



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 7

October 2011

PAUL DUNBAR and YE TOWER LANTANA, 1925

Marjorie Watts Nelson will discuss Paul Dunbar's life and his famous eatery on Federal Highway at the Boynton Beach Historical Society's meeting in the Program Room of the City Library on Monday, October 17, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. In the 1930s and 1940s, Paul Dunbar's Ye Tower Restaurant on the east side of Federal Highway in Lantana was one of the very few restaurants between Boynton and Lake Worth. The building, now demolished, sat close to the highway and was crowned with a little tower which made it somewhat distinctive and thus easy to identify as one drove north.



Marjorie Watts Nelson

Marjorie Nelson is well known in the region for her work and interest on historic topics. She worked on several histories with Mary Linehan and has edited and published materials based on genealogical research. She is the widow of Walter Voss, a descendant of several Palm Beach County pioneer families.

WHAT:

"Paul Dunbar's Life,
Ye Tower, Lantana in 1925"
Presentation by Marjorie Watts Nelson

WHEN:

Monday, October 17, 2011, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE:

Program Room
Boynton Beach City Library
208 South Seacrest Blvd

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

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS—2011-12

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The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is u 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 2ND VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP

The Board of Directors has elected Ginger Pedersen to serve for the remainder of the year as our Second Vice-President, Membership. She replaces Beverly Cormany who passed away last spring.

Ginger is involved in ongoing research on the history of Palm Beach County and presented a program to the Society on the History of Lawrence Road in 2009. The Board members feel that the Boynton Beach Historical Society is fortunate to have her serve.

BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY HAS GONE SOCIAL!

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HARVEY E. OYER, JR. PARK

The City of Boynton Beach has renamed Boat Club Park in honor of Harvey E. Oyer, Jr. The formal dedication and public renaming will take place on Tuesday, October 11, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. 2010 N. Federal Hwy. The public is invited. In the September *Historian* we noted some of the events that have connected Harvey to this park. He participated in many events at the park's location. For years the Boynton Beach Kiwanis Club has held its annual fishing tournament here and Kiwanis also has served frequent chicken barbecues. As an avid Kiwanian, Harvey always volunteered to work at these events. For years he made arrangements for the Historical Society to hold our annual picnic (now replaced by our May covered dish dinner at the Woman's Club) in one of the buildings at the park. An incorrect notation in *The Historian* in September described Harvey playing his great-grandfather Hannibal Pierce bringing Major Boynton by boat to that site in celebration of the Boynton 1995 Centennial. Harvey did play an ancestor, but it was Captain Frederick Voss, his grandfather, who brought Major Boynton into the area.



DUES REMINDER

This is an early reminder that our membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. Over a dozen members have sent in their 2012 dues already. Last year many of you renewed without waiting for a formal notice after the first of the year. We are most grateful to those of you who remember to do this. If you are renewing and your address or other information has not changed, you do not need to complete a new membership form. You check alone is sufficient. Thank you for your help.

IN MEMORIAM

In late summer, the Boynton Beach Historical Society lost two of its long-time members, both of whom were early residents of the Town of Boynton. They are Evelyn Brant Raulerson and Callie Rousseau Brown.

EVELYN BRANT RAULERSON - At age 18 Evelyn Brant became "Miss Boynton Beach." Although she was born in Berrien Center, MI in 1918, her Parents, Frank and Agnes Easton Brant, moved to Boynton in 1923 when she was quite young. Mrs. Brant had Easton relatives in the area (see story on page 4, Recollections of an Earlier Life). Evelyn married Gifford J. Raulerson, now deceased, Five sons survive: Lee Roy and wife Muriel Raulerson; James "Toppy" and wife Georgie Raulerson; Steven and wife Teresa Raulerson; Gifford and wife Brenda Raulerson; and David Raulerson. A sister Deanna Brant Boehner and her husband Ron, and a brother Carl "Top" Brant and his wife Winnie also survive. She had five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A number of years ago, the Florida East Coast Railroad give her recognition as a Special Friend because for 30 years she had waived regularly from her home to trains and engineers as they had passed by. A lifelong Baptist, she prayed daily for her family in whom she had great pride. She died in Canton, NC in July. We offer condolences and best wishes to all her family members, but note especially Toppy and Georgie Raulerson who are members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.



Evelyn Brant Raulerson

CALLIE ROUSSEAU BROWN - Callie Brown passed away at age 101 on August 25, 2011. The daughter of Able Rousseau and Katherine Ford Rousseau, and a descendent of Florida pioneers, she was born in 1910 in Boynton, FL. She was preceded in death by her husband, William Hugh Brown, her son-in-law, William David Furr, three sisters and two brothers. In recent years she had lived in Indiana with her daughter.



Callie Rousseau Brown

Callie was a graduate of Florida State College for Women (now FSU) and received her Master's from Florida Atlantic University. She had a teaching career which included 37 years in Palm Beach County and a year on a Fulbright Grant as an exchange teacher in England. At age 97 she published a book, *Sun on my Hair, Sand in my Shoes*, an autobiography of her life in Florida. She was a member of numerous organizations including the Boynton Woman's Club, the First United Methodist Church, Delta Kappa Gamma, Seminole Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Order of Eastern Star, the Huguenot Society and the English Speaking Union of Indianapolis. When in Boynton, she had presented several programs to the members of the Historical Society.

She is survived by her three children, Elizabeth Brown Furr, William David and wife Jacquelin Brown, and Ellen Brown and husband Brian Curtin, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews. We send them all our condolences and best wishes.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN EARLIER TIME

[On April 10, 2009, two members of the Lantana Historical Society, Jack Carpenter and Kathy Clark-Tilson, interviewed Woody Easton. They were kind enough to share the following with The Historian. Since we are reporting the death of Woody's niece, Evelyn Brant Raulerson, this seems an appropriate time to share a portion of the interview.]

Woodrow Wilson Easton, nicknamed Woody, was born October 2, 1912 in Dowagiac, Michigan. Woody said he was named after President Woodrow Wilson. He was the sixth child of James Willard [better known as "Will"] Jackson Easton and Sarah Jessie Bielby Easton. Also present at the interview were three of Will Easton's grandchildren. Three siblings, Evelyn Brant Raulerson, Deanna Brant Boehner, and Carl "Tippy" Brant, are the children of Will's daughter Agnes Marie Easton Brant and her husband Frank Raymond Brant.



L to R standing: Deanna Boehner, Tippy Brant, Jack Carpenter, Kathy Clark-Tilson. Seated: Woody Easton, Evelyn Raulerson.

Will Easton had performed in vaudeville for a while. He did skits. Woody's Uncle Bill also was a vaudeville performer and had a trained bear. Woody's nieces, Evelyn and Deanna, remembered their Uncle Bill and that he carved animals for them from wood. Deanna said he had once carved a bear for her like his trained bear.

In 1921 Will, Jessie and Woody moved to Florida. Will Easton had been instructed by his doctor to move to a warmer area for his health. He had asthmatic problems. so Will, Jessie and Woody headed to Florida, a long trip by car at that time. They stopped along the way for nights and to sleep. Woody said his father was always sure to stop somewhere near a farm so he could catch a chicken for food. Back then farmers and others were willing to help out people in need. The trip was long with the top speed being 35 miles per hour.

The Eastons first settled in Boynton along the main road through town. A trailer park was located

there on the north end. They erected what Woody described as an Army tent to live in.

The doctor in Michigan had told them that they could stay on land he owned west of Boynton, and that they could stay as long as they wished. The family made a futile attempt to check it out. Traveling west of Boynton was not easy in 1921. When they tried to drive west, they discovered that they should have taken a boat since that seemed to be the only way anyone could get around. They could not stay there since they could not find a clear area in which to set up. They returned to the trailer park in Boynton and again put up their tent. Eventually they found a cheap place in town to rent. They lived near Dr. Weems.

Will Easton did small jobs around town. Woody's mother Jessie was considered to be an excellent cook, and she got a job cooking at the Boynton Hotel. Later the Eastons opened a restaurant in Boynton called "Dad's Place." It was located on the south side of Ocean Avenue. Jessie baked cakes and pies to be sold at Dad's Place. Evelyn and Deanna remembered Sunday as "bake day." Jessie baked enough for her family to enjoy and enough for her friends to have also. Often truckers driving through Boynton would stop at Dad's Place for some of Jessie Easton's pastries.

Woody helped out at the restaurant. He went to Dad's Place from school at lunch time to wash the dishes and then go back to school. Woody said he was not sure why they closed Dad's Place, perhaps because they did not have a license. They sold pies, cakes, and pastries along the highway.

Woody remembered the Boynton caves. He often went to see them until they were "filled in." His nieces Evelyn and Deanna also remembered the Indian mounds that were at the Boynton Inlet area. They remembered the Indian remains, the bones that were unearthed while construction took place in the Inlet area.

The Eastons moved to Lantana in 1927. In 1929 Will became the second of Lantana's live-in bridge tenders. He, Jessie and Woody moved into the Bridge Tender's House on the water. Woody remembered that they had running water pumped from the town.

Once one crossed the bridge to Hypoluxo Island, there was only a path to the beach, not an actual road. South Ocean Boulevard [now A1A] running north and south was there, but it was much farther east than the present day South Ocean Boulevard. What remains of the old road is presently underwater and usually covered by sand.

[Continued on page 5]

[Recollections of an Earlier Time - Continued from page 4]

While Will Easton was bridge tender, the bridge was opened whenever someone blew a horn asking to have it opened. Opening involved inserting a "key" and then turning the key by walking in circles pushing the key around. Woody could not remember how many turns it took to open the center portion of the swing bridge. He did recall that opening required five to ten minutes and then another five to ten minutes to close the bridge. All the family members would and could open the bridge.

Will Easton had a little farm on the shore of what is now Bicentennial Park. At that time the area was referred to as "The Point," or Lantana Point and was overgrown with Australian pines and hence called Australian Pine Park. On the north side of the road, Will planted potatoes, carrots, onions and various other plants for his family.

Woody traveled from Lantana to Boynton on his motorcycle daily. He kept his motorcycle in a shed at the bottom of the Lantana Bridge. He attended Boynton High School and graduated from there in 1932. After he left school, Woody went to work for a local nursery in the Lantana area. The nursery was owned by Nellie King, and was located on U.S. 1 just south of the location of the old Ye Tower [somewhere south of the present traffic light at the Ye Tower Shops and north of Hypoluxo Road].

By now Woody had married; and Faye, his wife, brought him his lunch each day. Once when she was there, she was startled by a crab which caused her to drop fifty cents and it rolled into a crack in the wooden floor slats. Woody pulled up the slats to recover the money. One might wonder why so much work for fifty cents, but Woody earned only a dollar a day. Faye had dropped what was for him a half day's pay. Nellie King offered him a raise provided he promised he would "be a good boy." He was raised to \$1.25 per day. He worked six days a week Monday through Saturday and he was making \$7.50 a week! Nellie would often ask him to work Sundays too.

In later years Woody went into construction. He built several houses in and around the Lantana area.

MORE ON OYER COTTAGE

The September *Historian* showed a picture of the renovated Oyer cottage originally built in the early 1920s. One of the members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, Sandra McGregor, sent a letter to *The Historian* recalling that her parents rented the cottage at one time. This is an excerpt from Sandy's September 5 letter:

"Also wanted to mention how happy I am that Harvey's children have renovated the Oyer cottage. I do not know exactly when they moved in but at some

point in time Mother was pregnant with Marjorie Anne (b. 10/12/1939) and Harvey delighted in telling me many times how he and his sisters were hanging out the windows as the ambulance brought Mother and my sister home from the hospital. I have many photos of Margie taken around the cottage.



The Renovated Historic Oyer Cottage

"Sometime before November 24, 1943, when I was born, my parents left the cottage and purchased their home at 915 N. Federal Highway. Mother and I came home from the hospital to that house. It was built and owned by Bill Winchester's uncle, from whom my parents purchased it. It was our home until the summer of 1961.

"The CRA has been renting it for some time as their office. The original house is still behind the office, although the separate 2-car garage has been torn down. The office was added onto the front of the house by a local realtor who purchased the house from my father. The realtor (whose name escapes me at the moment) had his office there and he and his wife occupied the house."



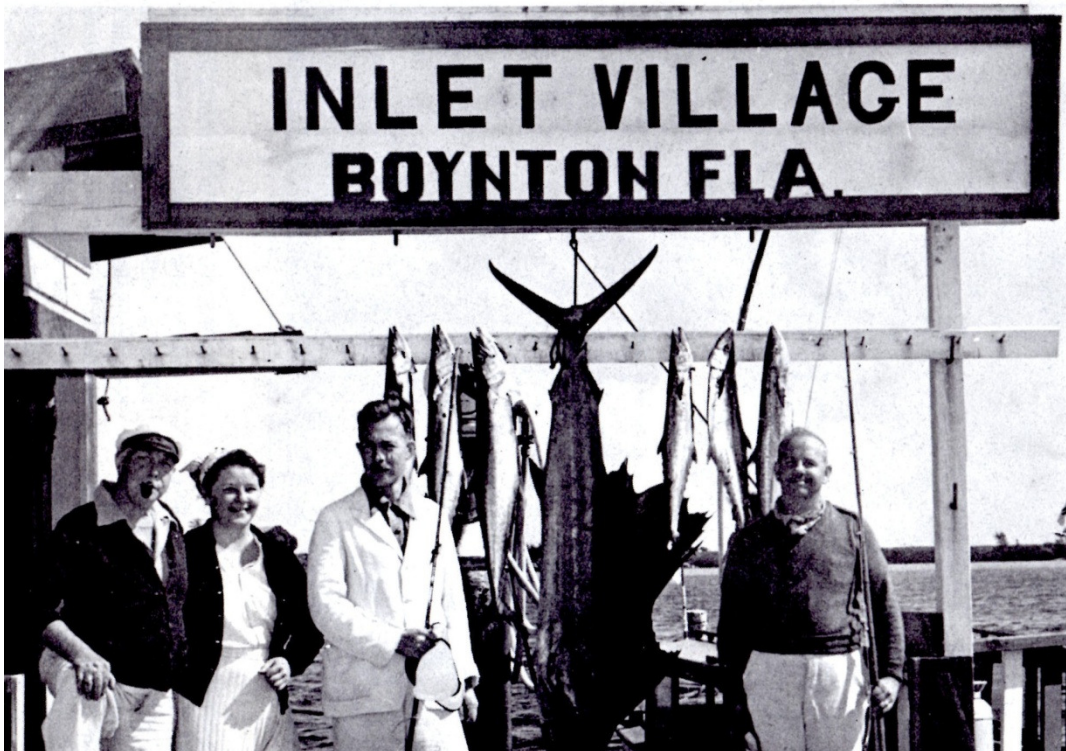
The Winchester House - early 1940s

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 _____
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 I will be willing to serve on the following committees (Circle choices):
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BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

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



Captain Walter Voss (on right) and happy anglers with a sailfish and six kingfish caught aboard Voss' boat, "Dream Girl," ca. 1939. Voss ran first charter boat out of the Boynton Inlet. Inlet Village was on west side of the Intracoastal, south of today's Harvey E. Oyer, Jr. Park. [from "Boynton Beach: The First 100 Years," Boynton Beach Historical Society and Friends of Boynton Beach City Library, 1995]