in Boynton. Anyone may take the survey as it will remain online until March 18th.

When you take the survey, please remember that the Historical Society has always held the position that the Old School belongs to all of the citizens and should remain a publicly held facility that serves to improve our quality of life with cultural opportunities that will enrich our community. We feel that the Old School should not be turned over to some unknown private entity that would not guarantee the care and fate of this historic structure.

We must hold tight to the vision of a Community Cultural Center. This is the vision that has arisen from every public input opportunity compiled over the past 15 years, and you must not let the mention of the dreaded "taxes" scare you from our goal. The professional consultants have been assigned the task of putting together a package of all the available funding mechanisms [and there are some out there!], and these funds will lessen the blow to our pockets.

Please complete the survey. We need your help to stop the years of the mistreatment and underutilization of this valuable community asset. The survey will take us one step closer to the day we can throw the doors of that building open and celebrate the birth of a vibrant downtown. To reach the Survey, log onto <http://boynton-beach.org> and you will immediately see *Boynton Beach Seeks Public Input to Help Determine Future of Old High School*. Below that you will see two subheadings, "Detailed Project Information" and "Take the Survey." Complete the survey here and/or obtain copies from the Boynton Beach City Library to use and share with your friends.

GOLD COAST TRAILS

[Part II]

[In the February *Historian* Part I of the recollections of Margaret Garnett Harris which she wrote for the Boynton Beach Historical Society in 1969, only a year after it was organized, were printed. This month we continue her story.]

"One of the most vivid recollections when I was very young, A saintly man used to sit on one of the few seats which faced north, whereas, most of the seats faced west toward the pulpit. We called his the 'Amen corner,' because he sparked the sermon with frequent approvals. I had a full front view of him one Sunday, when after a lot of amens, he suddenly stiffened and his eyes turned upward. I was sure he was having a vision such as Paul had on the road to Damascus. Church broke up and I was disappointed to learn he had suffered a stroke.

"An important event of the year was the Fourth of July Sunday School picnic at the Boynton Casino. We played and swam all day and had a tub of lemonade and a lot of food. My youngest brother, Leland, who still likes to eat, on one occasion loaded his plate while announcing in a loud voice, 'God helps those who help themselves.' It wasn't funny to my parents and he was taken care of later.



Boynton Casino

"A real happening at one of the picnics was the time my brothers took their home crafted canoe and put it into the ocean. It took skill to keep it upright in the lake, and a miracle to keep it upright in the breakers. It was great fun to give everyone a ride—even the old ladies who may have been at least 30 or 40—and see them spill over at the first big wave.

"The early history of your school should be recalled and recorded while people still remember, because unfortunately, no record is in the old minutes of the School Board. The first minutes books were numbered 1, 2, and 3. Number one began in 1885 when the Dade County School district was formed, and it included the years through 1896. The second included the years 1897 to 1905. Guy Metcalf of West Palm Beach, who was then a school trustee, borrowed the second book in 1907. The School Superintendent recorded a statement in 1914 that a thorough search

was made of the Court House in Miami, persons were carefully questioned, and it could not be found. There had been a running feud between the school trustees of District 1 and the Dade County School Board members because the West Palm Beach area trustees over-stepped their bounds, made promises as to salaries and appointments they were not permitted by law to make, and the School Board was not able to fulfill. This book would have contained the beginning of your school. I would like also to have read these minutes because it was during this time my father served on the Board. Half of his term of office was when the County Seat was at Juno, the other at Miami. He went to Miami one day on the train and returned the next.



Garnett Family (before Margaret was born) Irl, Andrew, Lewis, Leland, Lillie and Roy.

Andrew Garnett Family, 1908

Andrew Garnett served on the Dade County School Board about this time

"Incidentally, I can remember my mother saying Guy Metcalf, who was Superintendent of Palm Beach County Schools one year in 1917-1918, put a bullet through his head while sitting at his desk at the School Board Office. School Superintendents had their problems then, too, though actually, I do not know the nature of his problem.

"There were two references in the early Board minutes which do pertain to Boynton Schools.

"Miami - August 14, 1906

"Jesse Doughty (sic. Correct spelling is Daughtery - it was written thus) and W. C. King were appointed supervisors at Boynton and Pompano, respectively.'

"Miami - October 8, 1907

"Petition from the colored people of Boynton asking the Board to furnish a teacher for a school at that place, the people to furnish building, was received, also letter from Cullen Pence recommending same. Petition was granted and school established for four months. Superintendent was ordered by the Board to employ a teacher."

[to be continued in April]

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The February meeting of the Board of Directors was held February 28. Discussion continued on moving the Society's properties from Harvey Oyer's office where they have been stored, moving ahead on the Boynton Inlet Marker application, and proposals for use of the Harvey E. Oyer, Jr. Memorial Fund. Under New Business the Board approved printing and distribution of a brochure for the Society prepared by Steve Anton and a trial opening of an internet PayPal account to encourage those interested to become members of the Society via the internet.

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be **Monday, March 28, 2011, 6:30 p.m.** at the Boynton Woman's Club. Any member of the Society is welcome to attend this meeting and participate in the discussion, but only members of the Board may vote on motions.

APRIL AND MAY PROGRAM MEETINGS

Please mark your calendars. The **April** meeting is scheduled for April 11, 6:30 p.m. at the City Library Program Room. This is our **Annual Meeting** and we will have a short business meeting at the beginning to elect officers, directors and trustees for the coming year. The election will be followed by the program which will feature Richard Philpott discussing the historic role the Masons have had in the development of the City. Many major City officials and leaders have had roles in Boynton Masonry.

The **May** meeting is scheduled for **Sunday**, May 15, at 5:00 p.m. at the Boynton Woman's Club. This is our annual covered dish dinner and marks the end of our meetings (and issues of *The Historian*) until September. The program for this meeting is yet to be announced. We will also provide more information on the dinner itself in the April and May issues of *The Historian*.

HARVEY E. OYER, JR. MEMORIAL FUND

Gifts received since February 1st:

Eubanks, Richard and Katherine Garnett
Farace, Virginia
Holt, Richard D.
Hunt, Ray and Linda
Knuth, Gladys Baker
McCulloch, Denise Smith
Morgan, Marian
Rogers, John and Carnella

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 MEMBERSHIPS

The names below represent memberships paid since February 1st. Those who joined prior to that date are listed in earlier editions of *The Historian*.

PATRON MEMBERSHIP:

Michael and Linda Callaway
Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Ruth Jones
John and Rannie Melear
Richard and Judith Merkel Howard
Wayne F. and Eva Brooks Netzer
Herbert and Betty Magnuson Zobel

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Janet DeVries
Margaret Guyder
Suzanne Kruse
Elizabeth Miner LaBella
Alice Lund
Richard Philpott
Eleanor Murray Sala

A POSSUM FOR DINNER

[Editor's Note: Although I am not sure she ever ate possum, Freda Voss Oyer, Harvey, Jr.'s mother, told me that her mother, Lillie Pierce Voss, spoke of eating possum for Christmas dinner. I share the following with those of you who may be skeptical.]

"Ernest Matthew in his *White Trash Cooking* tells us how to prepare just one of the creatures, tail and all, in two recipes called Mama Leila's Hand-Me-Down Baked Possum and Aunt Donnah's Roast Possum: 'After you kill the possum be careful not to let him get away. While you're talking and planning how you going to eat him, he's going to be slipping right from under your nose. All he was doing was playing possum . . . Possum should be cleaned as soon as possible after shooting. Skin him and clean him before you go another foot, then the mess is gone and he won't get away. When you get him home, rub salt and pepper all over his body then run a mixture of vinegar and brown sugar over the salt and pepper. Wrap up the possum in a good baking pan and let it stand in the refrigerator overnight. The next morning put the pan with the possum still in it [hopefully] on top of the stove . . . Possum is tender and mild regardless of what other people think . . . There's only one thing to serve possum with - sweet potatoes (and) you only eat possum in the winter.'"

[from CRACKER: *The Cracker Culture in Florida History*, Dana Ste. Claire, The Museum of Arts and Sciences, Daytona Beach, FL, 1998, p.138]

PICTURES TO SHARE

Readers sometimes comment that they would like to see more pictures of people or scenes from Boynton's past. Below are some selections from among pictures that have been given to the Society.



The Horace B. Murray family about 1895 posing in front of a palm thatched building that was probably their temporary home. Although mislabeled in some later publications as a "tomato packing shed," the building fits the descriptions of short-term housing of the time. Note the drape by door to close it off. A tomato packing shed would have had open sides and no drape..



In February 1942, pictured from left to right, are Margaret Shepard, Richard Saylor, Thelma Partin, Charles Weaver, and George Stanford. [Photo courtesy Dorothy Mann McNiece.]



The Boynton Hotel Company, which bought the site of the 1908 Methodist Church, had torn down the church and begun building the 7-story Cassandra Hotel when the 1928 hurricane hit. They defaulted on their mortgage to the church, and the iron framework was eventually torn down and sold as scrap to Japan. Harvey Oyer, Sr. and Ray Wilcox bought the two-story building, also owned by the church. The Oyer family still owns the building, and "Hurricane Alley" currently rents the first floor for its restaurant.



In the 1930s, after the Boynton Methodist Church had completed its new building, Mrs. Clara White's Sunday School class, pictured above, built the structure shown behind them as an open air classroom. It was located behind the church in an area where a parking lot and a newer building addition now stand. When the church added classroom buildings in the 1950s, the structure was sold, moved to a lot near Poinciana School off Seacrest Boulevard and converted into a rental house that is still in use.



In the late 1930s a Mizner inspired building was erected on North Federal Highway and named Rainbow Gardens. Behind it was planted lush tropical foliage among which were uniquely carved pillars and stone seats. The building contained a snack bar, a restaurant and a gift shop. The site is the current location for Benvenuto's restaurant. [Photo courtesy Janet DeVries, *Around Boynton Beach*, p.49.]



Rainbow Tropical Garden's Beauty Pageant to crown Miss Rainbow Gardens, ca. 1947. [Photo courtesy Katherine Garnett Eubanks.]

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.

Members' Name _____
 2nd Member's Name _____
 Street _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____ e-mail _____
 TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: _____
 INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) _____ FAMILY \$35.00 _____
 PATRON (\$50.00) _____ CORPORATE (\$100 or more) _____
 I will be willing to serve on the following committees (Circle choices):
 Archives/Preservation _____ Program/Planning _____ Mailings _____
 Telephone _____ Hospitality _____ Membership _____ Public Relations _____
 Minority History _____ Seeking Sponsors _____ Fundraising _____
 Other (Specify): _____

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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



THIS VIEW SHOWS BOYNTON'S "Main st.," Ocean ave. and the principal business section.—Photo by Ray B. Dame.

Ocean Avenue mid 1930s. On left is the Jones Hotel offering "Rooms". On the right, just beyond the two-story building is a frame building which was the United States Post Office. [Clipping courtesy of Ruth Jones.]