



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.



2012 Number 1 January 2012

ART IN PUBLIC PLACES: HOW PUBLIC ART REFLECTS OUR HERITAGE

Debby Coles-Dobay will discuss this topic at the Boynton Beach Historical Society's meeting on Monday, January 9, 2012, at 6:30 p.m. in the program room at the City Library. The City program, Art in Public Places, is a mission dedicated to creating a stimulating cultural environment that reflects and enhances the City's Heritage, Diversity and Character. The public artwork vitalizes, stimulates and focuses on cultural interaction, amenities, education, business growth and economic development.

Coles-Dobay, the City's Public Art Administrator, will highlight some of the public art projects and the process it took to achieve this mission. Her presentation will cover how **Mark Fuller's** artwork at the Boynton Town Center pays Homage to Boynton Beach's History; the HOB community's participation in the creation of the three public art panels on Martin Luther King Boulevard and Seacrest Boulevard, the purchase of **Bernard Thomas' artwork** and **Conrad Pickel's** vision for Boynton Beach. In addition, she will reflect how public art can contribute to the Old High School's future redevelopment.



Debby Coles-Dobay

WHAT: ART IN PUBLIC PLACES: How Public Art Reflects Our Heritage, a discussion by Debby Coles-Dobay

WHEN: Monday, January 9, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Public Meeting Room, Boynton Beach City Library , 208 South Seacrest Blvd.

**ALL MEETINGS OF THE BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARE OPEN
FREE TO THE PUBLIC**

**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	Ginger Pedersen
Recording Secretary	Diana Dennis
Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
Treasurer	Frances McKeral

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	Christian Oyer Macoviak
2012	Victor Norfus
2013	Brian Edwards
2013	Virginia Farace
2014	Randall Gill
2014	Wendy Franklin

The Boynton Beach Historical Society's website is www.boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org. Our e-mail address is 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.

Find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach

Find us on Twitter:

www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory

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.

2012 MEMBERSHIPS

Dues for 2012 became due on January 1, 2012. In the November *Historian* the names of those who had renewed their memberships as of November 1st were listed. Below are the members who have renewed since that date. (A notation above your name on your *Historian* address label indicates when your membership expires.)

PATRON:

Evelyn C. Howell
Linda M. and Michael Callaway

FAMILY:

Barbara J. and Billy DuBois
Nancy S. and William Earnhart
Irene M. and Martin J. Feeney
Robert L. and Virginia W. Foot
JoAnn, Irma and Delmar Hackle
Rannie and John A. Melear
Dorothy F. and Walter G. Whittaker

Betty Magnason and Herb R. Zobel

INDIVIDUAL:

Tim Bednarz
Kathy Clark-Tilson
Diana Dennis
Janet DeVries
Virginia K. Farace
Robert W. Ganger
Margaret Guyder
Judy G. Keatts
Gladys Baker Knuth
Suzanne Kruse
Donna Harmening
Mildred Lofley [gift membership from Gladys Baker]
Rita K. Marlin
Jeff Morgan
Lillian Ostiguy
Susan Revie
Mary Lou Muster Ryder
Leland Smith
Raymond E. Weeks
Marion Weaver Wester

Welcome to new members Susan Revie from Briny Breezes and Mildred Lofley from Blairsville, Georgia. Thanks to all of you who responded to the request to renew included in *The Historian*.

IN MEMORIAM

LORRAINE VICKI—

Those of us who have been members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society for a number of years were saddened to learn of the death of Lorraine Leweranze Vicki in November. Lorraine and her family had been active members of the Boynton community for a long time. Lorraine was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Boynton Beach, but the family decided against holding any funeral or memorial services. We extend our sympathies and best wishes to all the family members.

**NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING VOTES
TO HONOR BETTY THOMAS**

At the November meeting of the Board of Directors, the members voted to help support the cost of furnishing of the principal's office in the rebuilt Galaxy School. The office will be dedicated to Betty M. Thomas, once a teacher who became the school's principal. She was also an active community leader. Betty Thomas passed away last spring. She was a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society for many years and had served several terms on the Board.

TAKE TIME TO VISIT HISTORIC OPEN HOUSE

Audrey Gerger, a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, lives in a charming house built in 1927 which once belonged to Clyde and Margaret Garnett Harris and before them, Leslie Crane. Both Clyde Harris and Leslie Crane had been principals of Boynton School, which included both the elementary and high school.

Audrey has decorated the house grandly for the holidays and invites any interested members of the Society to come for a tour of the house this Sunday, January 8th between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m., but she asks that you telephone her at 561-739-9960 to let her know you are coming. [She does not want to house sit if no one plans to visit.] The house is located at 331 N.W. 1st Avenue.

Remember this offer is for this coming Sunday, the day before our January program meeting.



Audrey Gerger's House as it looked ca. 1940

DR. MARTHA MEEKS LIGHT

A Boynton Beach Native

In honor of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birth month, *The Historian* is proud to recognize one of our members, Dr. Martha Meeks-Light, who has lived in Boynton Beach her entire life.



Dr. Martha Meeks-Light

Dr. Meeks-Light has maintained an active role in the community as a teacher and as a community activist. She has been especially concerned about encouraging redevelopment in the "Heart of Boynton" neighborhood. She earned her doctorate in Education and reared seven children (one of whom is BB Historical Society Board member Victor Norfus).

The following taken from an interview published in a 2010 "Heart of Boynton Neighborhood Newsletter" represents some of her insights into our City.

"Q: 'What was good about growing up in Boynton Beach?'"

"Dr Light: 'Unity and family, the community being together and knowing one another. All took ownership of their community; everyone pitched in to help their brothers and sisters get back on their feet during difficult times.'"

"Q: 'What was bad or negative?'"

"Dr. Light: 'The lack of opportunities to advance in education, to travel, and limited communication with others outside the immediate area. Life saving medical services were also not available.'"

"Q: 'What changes would you like to see now?'"

"Dr. Light: 'I would like to see more togetherness and unity expressed by others, neighbors getting to know each other, and checking on others in the community; talking and listening to the concerns of each other; citizens uniting to make their community a better place to live; and all citizens taking pride in their community by keeping it clean and not littering; taking care of their environment.'"

A "HEART OF BOYNTON" HISTORIC FACT

Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard runs east-west through the Heart of Boynton perpendicular to Seacrest Boulevard and Federal Highway. Originally it was named Wells Avenue after Robert Wells, a Bahamian American sailor who settled in Boynton in the early 1880s. He owned the land and built the first road through his land; hence it was named Wells Avenue after him.

WHAT IS "THE HEART OF BOYNTON"?

The Heart of Boynton is a community organization whose mission is to improve the social, physical, and economic health of the Heart of Boynton Community by sharing information, facilitating training and education, providing resources, and encouraging communication and participating among neighborhoods, government, educational institutions, businesses, and other participants. Since the Heart of Boynton Community Association [HOBICA] was incorporated in 2008 it has sought to raise the level of community participation by citizens to fulfill the stated mission. More information will be forthcoming in the February *Historian*.

APPRECIATING FLORIDA'S ARCHAIC DISCOVERIES

As editor of *The Historian* I am frequently pleasantly surprised to learn new information about our State which I feel compelled to share with the newsletter's readers. One of my daughters lives in Titusville and has often commented to me about an archaeological site with world-wide significance discovered near Titusville in recent times. I actually knew nothing about it, perhaps having overlooked stories in the local media when its discovery occurred in 1982. But then important scientific stories are frequently buried among the department store ads on back pages of a newspaper. After all, digging up some old bones in Florida may not seem particularly important to publishers whose primary objective is to sell advertising.

The Titusville discovery, known as the Windover Project, came about when a backhoe operator demucking a pond noticed what appeared to be a rock. Since rocks are rather scarce in this region, the operator got down from his backhoe to discover that the "rock" was a human skull. The developers, who were his employers, contacted the department of anthropology at Florida State University after the county medical examiner explained that the bones were very old and probably had some archaeological significance.

Now regarded as one of the world's greatest archaeological finds, its examination has led to revisions of some long accepted theories on early man in North America.

The shallow pond was the burial site for more than 200 people who lived in the region about 7,000 years ago. The pond's muck turned to peat long ago and preserved the bones and more amazingly the brains.



The Windover Archaeological Site

Because of the exceptional state of preservation, the researchers believed the bones to be no more than a few hundred years old because usually bone deteriorates in an unprotected grave within about 500 years. Radiocarbon dating over the course of the

excavation showed ages ranging from 6,990 to 8,120 years, plus or minus 70 years. This was one of the most intact cemeteries of 6,000 B.C. ever found and stirred excitement around the world.

Dr. Glen Doran from Florida State University believes that the skeletons are probably the remains of ancestors of the American Indians and descendants of Asian migrants who crossed the Bering Strait to North America between 40,000 and 20,000 B.C. and reached Florida about 12,000 years ago.

The women were about 5 feet 2 inches tall and the men 5 feet 6 inches, but some were as tall as 6 feet. They were robust and well-muscled and sometimes lived to be 65 or 70 years old.

The intact brains recovered from within the skulls show a size quite similar to that of modern people which suggests that they were as intelligent as we. Scientists are hopeful that cloning the brain matter and investigation of the DNA will permit comparisons with modern man that could provide a step in curing genetically linked and hereditary diseases.

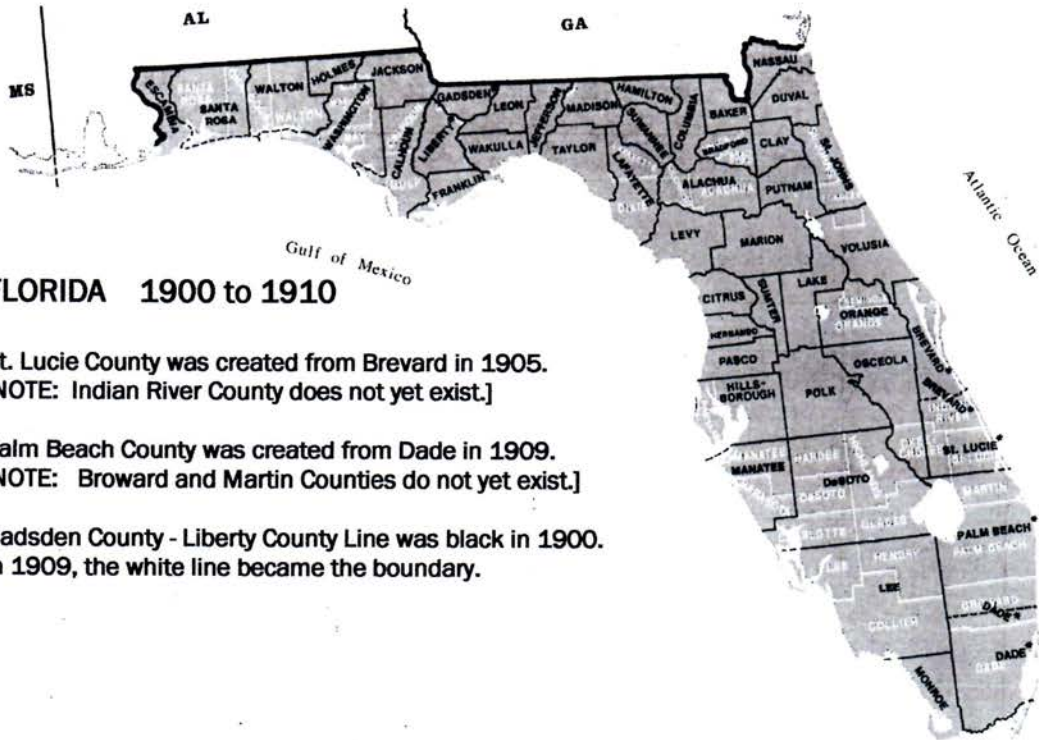
While gathering food and hunting were high priorities, they seem to have allotted only about four hours a day for these activities which gave them the rest of the day to work on tools, cloth or jewelry and for recreation and relaxation. They had developed a complexly woven cloth made of plant fiber, they split conch shells for dipping water, they used bone awls as needles, created weaving tools, had a wooden mortar and pestle to crush and mix food, and employed shark teeth for wood carving, and mussel shells for scraping. They gathered foods such as cattail roots, hickory nuts, prickly pears, mulberries, blackberries, palm heads, gourds and grapes. They hunted large animals such as deer and trapped smaller animals and fish.

Earlier archaeologists had thought Indians from the Archaic times had lived at a bare subsistence level, but the intricate weaving of cloth and the complexity of the tools indicates that these people spent time on activities other than mere survival and had developed refined technology and economic stability. They demonstrated ability to adapt to a changing environment, and as the population of the group increased they dealt with obstacles such as decreasing food supply and other problems.

For information on "The Windover Story, an Exhibition of Archaic Man" at the Brevard Museum of History and Natural Science, See www.nbbd.com/godo/BrevardMuseum/WindoverPeople/index.html See "The Windover Archaeological Research Project" by Joseph I. Richardson at www.nbbd.com/godo/history/windover/index.html

Information about FPAN, The Florida Public Archaeology Network is available at www.flpublicarchaeology.org and at nbbd.com/npr/fpan/index.html

There is also a brief article, "The Windover Site: A Glimpse of Life in Florida 7,000 Years Ago" by Dr. Rachel K. Wentz, Regional Director, FPAN, East/Central Region in *The Indian River Journal*, Vol. VIII, N. 2, Fall/Winter 2009.

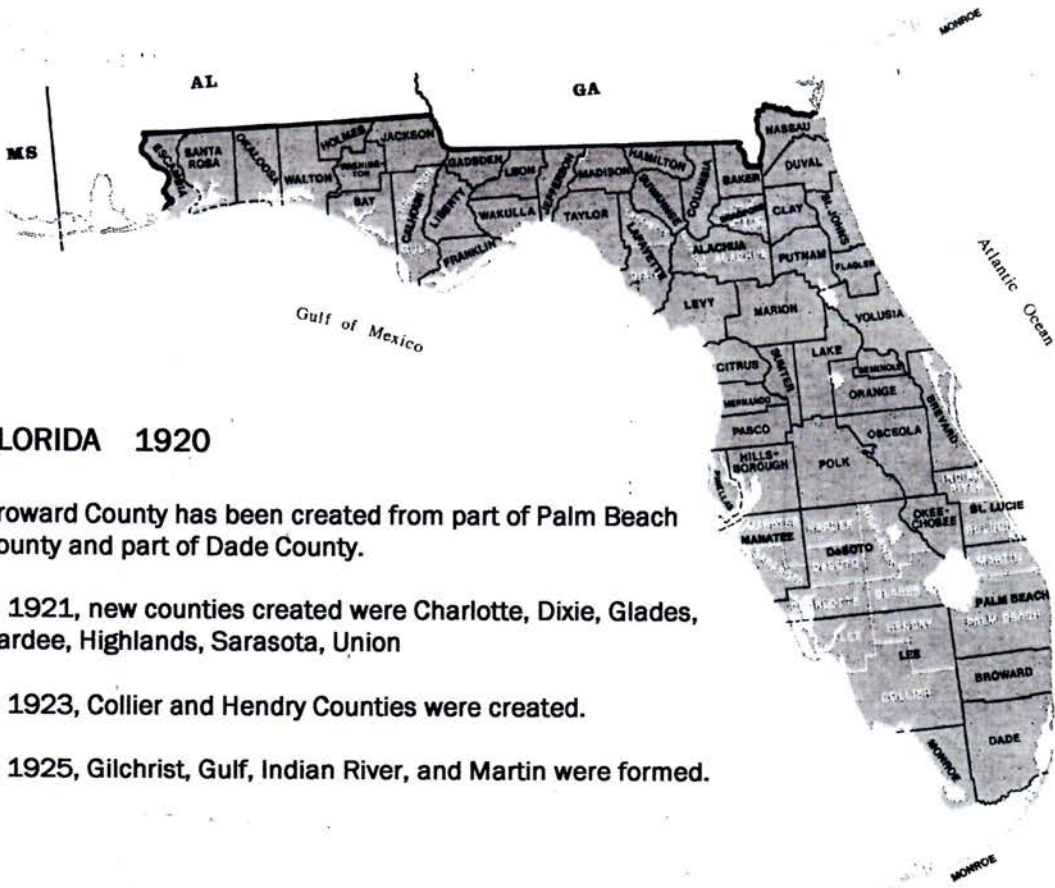


FLORIDA 1900 to 1910

St. Lucie County was created from Brevard in 1905.
 [NOTE: Indian River County does not yet exist.]

Palm Beach County was created from Dade in 1909.
 [NOTE: Broward and Martin Counties do not yet exist.]

Gadsden County - Liberty County Line was black in 1900.
 In 1909, the white line became the boundary.



FLORIDA 1920

Broward County has been created from part of Palm Beach County and part of Dade County.

In 1921, new counties created were Charlotte, Dixie, Glades, Hardee, Highlands, Sarasota, Union

In 1923, Collier and Hendry Counties were created.

In 1925, Gilchrist, Gulf, Indian River, and Martin were formed.

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM**

Member's Name _____
2nd Member's Name _____
Street _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____ Cell _____
E-mail _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:

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

PATRON (\$50.00) _____ CORPORATE (\$100 or more) _____

Complete this form and mail it with a check for the appropriate amount to Boynton Beach Historical Society, P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425-0012.

THE HISTORIAN

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

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.



The Melear Family 1950 at the Boynton Casino

Standing, L to R: Geneva Woods, Hollis, Carlton, Clarenie, Lester, Van Buren [Boot]. Seated, L to R: Nonie White, Tal, Vida Wiggins, Bill, Charlie, and Romie. [Photo courtesy Curtiss White via Facebook]