



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 8

November 2012

The Boynton Beach Historical Society and the Boynton Beach City Library will cosponsor

MURDER IN THE 10,000 ISLANDS: MR. WATSON & SHADOW COUNTRY

a history talk to be presented on Monday, November 19, by Dr. John Childrey, Professor Emeritus in English from Florida Atlantic University, who has been inspired by the writings of Peter Matthiessen about murders which took place in that southwestern part of Florida early in the 20th century. John holds BA, MEd, and EdD degrees from the University of Virginia and an MFA in short fiction from Florida International University.

John taught in the public schools of Lynchburg, Virginia, at Randolph-Macon Woman's College (now Randolph College), Purdue and Florida Atlantic University. While at FAU, he served as a department chair and as Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts. His poetry has appeared in both regional and collegiate publications. In 1995 a fanzine journal of Custer/Amerindian studies published a twenty poem historical fiction, "Buffalo Grass-Voices from the Battle of the Little Big Horn." He has also published and presented on reading and English pedagogy. Retired in 2010, he now continues to research his planned great American novel.



Dr. John Childrey

**WHAT: HISTORY TALK ON MR. WATSON and
The SHADOW COUNTRY, Dr. John
Childrey, retired Professor of English**

WHEN: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 6:30 PM

**WHERE: BOYNTON BEACH CITY LIBRARY
Program Room**

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2012-13

OFFICERS [Elected Annually]

President	Voncile Smith
1st Vice President, Programs	Janet DeVries
2nd Vice President, Membership	Ginger Pedersen
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Corresponding Secretary	Anne Watts
Treasurer	Frances Tuite McKeral

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

DIRECTORS [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2013	Tim Bednarz
3013	Gloria Partin Turner
2014	Steven Anton
2014	Barbara Ready
2015	Sheila Rousseau Taylor
2015	Linda Stabile

TRUSTEES [3-Year Staggered Terms]

2013	Brian Edwards
2013	Virginia Farace
2014	Randall Gill
2014	Wendy Franklin
2015	Christian Oyer Macoviak
2915	Audrey Gerger

Our website is www.boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org. The e-mail address is boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com. Please mail inquiries or information to our local address P.O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425. Voncile can be reached at 561-734-5653.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach

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.

NEW DUES YEAR BEGINS JANUARY 1st

A reminder that January 1, 2013 begins a new dues cycle for memberships in the Boynton Beach Historical Society. This is the last newsletter before our new fiscal year begins. We very much appreciate your sending in your dues without our having to mail you a formal reminder. This saves us both time, duplicating expense, and postage. Please make your checks out to the Society for whichever level of membership you desire and mail it to our Post Office Box 12, 33425.

Below is a list of all members who have already paid for 2013:

CORPORATE:

Gregory Bowser Construction Services LLC

PATRON:

Dr. Heather T. Frazer

Dr. Voncile M. Smith

FAMILY:

Robert L. and Virginia W. Foot
Dr. Bob W. and Jeanne Gayler
Richard V. and Judith Merkel Howard
Dr. Arthur and Sylvia MacMenomay
Richard and Barbara Monahan
J. Robert and Jayne Rousseau
Helen, Charles and Fred Senior
Lloyd P. and Mary Ann Thomas
Bill R. and Elsie Winchester

INDIVIDUAL:

Robin Bollenbacher
Ellen Brown Curtin
Nadine Smith Hartling
Marie J. Horenburger
Nancy Murray Lacy
Denise Smith McCulloch
Rosalie Alvaroe Morrissey
Stormet Norem
Lyn Smith Orletsky
Nicholas Ian Orletsky
Camilla Smith Richardson
Anne Rimler
Susan Merkel Shaffer
James Marshall Smith
Linda Louise Stabile

We welcome new members Robin Bollenbacher, Gregory Bowser Construction Services, Ellen Brown Curtin, Lloyd P. and Mary Ann Thomas, Richard and Barbara Monahan, Anne Rimler, and Susan Merkel Shaffer. Thank you very much for deciding to join us. We also welcome back after an absence of several years Nancy Murray Lacy, Dr. Heather T. Frazer, Stormet C. Norem, and Dr. Arthur and Sylvia MacMenomay.

And thanks to all you others who have sent in your dues early.

NEXT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

The next Board of Directors meeting will be December 3, 2012 at 6:30, location to be announced.

We have several old business items that we should resolve ASAP. One is the HEO, Jr. Memorial which we hope will be the restoration of the Lowell Thomas film made in the 1970s on the History of Boynton Beach. The other pertains to the City Library being the permanent repository for our archives which may require transferring our holdings to the City.

Any member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society in good standing is welcome to attend any Board meeting and participate in the discussion. Voting is, however, limited to Board members.

Check our website or call Voncile for information on the location.

THE WEEMS FAMILY

For years Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems, Sr. was the only medical doctor in Boynton Beach. Many residents now over age 50 who were born in the City were delivered by him.

"Dr. Nat," as he was called by most who knew him, was the son of an Alabama country doctor who was too poor to send his son to medical school. The father gave his son \$1,500 and Nat earned the rest of what he needed to pay his way through medical school himself.

In Clopton, Alabama, his home, he taught school at age 16, and travelled with two horses. At that time there were five families in Clopton.

Later, he spent his first two years in college at Auburn and went to the University of Alabama studying pre-med. Then he moved to Atlanta and received his M.D. from Grady Hospital. One of his fellow classmates at Grady was Truly Fain who later received a nursing degree there. They fell in love and were married.

Another classmate from Grady who had opened a medical practice in Lake Worth wrote Nat there was a need for a doctor in Boynton. So Nat and Truly left Clopton and moved to Boynton for him to begin his medical career. He set up his practice in the back of Newlan's Pharmacy and he and Truly at first rented living space in the Newlan's house primarily on their screened porch.

He himself described his arrival, "I came to Boynton in 1925, driving a model-T Ford. There were about 1,500 people here—one bank, a newspaper, no doctor—I was the first. The real estate boom was on. Lots were selling from \$1,500 to \$3,000 apiece."

As he was becoming established, two hurricanes hit South Florida. The 1926 storm devastated Miami, while the one in 1928 nearly washed away Palm Beach County. His office was flattened and everything in it ruined.

After the second storm the economic bubble burst and most banks in the area went out of business. He got only 10% on the dollar for his savings.

Many people moved away from the area permanently. But the Weems family remained.

Nat performed a full range of treatments—he set bones, prescribed for and tended patients with a variety of fevers, aches, sprains, cuts, lacerations, burns, and other ills. Boynton had no hospital and the nearest was Good Samaritan in West Palm Beach. Residents from the time recall seeing Dr. Weems driving back and forth to that hospital and calling on sick patients at their homes at all hours of the day and night.

In 1935 he established the Weems Clinic. During his many years of service he never refused help to a patient whether they could pay for it or not. He himself estimated that he had delivered 7,500 babies. In the

early days delivery always took place in the home, but later women came to his clinic.



A Young Dr. Nat M. Weems

At the start of World War II, Palm Beach County had 53 doctors and 18 were called into military service. Only 36 physicians were left to care for 80,000 patients. Dr. Weems said that he worked 16 hours a day. His practice had become so large that at the close of the war he added some other doctors to assist him at his clinic, but except for a few years, he was alone in his clinic until his son, Dr. N. Marion Weems, Jr. joined him in 1957. In 1962 he sold his clinic to Marion.

Dr. Nat died in 1978. Seven children survived him.

Sadly he and Truly lost their first son and later after several living children had been added to their family, they lost another child. Nat's and Truly's children are N. Marion, Jr., Alice Nain (now Mrs. Curtis Weaver), Anne (now Anne Weems Michael), William Fain, and Juli Ette (Julia Weems Monahan who passed away several years ago). Truly Fain Weems died in 1947 before these children were grown.

In 1950 Nat Weems married Margaret Dudley. Two children were born to this marriage, a son Marion Dudley who is also a medical doctor and Margaret Louise (Meg) who is a nurse.

Nat Weems retired in 1965, but for someone who had spent his life serving others, reduced activity did not suit him, and in that same year he accepted a position as Emergency Room Doctor at Bethesda Memorial Hospital in Boynton Beach. He held this position until 1971.

In 1972 the new Police Complex for the City was dedicated to him.

Medical service is exemplified by this family. Dr. Nathaniel Marion Weems, Sr. had a brother, Dr. William (Bill) Weems who practiced in West Palm Beach. Two of Nat Weems sons (N. Marion and Dudley) are doctors, and three of his daughters (Anne, Julia, and Meg) became nurses. Truly Fain, who was a nurse, had a brother Roger Fain who practiced dentistry in Lake Worth.



Dr. Nat relaxes at his clinic between patients



Weems Home – 409 NE 3rd Street, Boynton Beach



Truly Fain Weems at Bank of Boynton-Ocean at US 1-early 1940s



Margaret Dudley Weems, Doc, and Marion Dudley Weems 1952



Older children. In rear: N.M. Jr.; Alice Nain. In front: Juli, Anne, Fain



Meg and Dudley Weems – ages 4 and 8

IN MEMORIAM

MILDRED LUCILLE TRAYLOR TARASCO—Mildred passed away in July. She and her husband George Tarasco had been long-time members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. Her brother and sister-in-law, Philip and Barbara Traylor, and her sister, Mary Ann “Bernice” Traylor Wilson are current members.

She was born in Deerfield Beach, the daughter of H. Bert and Mary Leola Griffin Traylor. Their relatives were in Boca Raton as early as 1908 and one uncle served as Mayor of Boca Raton from 1924 to 1929.

Mildred attended local public school and the convent in Key West. She was active in a variety of civic and service organizations. She is survived by two daughters, Nancy (Ron) Hurst of Jacksonville, FL and Vanessa (Randy) Hurst of Tennessee, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. We send our condolences to her family.



Mildred Tarasco at Harvey Oyer's 80th Birthday Party, 2006

MARILYN BASKIN CARR—Marilyn died this past summer after an extended illness. Until she became ill, she had been a member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

Marilyn was born in a dairy between the intracoastal canal and the ocean about where Briny Breezes is now located. She attend Boynton public schools and graduated from Seacrest High School in 1951.

She was one of several children of Maurice Baskin, Sr. She and her husband, James “Jay” Carr had five children—Stacie Anne, Richard “Rick.” Pamela, Mark, and Tammy Sue. We are sorry for their loss.

ESTHER ORR—Esther died in October at her home in Gainesville where she had recently moved from Boynton Beach. Esther had been a long-time member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

She was born in Zanesville, Ohio, but when she was still quite young, her family moved to Tampa where she graduated from Hillsborough High School. She had a life-long love of travel which had in part been stimulated by her work with Pan Am airlines.

She moved to Boynton Beach in the early 1950s. She had four children—Janet, Jack, Jim and Jill and as the oldest neared adulthood, Esther decided to enroll in college to become a teacher. She taught elementary school at Plumosa in Delray Beach and later at Forest Park in Boynton Beach for a total of 20 years and retired at age 72. We know her family greatly misses this happy, upbeat, and enthusiastic woman.

ELISABETH BROWN FURR—Elisabeth died suddenly in October near her home in Fishers, IN. She was the daughter of William Hugh and Callie Rousseau Brown. Her mother and many other Rousseau relatives have long been active members in the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

Born in Boynton Beach as a child Elisabeth was known as “Betty Kay” but chose to be called “Liz” as an adult. She attended Boynton schools and graduated from Seacrest High School where she was the drum majorette for the band. She graduated from Brenau College for Women (now Brenau University) in Gainesville, GA and became a county extension agent in Marion, Pasco and Manatee counties in Florida. She was married to William “Bill” Furr from Ocala. She is survived by her daughters Ellen (Art) Davida and Jill (Gary) Birch, her brother Bill “Bud” (Jackie) Brown, her sister Ellen Brown (Brian) Curtin, three granddaughters and two great-grand children. We regret their loss.



Elisabeth Brown Furr

KEITH JOSEPH JONES, SR.—Keith passed away in October. Both his mother, Ruth Jones and his sister Emilie Jones Little are current members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society as are several of his cousins, Gloria Partin Turner, Judith Merkel Howard, Susan Merkel Shaffer, and his aunt Wilese Jones Langford.

Keith was employed by Palm Beach State College. He is survived by his wife Susan Marie Jones, three children — Rachel Mohlman, Keith Joseph Jones, Jr., Laura Lee Jones, and one grandchild; also by his mother, Ruth Jones, his brothers Thomas Mason Jones, Jr. and his sisters Janice Jones (Joe) Heine, Emily Jones Little and Michele Jones Keith, and many other family members. We send our condolences to all the family.

**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.

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 HISTORIAN

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

GRANDPARENTS OF WEEMS CHILDREN:

Alice Nain Weems was named for her two grandmothers, and Truly Fain Weems gave her son, William Fain, her maiden name.



Alice Weems – Dr. Nat Weems Mother



The Fains – “Mama” Nain and “Papa” Fain –
Parents of Truly Fain Weems.