

# THE HISTORIAN

## The Newsletter of THE BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Serving Boynton Beach, Ocean Ridge, Manalapan, Gulfstream, Lantana, Hypoluxo, the Village of Golf and all areas of West Boynton to US Hwy 441

Post Office Box 12 Boynton Beach FL 33435-0012

Voncile Smith, President

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Voncile Smith, Editor

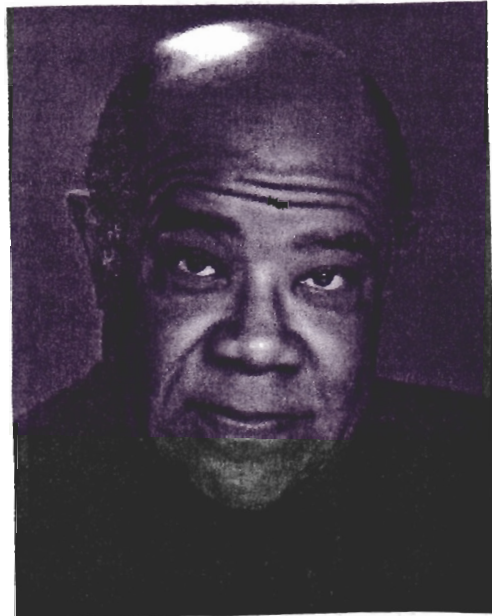
### FEBRUARY PROGRAM TO HONOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

**LeRoy Mitchell, Jr.**, a professional actor, will create a character based on the life of **James Weldon Johnson** on Monday, February 10, at 6:30 p.m. at the Boynton Beach Public Library. This program is part of the Florida Humanities Council speakers' bureau which provides lively and informative presentations on topics that concern Floridians. The program, jointly sponsored locally by the Boynton Beach Historical Society and the Boynton Beach Friends of the Library, honors an important African American literary figure during February—Black History month.

The scene is set accordingly: In the summer of 1933, James Weldon Johnson, a native of Jacksonville and the first Negro Secretary of the NAACP, comes to our town to read some of his poetry. He may also talk about his life as a lawyer, as a diplomat, a high school principal, a member of the Harlem Renaissance, and as the principal collector and editor of Negro poetry and spirituals. Featured poems include "O Black Bards of Long Ago," "Sence You Went Away," "Mother Night," "Lottery Girl," "Go Down Death," "The Creation," and "Lift Every Voice and Sing."

Mr. Mitchell, also a Floridian, works out of Tampa where he is an elder in the Presbyterian Church. He is a stage, screen, and television actor who has performed on stages in the United States, United Kingdom, and the Panama Canal Zone. After entering the U.S. Army as a private in 1955, he retired 20 years later as a Green Beret major with experience in Vietnam, peace keeper experience with the Organization of American States, and DMZ experience in Korea.

All programs of the Historical Society are open free to the public.



### BOYNTON NEEDS AN HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Boynton Beach may very well be the only city on the coast in southeastern Florida that has no ordinance to establish guidelines for the preservation of historic buildings and sites. As we continue to see the demolition of irreplaceable portions of Florida's past by city officials preoccupied with creating an ever expanding tax base, the time is long overdue to expect the City to establish clear guidelines for historic preservation.

Only last week, for example, the City knocked down a frame structure that stood on the

southeast corner of Ocean Avenue and Southeast Fifth Street known more recently as "**the Beane Building.**" Erected in 1909 from lumber salvaged from the shipwreck of *The Coquimbo*, it was the first home of the **Boynton Woman's Club** and had served many other functions over the near century of its existence. Currently the property is owned by **Bob Katz** who had hoped to lease the building for a shipwreck theme restaurant. The provision for continued maintenance of such properties could help Boynton Beach realize its potential as a city concerned about its history and the relationship of that history to the quality of the cultural life we can offer.

# STATE UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVE PROPOSED

Last Thursday, January 30, 2003, at a public meetat the Boynton Beach Public Library representatives from several agencies discussed a proposal to establish the shipwreck *Lofthus* as a State Underwater Archaeological Preserve.

Copies of the proposal were presented for discussion by the Bureau of Archaeological Research Division of Historical Resources Florida Department of State and Marine Archaeological Research & Conservation Reporting.

The submerged site of *Lofthus*, the remains of a Norwegian lumber barque wrecked off Boynton Beach has been nominated to become the eighth shipwreck park in Florida. A cooperative effort between state, county, and city officials, as well as interested local organizations and individuals, is proposed to create a new historical attraction for Boynton Beach, southeast Florida, and Palm Beach County.

This proposal is the result of months of historical research by local historians and divers, as well as a recent campaign of underwater mapping, in response to local nomination of the site as an Underwater Archaeological Preserve.

Shipwreck parks are a relatively new phenomena as a means of education and preservation through recreation. Florida's program began in 1987, with the designation of *Urca de Lima*, a Spanish merchant ship cast ashore near Ft. Pierce during a hurricane in 1715, as the first state Underwater Archaeological Preserve.

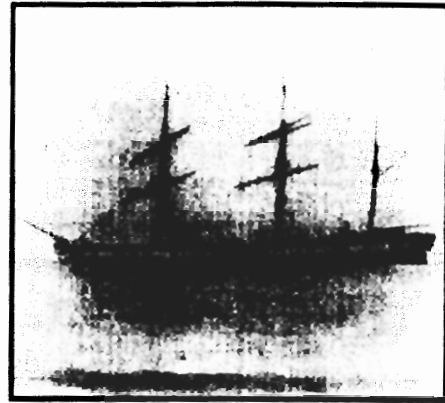
In 2002, the Florida Division of Historical Resources received a nomination for a Preserve from the Marine Archaeological Research & Conservation Reporting (M.A.R.C.) organization, a group of avocational underwater archaeologists based in south Florida. Their research on east coast shipwrecks and maritime history identified the wreck of *Lofthus* as a prime Preserve candidate.

Located in 20 feet of water off Boynton Beach, *Lofthus* met the necessary criteria to become a Preserve, including public accessibility, archaeology integrity, and abundant marine life.

The vessel now wrecked off Manalapan was built at the T.R. Oswald shipyard in Sunderland, England, and was launched under the name *Cashmere* on October 5, 1868, in the heyday of metal sailing ships. The vessel's recorded dimensions were 222.8 feet in length, 36.7 feet in beam, a depth of hold of 22.7 feet and 1,277 gross tons with two decks. The ship's hull was of riveted iron construction and it was rigged as a barque with three masts. Used in the East Indian trade, the vessel had false gunports painted along her sides to deter Sumatran and Javanese

pirates. In 1897, *Cashmere* was sold and renamed *Lofthus*, and transferred to the American trade.

On February 4, 1898, while en route from Pensacola to Buenos Aires with a cargo of lumber, *Lofthus* was wrecked on the east coast of Florida.



The wreck is situated approximately 175 yards off the shore of Manalapan and 3/4 of a mile north of Boynton Inlet. As with all other historical and archaeological sites on public uplands or submerged bottomlands, title to its remains is vested with the State of Florida's Division of Historical Resources, under chapter 267 of the Florida Statutes. The law forbids unauthorized disturbance, excavation, or removal of artifacts, in order to protect the site for the people of Florida.

Today, the sunken *Lofthus* teems with marine life; features of the once-sleek barque are recognizable on the white sand bottom, providing a magical adventure for the underwater visitor. Yet many who come across the broken wreckage have little knowledge of the ship's history and the circumstances that conspired to leave her a permanent resident of the waters off Boynton Beach.

The creation of a new Preserve will represent an added attraction for visitors to Palm Beach County. As an underwater destination it fits readily into three categories of tourism: Recreational Tourism, as a watersports destination; Heritage Tourism, as an historical shipwreck reflecting local maritime heritage; and Eco-Tourism, as an interpreted marine habitat.

The creation of a shipwreck park at the site of the *Lofthus* will benefit all interested parties, and can provide important returns, both financial and historical, for the community as a whole.

The proposal's presenters ask that letters of support for the *Lofthus* Preserve be sent to:

Dr. Janet Snyder Matthews, Director  
Florida Department of State  
Division of Historical Resources  
R.A. Gray Building, 500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250  
Jmatthews@mail.dos.state.fl.us

(The information above is abstracted from the written proposal distributed at the meeting. For a more detailed account, contact Voncile Smith, 734-5653 or the Boynton Beach Public Library.)

## 2003 PAID MEMBERS

(Received by January 15, 2003)

### PATRON MEMBERSHIP:

Dr. Leone Buffan  
Mrs. Lois DuBois  
Mr. and Mrs. James E. Jones (Patricia)  
Mr. Harvey E. Oyer, Jr.  
Mr. and Mrs. Phillip L. Parker (Donna S.)  
Maj. and Mrs. Paul D. Price (Frances R.)  
Dr. Voncile M. Smith  
Ms. Dorian B. Trauger  
Mr. and Mrs. Fain Weems (Claire)  
Dr. and Mrs. N.M. Weems (Cecile)

### FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:

Mr. and Mrs. Beverley Brown (Margaret Shepard)  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Clarke (Dorothea)  
Dr. and Mrs. William Earnhart (Nancy)  
Dr. and Mrs. Bob W. Gayler (Jeanne)  
Ms. Judith Howard and Mrs. Rebecca Merkel  
Mr. and Mrs. J.M. Howell (Evelyn)  
Ms. Ruth J. Jones  
Mr. and Mrs. John I. Rogers (Carnella)  
Ms. Helen, Mr. Charles, and Mr. Fred Senior  
Mr. and Mrs. John Suiter (Kathleen)  
Mrs. Leonard Thompson (Katherine)  
Mr. John Tuite and Ms. Frances McKeral  
Mr. Raleigh Weeks  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. "Bob" Weeks (Rachel)  
Ms. Betty M. Zobel

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:

Ms. Sue Murphy Beaman  
Mr. Arthur Blood  
Ms. Barbara Bonin  
Ms. Barbara Cavanagh  
Ms. Lucile Dickinson  
Ms. May Foy Dillon  
Ms. Betty Perry Duffey  
Ms. Sally Dye  
Ms. Catherine Edward  
Mr. Jim Edward  
Ms. Virginia K. Farace  
Ms. Blanche Girtman  
Mr. Roscoe Grummons  
Ms. Margaret Guyder  
Ms. Frances Haenny  
Mrs. Margaret Harris  
Mr. James Lacey  
Ms. Helen L. McGregor  
Ms. Helen Adams Meisenheimer  
Mr. Gene Moore  
Mr. Robert J. Mulroy  
Ms. Marjorie W. Nelson  
Ms. Alice Otis  
Mr. James Pitts

### INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS (Continued):

Mrs. Robert E. Raborn  
Ms. Margaret Rousseau  
Mr. Jay Rowley  
Ms. Mary Lou Muster Ryder  
Ms. Eleanor Murray Sala  
Ms. Lorraine Vicki  
Mr. Jim Warnke

(Members who have paid after January 15 will be listed in the March newsletter. If you would like to join the Boynton Beach Historical Society, please see the form on the back.)

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### SPRING MEETINGS

March 10, 2003, 6:30 p.m. Boynton Beach Public Library. Writer **Gary Monroe** will discuss his book, *The Highwaymen: Florida's African-American Landscape Painters*, published by the University Press of Florida, and what he learned during his six years of research for it in Fort Pierce. This program is made available through the Courtesy of the **Florida Humanities Council** and is jointly sponsored by the Boynton Beach Historical Society and the Boynton Beach Friends of the Library.

In conjunction with this program the Library and the Historical Society will sponsor a small **exhibition of paintings by the Highwaymen** that will be on display at the Library for two weeks.

April 14, 2003, 7:00 p.m., Boynton Woman's Club. **"The History of the South Florida Drainage District."** Speaker TBA.

May 12, 6:00 p.m. Boynton Woman's Club: our annual covered dish dinner and a special program, **"The Life and Works of Bernard Thomas,"** with **Betty Thomas** and **Sarah Thomas Bollenbacher.**

The Boynton Beach Historical Society does not meet during the months of June, July, and August. After the May meeting, the next program meeting will be the second Monday in September—program, time and place will be announced in the September newsletter to be distributed at the end of August.

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### DO YOU HAVE MEMORIES TO SHARE?

Do you have photographs or clippings that you would be willing to share with the Historical Society? We will appreciate contributions, but if you wish to have them back, we will copy them and return the originals to you. We would also like you to share any personal histories of families and friends, or perhaps some personally recalled anecdotes of school or community life. Please contact the editor at P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012, telephone 734-5653, or e-mail vms317@bellsouth.net.

## THE LAKE WORTH HISTORIAN, 1896

[Editor's Note: Several years ago the Palm Beach County Historical Society reproduced copies of the 1896 edition of *The Lake Worth Historian*, a "souvenir publication Published by the Ladies of Palm Beach, for the benefit of the Royal Poinciana Chapel." Prior to 1912, when the Town of Lake Worth was formed, any use of the term *Lake Worth* meant the region of the lake of Lake Worth. *The Historian* will include excerpts from that publication occasionally that relate specifically to our service area.]

### HYPOLUXO, AND ITS HISTORY

In the fall of 1873 William H. Moore and H.D. Pierce of Chicago, Ill, with the latter's wife and little boy, Charlie, founded what is now known as the town of Hypoluxo.

With one exception they were the first settlers on Lake Worth. Charlie Moore, or Charles Warner, as his right name proved to be, lived at the upper end of the lake; he could hardly be called a settler, as he lived here in a little shanty, all alone, simply for the purpose of "beach-combing." During those days there were a great many wrecks, and drift stuff coming in on the beach.

Mr. Pierce and Mr. Moore built a good sized two-story palmetto house of one room on each floor, in the middle of the hammock on Hypoluxo Island. A little later Mr. Moore took up a homestead on the northern half of the island, but continued to live most of the time with Mr. Pierce and family.

Provisions of all kinds were very scarce, and the men had to go to Titusville, a distance of 160 miles, in a little nine-foot open boat (afterward lengthened to twelve feet) for any kind of food. "Provisions" generally consisted of white bacon, hominy, corn meal and flour; no butter, for it was too dear for a poor man. The trip was from eight days to three weeks long.

The lake was well stocked with fish of all kinds, and the woods were full of bear, panther, deer and turkey, also a few wildcats, and a great number of smaller animals. Mrs. Pierce says it was no uncommon thing for her to stand in the door and see bear crossing the lowlands.

Mr. Pierce lived on the island until the spring of 1876, when he moved six miles south to the Orange Grove House of Refuge, so called from the large grove of wild sour oranges growing there. At this place in August, 1876, the writer [Lillie Pierce Voss] was born. In 1877 the family moved back to their island home, where they have since lived.

Hypoluxo formerly included everything south of Captain Dimmick's place down as far as Orange Grove Station, but since then several little towns have been carved out of it, and there is a good large section left yet.

In 1877 Mr. E.R. Bradley, wife and three children, came to Hypoluxo from Chicago; after living with Mr. Pierce's family some time they took up a homestead on the west side. About this time a family of the name of Butler settled on the middle of Hypoluxo Island. Butler did not work much, but had a small potato patch, which he constantly figured on, till in his own eyes he was rich, but riches never came. "Like Butler's sweet potato patch," is still a joke among the older residents. He soon tired of the solitude, however, and moved away.

The next settler was Michael Merkle, also from Chicago. He had been wealthy, but losing his property, he decided to come to Florida, and here he has lived ever since he first landed on the shores of Lake Worth. He did not consider it worthwhile to homestead, but built a small palmetto house on the east shore of Lake Osborne. At first he lived almost entirely on fish, cooked without salt; there is even now a great pile of fish bones outside his door. Mr. Merkle is a devout Catholic, and it used to be the delight of the children, myself included, to hide in the bushes as he passed, and listen to his chanting. Nowadays he works for other people, and earns enough to buy some of the luxuries of life, of which, however, he is very sparing. He is a great reader, and is exceedingly well informed on all subjects; he speaks several languages, but is very brief in conversation. There a few guava and coco-plum bushes about the house, a few flowers, and a sweet potato patch, which are the only attempts at cultivation

that Mr. Merkle has made; he has a shotgun, but very seldom goes hunting.

So far all of Hypoluxo's residents were from Chicago; but in 1880 George Charters from Brattleboro, Vt. came, and took up a homestead on the "beach ridge," which many called "the shoe-string farm," it was so long and narrow. George himself called it "Buzzard's Roost," there were so many of these birds on it. He was quite a character, but a kinder hearted man never lived. He built a house composed of the pieces of a vessel that went ashore in front of his place; it was a very good house, and strong enough to stand any hurricane on the coast of Florida. I knew George Charters eleven years, and during the whole time I twice saw him wearing shoes. On the homestead he planted thousands of coconuts, which today make it the largest coconut grove in the United States.

In 1892 he sold the homestead for \$7,500 and intended going home to be married, but while stopping in Jacksonville on his way to Vermont, he was taken with brain fever and died after a short sickness.

In 1885 A.W. Gamett, J.W. Porter, and Ed. Hamilton came from Kentucky and bought a small lake front, each also taking up a homestead. A few years later, Mr. Hamilton, who was then acting as mail carrier, was lost while trying to cross Hillsboro river. The others have constantly improved their properties; have groves of lemons and oranges, many handsome and profitable banana trees, and extensive market gardens. As time passed on many others settled on the west side, truck farming being the principal industry.

In 1876 Capt. W.H. Moore left the island to become assistant keeper at the Jupiter lighthouse. On his return to the lake he ran the sloop "Bon Ton" and later the little steamer Hypoluxo, making daily trips to Juno, connecting with the "Celestial Railway," carrying mail, freight, and passengers.

Hypoluxo, having a large share of the richest lands in Dade county, has developed into one of the greatest vegetable growing districts on the east coast. The island is a rich red hummock, covered with an almost tropical growth of good sized trees, and will grow almost anything. The island is never flooded, and during the winter it is a good thing to have a force pump in the vegetable garden. Immense egg-plants and Bermuda onions are grown here. Mr. Pierce is the largest grower of Bermuda onions on Lake Worth, and there is always a ready market for them at home.

The west side is a deep, rich black muck, that is especially fine for tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, cauliflower, turnips, And egg-plants; a tomato or cabbage field, growing in the black muck is a beautiful sight, and well repays a visit to the gardens. The muck lies in a strip half a mile wide on the lake shore, and back of it is the pine land which is successfully cultivated for pineapples.

Two years ago the company that bought the Hypoluxo Beach property built a two and a half story cottage, which is open during the winter season to the public. It is an ideal resort for those desiring quiet, combined with healthful breezes and comfort. It is on the narrow ridge of the "shoe-string farm;" one side facing the Atlantic, the other sloping away down through the coconut palms to Lake Worth.

The fishing in the ocean in front of the hotel, is fine, as a small boat can be launched during calm weather, and being rowed out a few yards, can be easily filled with red snapper, grouper, sheep-head, and other kinds of fish for which no name is known.

A row up the lagoon is also pleasant, dotted as it is with small islands. There are a great many blue and white herons that make the scene picturesque; but we must remind the tourist that there is a heavy fine for shooting our birds.

All of the old "shanties" have been replaced by good large comfortable homes. A visit to Lake Worth is hardly complete without a launch or sail-boat ride down the ten miles of water that is between us and the Hotel Royal Poinciana.

--Lillie Pierce Voss

## WHERE IS WILBUR R. HACKLE?

A postcard from a former USMC buddy addressed to Wilbur R. Hackle arrived in the P.O. Box of the Historical Society recently. Many people remember Wilbur, but no one your editor has talked to seems to know his current address. Does any reader know where the card can be sent to reach him? If so, please contact the Historical Society, or call or e-mail Voncile at 561-734-5653 or vms317@bellsouth.net

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## THE FABULOUS 50s

[Sometimes I feel overwhelmed by e-mail messages. I delete the ads, but read most of the jokes and bits of nostalgia passed on to me. I thought some of you might enjoy reading one I received recently about this father's reactions to reflections on the past.]

### "DO YOU REMEMBER?"

'Hey Dad,' My son asked me the other day. 'What was your favorite fast food when you were growing up?'

'We didn't have fast food when I was growing up.'

'C'mon, seriously. Where did you eat?'

'We ate at home,' I explained. 'My Mom cooked every day and when Dad got home from work, we all sat down together at the table, and if I didn't like what she put on my plate I had to sit there until I did like it.'

By this time, my son was laughing so hard I was afraid he was going to suffer some serious internal damage, so I didn't tell him the part about how I had to get my father's permission to leave the table.

Here are some other things I would have told him about my childhood if I had figured his system could handle it:

My parents never wore Levi's, set foot on a golf course, traveled out of the country, flew on a plane, or had a credit card.

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In their later years they had something called a 'revolving charge card' but they never actually used it. It was only good at Sears-Roebuck. Or maybe it was Sears and Roebuck. Either way, there is no Roebuck any more.

We didn't have a television in our house until I was 12. It was, of course, black and white, but you could buy a piece of special colored plastic to cover the screen. The top third was blue, like the sky, and the bottom third was green, like grass. The middle third was red. It was perfect for programs that had scenes of fire trucks riding across someone's lawn on a sunny day.

Pizzas were not delivered to your house back then, but milk was.

I never had a telephone in my room. Actually the only phone in the house was in the hallway, and it was on a party line. Before you could make a call, you had to listen to make sure someone else wasn't already using the line. If the line was not in use, an operator would come on and ask, 'Number, please,' and you would give her the number you wanted to call.

Movie stars kissed with their mouths shut on screen. Touching someone else's tongue with yours was called French kissing, and they just didn't do it in movies back then. I had no idea what they did in French movies. French movies were considered dirty and we weren't allowed to see them.

You never saw the Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers, or anyone else actually kill someone. The heroes back then would just shoot the gun out of the bad guy's hand. There was no blood and violence.

When you were sick, the doctor actually came to your house. No, I am not making this up. Drugs were something you purchased at a pharmacy in order to cure an illness.

If you grew up in a generation before there was fast food, you may want to share some of these memories with your kids or grandchildren. Just don't blame me if they fall over laughing. Growing up today sure isn't what it used to be."

## TIME MARCHES ON!

On the right is a picture taken at a Chamber of Commerce gathering in the 1950s. Who do you recognize in the picture? Several of your officers know some of the people (we think), but we would like your help to identify any of them.



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 Boynton Beach Historical Society  
 P. O. Box 12  
 Boynton Beach, FL 33435-0012

Special Thanks to Don and Sean Fenton, Investment Representatives, EDWARD JONES, 901 N. Congress Av., Boynton Beach 33426, for underwriting a portion of the cost for mailing this newsletter.

To join the Boynton Beach Historical Society for the calendar year 2003, please complete the form below and mail it with your check for the designated type of membership to Sue Beaman, Treasurer; 2010 S.W. 15<sup>th</sup> Street, Boynton Beach, FL 33426. Make checks payable to BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM 2003**

**NAME(S)** \_\_\_\_\_

**STREET/P.O.BOX** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE ( )** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAX ( )** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-MAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00)</b> _____	<b>FAMILY (\$35.00)</b> _____
	<b>PATRON (\$50.00)</b> _____	<b>CORPORATE (\$100.00)</b> _____