

# 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.

2013 Number 3

March 2013

## LAKE WORTH LAGOON RESTORATION

Come join Ginny Powell and the Boynton Beach Historical Society at our March 18 meeting for an overview of Palm Beach County's largest estuary. Hear the latest monitoring results for seagrasses, manatee and sea turtle populations. The presentation will highlight recent environmental restoration and enhancement projects in the Lagoon that have increased fish and wildlife habitat while simultaneously providing recreation opportunities for residents and visitors.

Ginny Powell is the Environmental Program Supervisor, Public Outreach Section, Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management [ERM]. She has been with the ERM since 1999 when she started as an Environmental Analyst managing the Lake Worth Lagoon Partnership Grant



Ginny Powell

Program. In 2004, she became the supervisor of ERM's Public Outreach Section which managed all aspects of public information associated with Department projects and programs including the design and production of brochures, posters, and newsletters; management of the ERM and Lake Worth Lagoon websites; and the planning and implementation of outreach and special events. She holds a B.S. in Horticulture Science from North Carolina State University at Raleigh.

**WHAT:** Lake Worth Lagoon Restoration  
A presentation by Ginny Powell,  
Palm Beach County Department  
of Resources Management

**WHEN:** Monday, March 18, 6:30 p.m.

**WHERE:** Boynton Beach City Library  
208 South Seacrest Boulevard  
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
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President, Programs	Janet DeVries
2nd Vice President, Membership	Ginger Pedersen
Recording Secretary	Diana Dennis
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
2013	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
2015	Audrey Gerger

Our website is [www.boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.boyntonbeachhistoricalsociety.org). The e-mail address is [boyntonhistory06@yahoo.com](mailto: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](http://www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach)

[www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory](http://www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory)

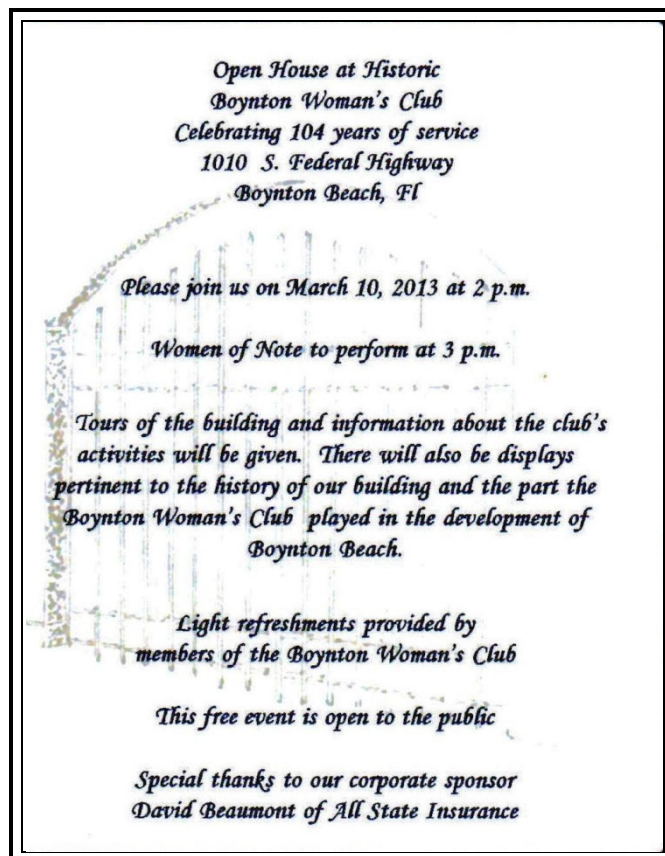
*The Historian* is mailed eight times a year—September, October, November, January, February, March, April and May—to all members. No copies are produced in December, June, July, and August. Copies from past years are posted on the website.

### **WOMAN'S CLUB TO HOLD OPEN HOUSE**

The Boynton Beach Historical Society has been invited to participate in the Open House scheduled by the Boynton Woman's Club for Sunday, March 10, 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. We will have a table holding some of the brochures designed by Steve Anton, Notebooks with previous copies of *The Historian*, and some representative pictures. The Society has always had a close relationship with the Club and are pleased that we were asked to take part.

Members will give tours and answer questions about the historic 1925 building, the only structure in Boynton designed by the famous architect Addison Mizner. Arts and crafts vendors will sell ceramics, jewelry, paintings, photos, scrapbooks, needlework and quilts. A free concert at 3:00 p.m. features Women of Note, an a capella chorus.

A copy of the invitation follows and additional information is available at 917-915-9961.



### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be Monday, April 8 at 6:30 at the Woman's Club. This will be the last meeting of the 2012-2013 Board since we will elect new officers, directors, and trustees at our Annual Meeting on April 15. It is also the last meeting Voncile expects to call since we will elect a new president at the meeting on April 15. Any member in good standing is welcome to attend any Board meeting, but only members of the Board may propose motions and vote.

### **LILLIE PIERCE VOSS HONORED**

On March 20, in a ceremony in Tallahassee, Governor Rick Scott will formally announce that Lillie Pierce Voss is a 2012/2013 Florida Women's Hall of Fame Inductee.

A number of her descendants will make the trip to the State Capital to attend. Three of her great-grandchildren, Harvey E. Oyer III, Christian Oyer Macoviak and Susan Oyer who are members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society are among those who expect to be present. Lillie's great grandsons, Joseph Macoviak, age 9, and William Macoviak, age 6, will accompany their parents. Other members of

[Continued on page 3, LILLIE VOSS.]



[LILLIE VOSS, continued from page 2]

the Voss family who are current members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society include Marjorie Nelson and Dr. Stephen and Dr. Gay Voss. Although not a direct descendant, Jean Ann Thurber is a cousin.

A copy of the page for the Inductee brochure is reproduced below:

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2012/2013 Florida Women's Hall of Fame Inductee

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**Lillie Pierce Voss**

**1876 – 1967**

*Lillie Pierce Voss*, formerly of Hypoluxo, was the first non-Native American child born between Jupiter and Miami. As a child she learned to interact with the Seminole Indians and she learned to shoot, hunt, fish, and sail a boat as well as any male. She was known as the Sweetheart of the Barefoot Mailmen, helping her mother cook breakfast for the mailmen and rowing them across the lagoon to the beach strip where they would start their historic treks. Her husband was a boat captain and steam engineer who ran steamboats in South Florida in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Together they piloted yachts between Palm Beach and New England for wealthy seasonal Palm Beach residents. Ms. Voss was a pioneer woman and dynamic individual who helped build South Florida while raising her five children. She witnessed and participated in some of the watershed events in the development of Southeast Florida, raised a successful family, and survived a hard-scrabble existence in the wild, untamed frontier of Southeast Florida at a time when most male settlers could not survive. She was smart, tough, and was an intricate part of South Florida's unique history.

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## **MEMBERSHIP 2013**

The list below includes the names of members who have paid dues since February 1<sup>st</sup>. Members who joined for 2013 prior to that date are named in the November 2012, and January and February 2013 *Historians*.

### **PATRON MEMBERSHIP:**

Don and Regina Day

Michael and Linda Callaway  
Dan Suiter and Lisa Ames  
N. Marion and Cecile Weems

### **FAMILY MEMBERSHIP:**

Billy and Barbara DuBois  
Harry D. and Edris M. Hatch and Valerie Pleasanton  
Robert T. and Christian Oyer Macoviak  
Robert B. and Sheila Rousseau Taylor  
Philip B. and Barbara S. Traylor  
Herb and Betty Magnason Zobel

### **INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP:**

Steven Anton  
Heidi Bell  
Helen Adams Bonomini  
Ramona Somerford Davis  
Mary Miner Haggard  
Phyllis Hammett  
Alice M. Lund  
Frank Melograno  
Harvey E. Oyer, III  
Susan Swiatosz  
Cindy Weeks

Thank you, everyone, for sending in your membership. We extend a special welcome to the new City Library Archivist, Susan Swiatosz.

The expiration date for your membership is shown on the address label attached to your copy of *The Historian*.

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## **MOONLIGHT WOODLAWN CEMETERY TOUR**

Join historians [and BBHSociety officers] Janet DeVries and Dr. Ginger Pedersen on a moonlit tour of Woodlawn Cemetery, West Palm Beach's historic cemetery. Built on former pineapple fields, the land was donated to the City by Henry Flagler. The cemetery is the final resting place of some of Palm Beach County's most influential and important citizens, including a few infamous ones whose story must also be told. This tour will focus on the pioneer era citizens who were the first to grace the shores of Lake Worth and brave its hardships, building businesses and serving the community. The tour will last 90 minutes. Please arrive by 7:45, the tour will begin at 8:00 p.m. Parking is available in the cemetery at 1500 South Dixie Hwy across from the Norton Museum. Please bring water and any needed insect repellent.

[Sponsored by the City of West Palm Beach]

**CHARLES WILLIAM PIERCE**  
**BOYNTON BEACH'S BAREFOOT POSTMASTER**

Lillie Pierce Voss had a brother who was nearly 12 years older than she. He was Charles William Pierce, and he left a substantial mark on the greater Boynton area.

The following is taken from The Boyntoneer, the official monthly publication of the Greater Boynton Beach Chamber of Commerce, Volume 2, Number 1, January 1971.

"Charles William Pierce, 1864-1939, was the city's first postmaster, and the only barefoot mailman who kept a written, detailed chronicle of the important role he and his family played in this colorful era of early history.

"Pioneer Pierce's 'Diary' amounted to 698 pages and contained over 200,000 words. Late in 1970, his recordings were published in a book entitled 'Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida.' Pierce had always meant to publish such a book himself, but his busy life sapped his energy. A few months before his death at age 75, he remarked, 'I know it has to be written, but I just can't do it. I am too tired.'

"Nevertheless, both writers and historians are indebted to this rugged pioneer who had a sense of history, and who realized his was an important era in America that could never re-occur.

"Author Theodore Pratt, who made the 'Barefoot Mailmen' famous in his novel by the same name, credited the pioneer's written accounts—supplied him by the Pierce family—as giving him 'much additional insight into the spirit of the times that ultimately went into my novel.'

"Charles Pierce was born in Waukegan, Illinois. He was only eight years old when his parents brought him to Florida, and his family made their home in a deserted cabin on the Indian River south of Fort Pierce.

"In 1872 Pierce's father [Hannibal Dillingham Pierce] became assistant keeper at the Jupiter light. There were no schools in the frontier area, but Pierce's mother [Margretta Moore Pierce], a former prairie school teacher, made certain her son and his younger sister did not go uneducated. An inveterate diarist, Mrs. Pierce taught her son to keep written journals of his daily adventures and activities.

"Pierce joined the ranks of the barefoot mailmen in 1887, following the death of beachwalker Ed

Hamilton at the Hillsboro Inlet. Hamilton's mail bag, clothes and shoes were later found on the north side of the inlet, with his boat on the inlet's south side where it had been left by a southbound 'stranger.'

"Although thorough searches were made, no trace of Hamilton was ever found. It was apparent to the searchers that Hamilton had attempted to swim the Inlet to recover his boat and had probably been killed and eaten by 'hundreds' of alligators then inhabiting the waterway.

"Pierce agreed to assist Andrew Garnett of Hypoluxo in covering the barefoot mail route left vacant by the death of Hamilton. The route distance from Palm Beach to Miami and back totaled 136 miles—56 miles by small sailboat or row boat and 86 miles by foot.

"Traversing the entire route in Miami and back was a grueling journey, requiring six days and five nights to complete the round trip. For their dangerous and demanding efforts, the barefoot mailmen were paid a salary of \$50 per month.

"During the following years, C.W. Pierce served as the first road commissioner in what is now Palm Beach County [at that time Dade County], earned his steam pilots license, and served as assistant postmaster at Hypoluxo.

"In 1905, at the age of 31, Pierce opened a branch of his father's store in what is now Boynton Beach and married Yallahs Lizette Wallack from Lemon City. His son, Charles Leon 'Chuck' Pierce, became the first boy born in Boynton in 1896.

"C.W. Pierce was named Boynton's first postmaster in 1901 and held that position until 1903. In 1908 he again became the Boynton postmaster and remained in that position until his death 32 years later."

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**A CONTEMPORARY LOOK AT CHARLIE'S YOUTH**

Harvey E. Oyer III has used much of the information supplied in the journal by Charles Pierce, his great grand uncle, for his children's series "The Adventures of Charlie Pierce." The three volumes, all in print, are "The American Jungle," "The Last Egret," and "The Last Calusa."

They are read widely by fourth grade students throughout South Florida making history live with a character children can relate to. Copies are available through most bookstores or can be obtained through Harvey.



## FROM THE MURALS – THE BAREFOOT MAILMAN



Office. Charles Pierce posed for the artist, and the mail carrier in the murals is said to bear a strong resemblance to Pierce

Above are copies of three of the six murals painted by artist Steven Dohanos for the walls of the United States Post Office in West Palm Beach. Dohanos spent several days conferring with Charles W. Pierce, immediately prior to the pioneer's death in 1939. The artist depicted scenes in his murals according to descriptions supplied by Pierce and his diary he wrote covering the era. As the caption indicates, Pierce posed for the artist thus serving as the model for the famous beachwalking pioneers.

The mural shown in the middle was used by Delray Beach writer Theodore Pratt for the cover of the *Barefoot Mailman*, his historic fiction novel published in 1940.

## FUN WITH OLD PHOTOS

Ann Mayberry Neuman has furnished us with several family photos.



In 1944 Ann stands beside the beautiful old ocean front Boynton Casino which the City razed in the 1960s.



Ann and her sister Kathleen Mayberry stand behind Donna Roush and Nancy Hood (McNamee) in this 1944 picture.



Ann's "Uncle Jim" and Aunt Stella" in a pose reminiscent of the painting "American Gothic" by artist Grant Wood.

**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:**

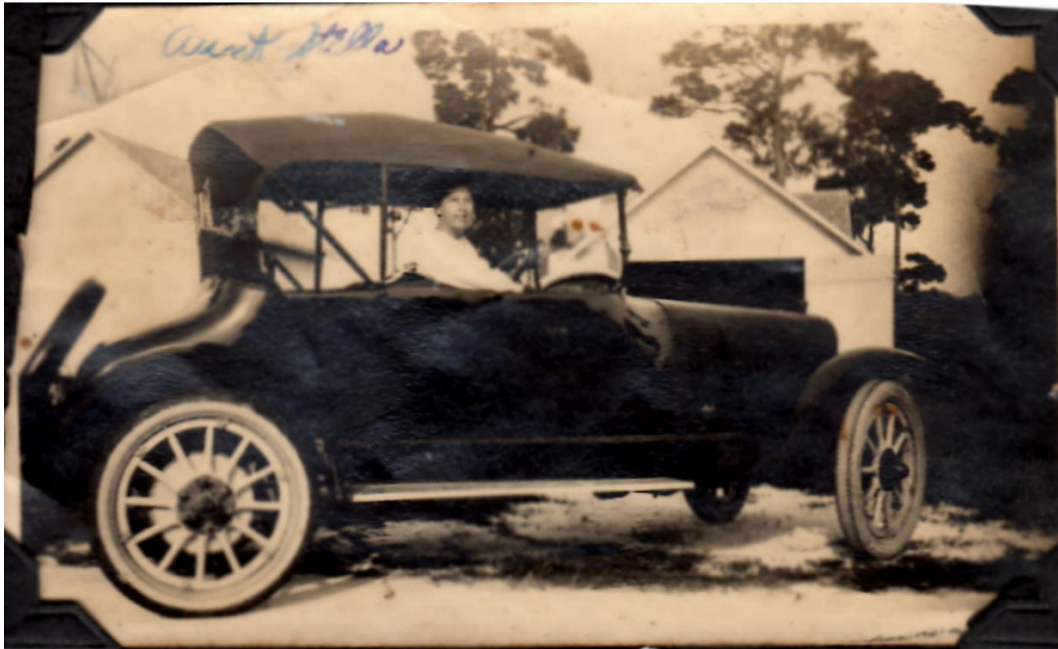
INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) \_\_\_\_\_ FAMILY (\$35.00) \_\_\_\_\_  
PATRON (\$50.00) \_\_\_\_\_ CORPORATE (\$100 or more) \_\_\_\_\_

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.



Ann Mayberry's Aunt Stella in her car, probably in the 1930s