

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 6

September 2013

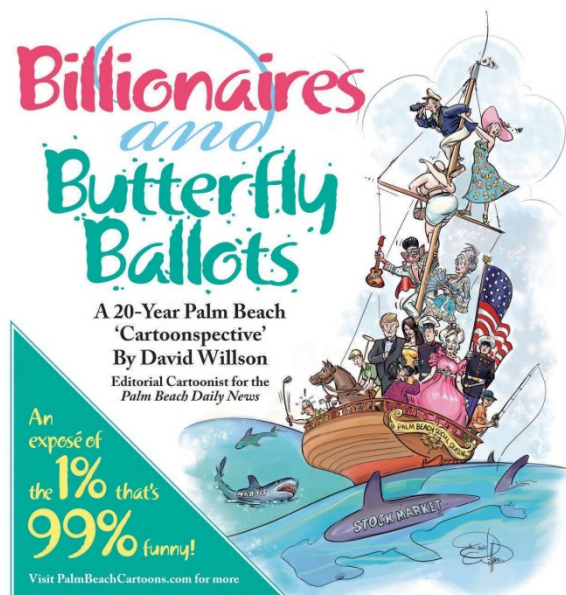
BILLIONAIRES and BUTTERFLY BALLOTS

David Willson, cartoonist for *The Palm Beach Daily News* and pioneer descendent, presents his cartoonistry on events and life on "The Island"—Palm Beach at the September meeting of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.

What do billionaires, snowbirds, gold diggers, Bernard Madoff, feral cats, Donald Trump, xenophobes, Jimmy Buffett, hurricanes, Rush Limbaugh, Butterfly Ballots, Ferraris, Epicureans, comatose iguanas, Lilly Pulitzer and political pit stops have in common? **Palm Beach!** This wealthy island's present-day reputation for salacious scandals, hapless elections supervisors and boisterous demagogues stands in contrast to its refined past. Fortunately, *The Palm Beach Daily News*, a newspaper whose subscription list rivals the *Social Register*, hired David Willson as its first and only editorial cartoonist 20 years ago. He was on hand when battalions of Butterfly Ballot-chasing litigators invaded *Flori-duh* and for many other infamous Palm Beach brouhahas. But that's just part of the story. Oh, those wacky one-percenters! You have no idea! At least, you won't until you've listened to him discuss all this and read his book.



David Willson



WHAT: DISCUSSION AND REVIEW of *BILLIONAIRES and BUTTERFLY BALLOTS* by DAVID WILLSON, CARTOONIST and AUTHOR

WHEN: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 6:30 P.M.

WHERE: BOYNTON BEACH CITY LIBRARY, PROGRAM ROOM

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

BOARD OF DIRECTORS--2013-14

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Our website is www.boyntonhistory.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. Copies from past years are posted on the website.

IN MEMORIAM

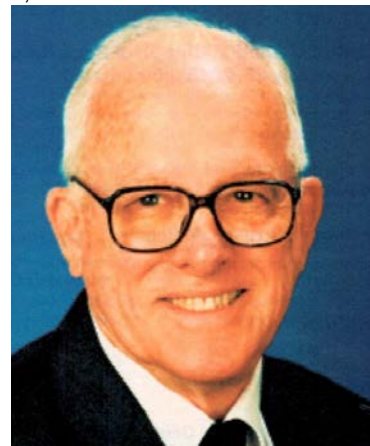
NANCY EARNHART—The Boynton Beach Historical Society is saddened by the death of Nancy S. Earnhart early in the summer. Nancy and Dr. Bill Earnhart have been members of the Society for many years. Nancy contributed much to the community. In Delray Beach she was one of the original members of the Board of Directors of Old School Square and had received the Buster Musgrave Award in recognition of her two decades of service to Old School Square and Delray Beach. She also contributed much of her time and efforts to Bethesda Memorial Hospital and the First Presbyterian Church of Delray Beach. She is survived by her husband Bill and their children Brady (Bob) Gartland, Becky (Ralph) Martinez and Craig (Mary) Earnhart, as well as grandchildren and a great-granddaughter. We send our best wishes to all her family and friends.

STEPHEN HEARD VOSS—We are sad to report the loss of another descendant of the pioneer Pierce/Voss families. Stephen was a grandson of Lillie Elder Pierce Voss and Captain Frederick Voss to whom we have referred in many past issues of *The Historian*.

Stephen was a notable person in his profession. He came to South Florida to join the first faculty at Florida Atlantic University in 1964 and retired in 2003 as professor emeritus. But he continued working with FAU students under a "courtesy" contract which enabled him to serve as an official academic advisor to undergraduate students.

He began his teaching career in 1953 and served in various school-related capacities for more than 50 years as a teacher and a principal, and then as a professor. During World War II he served as a Navy

medic assigned to the 6th Naval Beach Battalion and was wounded during the Normandy invasion. Recently he was honored by the French government for his service during the invasion of Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944.



Dr. Stephen H. Voss

He attended Florida Southern College and received his masters and doctoral degrees at the University of Florida.

Both Stephen and his wife, Dr. Gay Sherman Voss, have been members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society for many years. We extend our sympathy and sorrow to Gay and to their children Stephen Voss, Carol Johnson, Jimmie Enderle, Kathleen Woolrich, Angie West, Frances Green, and 9 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

HELEN LOUISE SENIOR—A lifelong Boynton resident and long-time member of the Boynton Beach Historical Society, Helen Senior passed away on August 06, 2013.

Helen's father had been an area administrator for Florida Power and Light. Helen attended Boynton schools and was a graduate from the historic Boynton High School when graduation ceremonies were held in the building itself. Helen is survived by her two brothers Charles and Fred who are also members of the Society. We send them our best wishes and condolences.

IRENE FEENEY—Irene was very active in the community. She had been president of the Boynton Woman's Club, was a member of the Boynton Beach Book Club, and had served in leadership positions at both the local and state level for the Democratic Party. She and her husband, Martin, have long been members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.



Irene Feeney

She is survived by Martin and four children—Walter Burg, Cynthia Lawson, Susan Smith and John Burg and by six grandchildren and stepchildren John Feeney and Kathy Vella. We are sad for their loss and the Society's.

..BRINY BREEZES HAS 50TH BIRTHDAY— BUT IT'S REALLY OLDER

In the second decade of the 20th century the increasing availability of automobiles in the United States led to the building of improved highways many of them leading to southern states. Newly mobile northerners and adventurous people from around the nation traveled south, many to Florida to escape the more developed cities to which they were accustomed.

Some modified early automobiles to carry sleeping quarters, kitchen equipment, and barrels of water. Ultimately industry developed sophisticated campers as luxurious as nice homes. Vacationer-campers sought out-of-the-way locations of interest and comfortable places to live, sometimes for a few days, sometimes for weeks.

Commonly the early wanderers in the 1920s and 1930s were called "Tin Can Tourists." The origin of the name is uncertain—some think the name refers to the campers' reliance on canned foods; others insist the name comes from the small Ford automobiles of the era, the Model T or "Tin Lizzie," which were popular and affordable at the time.

The original Tin Can Tourists of the 1920s pioneered camper travel and the use of travel vehicles became more popular following World War II. Trailer parks were developed to meet the demands of the influx of new visitors who brought their own accommodations. This led to new roadside tourist attractions for campers and trailers. Young families, temporary seasonal workers, and "Snowbirds" all enjoyed Florida's amenities. The locations often became like small villages with mobile structures making up the villagers' homes.

Let us examine the chronology of Briny Breezes to see how its development relates to the information above.



View of Trailer Park and Boat Area Briny Breezes 1963

The story begins in 1919 (about the time the first tin can tourists started out). A resident of this area, Ward B. Miller, who had retired from the lumber business in Michigan, bought 43 acres along the ocean at a site then called Palm Beach Shore Acres and built a large oceanfront home. Within two years he established a dairy with 500 head of cattle on the site (Shore

Acres Dairy). He gave permission to a group of campers to stay at his tract.

In 1925 Miller changed the name of his tract to Briny Breezes, subdivided it into lots and sold it for nearly \$2 million. Soon after the real estate crash in that same year led to the Miller family's reclaiming the land. Times were difficult because the economic depression of 1929 soon followed. Miller permitted people to camp on his land and fish for free provided they bought his milk and strawberries. In 1958 the residents of the community established a resident-owned corporation and for \$1.5 million bought the area from the Miller family. On June 19, 1963 the residents incorporated as a municipality and became one of the smallest towns in Palm Beach County.

In 2007 Ocean Land Investments offered to buy the 488 sites for \$510 million which would have made all the owners millionaires. A series of protests from the surrounding community and the disruption among the owners themselves led the company to withdraw the offer. "Briny" had a clear identity before it was incorporated 50 years ago. The Boynton school bus made a run twice daily during the school year to pick up and take home "Briny" children. From 1925 on the residents there had a clear identity. Perhaps they should consider celebrating 100 years in 2025. After all Boynton had a centennial celebration in 1995 when it was not actually incorporated until 1920. Briny Breezes certainly could claim it is only 30 years younger than Boynton.

"Tiny, fascinating Briny Breezes is 50 years old," Eliot Kleinberg, The Palm Beach Post, June 20, 2013.

"The Tale of the Tin Can Tourists," Family Motor Coaching, December 2001.

"Tin Can Tourism," Division of Library and Information Systems, Florida Department of State at www.floridamemory.com

MORE ON 1927 SCHOOLHOUSE

The future of the historic 1927 schoolhouse is once again cloudy. The Boynton Beach City Commission voted 5-0 in May to negotiate over the next 120 days with the Lansing Melbourne Group who proposed converting the building into an events destination under Palm Beach party planner Bruce Sutka.

But in June the Commissioners voted down a site plan for Lake Worth architect Juan Contin's \$4.5 million conversion of the building to an events and destination center. Contin's proposal was the first that was based on using private money. Commissioners became frustrated, however, as Contin remained protective about investors and their identities. The uncertainty about who would own the building and pay permit fees became an issue.

Several of the Commissioners state they still want to raze the building and use the land for other purposes. Contin apparently plans to sue. Members of the Historical Society who are interested in this issue should contact each of the Commissioners and Vivian Brooks, CRA Director, about what should be done with the building. The members of the current Commission, their telephone numbers and email addresses can be found on the City's website, or you can write them through the U.S. Postal Service and address them at City Hall, 33435..

SCHOOLHOUSE CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

The schoolhouse building that now houses the Schoolhouse Children's Museum and Learning Center is 100 years old this month. Built in 1913 as the Boynton School, it has been a wonderful century for this historic building.



Boynton School – Early Years ca 1914

First, it housed Boynton School, grades 1 through 12. (Florida schools did not include kindergartens until the late 1960s.) It dropped to grades 1-8 when the high school next door was built and opened in 1927. Thanks to the Historical Society and the City, the 1913 building was preserved and renovated and opened as a museum in 2001. For 12 years it has thrived as an engaging place for children to explore and learn. The Society and the City are proud of the roles we have played in creating this asset for the people of Boynton Beach and others who may visit here.

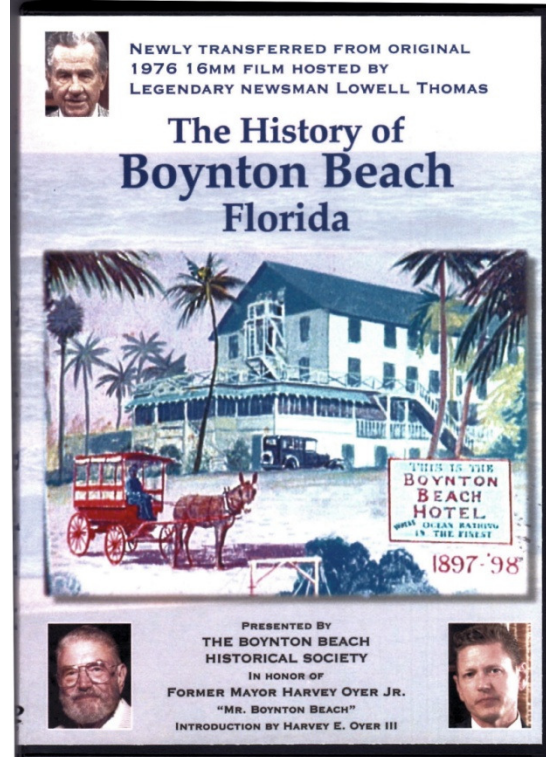
To celebrate the momentous birthday, the museum will hold a big party for children on Saturday, September 28th from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The children can make birthday cards and enjoy cake. There will also be an event on Friday evening, September 20 where invited guests will share stories about the "Jewel of Boynton Beach."

HARVEY E. OYER, Jr. MEMORIAL PROJECT COMPLETED

In December, 2010, at the time of the funeral of Harvey E. Oyer, Jr. his children—Harvey E. Oyer, III, Susan Oyer, and Christian Oyer Macoviak—asked that memorial gifts in his memory be sent to the Boynton Beach Historical Society. After much discussion, the Board of Directors with the approval of his children decided on the following: To restore and add to a film on the history of Boynton Beach that had been produced in 1976 as a project for the American bicentennial celebration.

All film tends to degrade over time, and both copies of this film, which were housed in the City Library, had been shown many, many times. Neither copy was in very good condition. The 16 mm film runs approximately 30 minutes and was narrated by Lowell Thomas. The film was first broadcast on Channel 5 on July 4, 1976. A committee of the Historical Society's Board of Directors—Anne Watts, Ginger Pedersen, and Janet DeVries—set about the task of researching film restorers to determine whether or not the Society could afford

this undertaking. Ron Hurtibase. Florida Legacy Productions, Margate, was eventually chosen to digitally restore the work and have new titles and a new introduction filmed. Harvey E. Oyer, III participated to narrate the new introduction as a tribute to his father. The film is available on DVD for distribution to schools or the public as is decided. In addition two true archival copies have been created using a special "M-Disc" to be housed in the City Library so that preservation is assured.



The restored film will be presented at the April 21, 2014 program meeting of the Society.

AUTHOR HARVEY OYER III HONORED

Harvey E. Oyer III was selected Florida Distinguished Author for 2013 by the Board of Trustees of the Florida House in Washington, D. C. The award is in recognition of his children's books on Florida history which he has reviewed at past meetings of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. These are based on a journal written in the late 1800s and early 1900s by his great-grand uncle Charles Pierce who came to the South Florida area with his family as an 8-year old in 1873. School systems throughout Florida have used the books to help teach Florida history in fourth grade. The Florida House is a historic house in Washington, D.C. funded with private donations. Its purpose is to provide education and information.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEB SITE

The Boynton Beach Historical Society has a new web site, www.boyntonhistory.org. All editions of *The Historian* from 2002 through 2012 are now posted as well as the schedule of programs for the year with much more detail about the speakers and their topics. You will also find more information about the history of the area including many photographs you may not have seen before.

DEWEY PARK DEDICATION

On Tuesday, September 10, 2013, at 9:00 a.m. a newly renamed park is to be dedicated, sponsored by the City of Boynton Beach and the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The park located at Ocean Avenue and N.E. 4th Street (by the FEC Railroad Tracks) is named in honor of Fred S. Dewey and Byrd Spilman Dewey who first bought the land on the original town plat in 1892, and filed the plat in 1898.

The Deweys supported the fledgling Town of Boynton by donating land, advocating for a school and starting a library in the post office. The event is open to the public to honor our founding citizens.



Byrd Spilman Dewey and Fred S. Dewey with their dog

PROGRAMS: 2013 – 2014

Program Chair Ginger Pedersen has announced the following program schedule for 2013-2014:

Monday, September 16, 2013—

Billionaires and Butterfly Ballots with
David Willson, cartoonist and pioneer descendant

Monday, October 21, 2013—

The Royal Poinciana Hotel The Beach Club
Pat Crowley, Author

Monday, November 18, 2013—

Palm Beach: Then and Now
Anthony "Tony" Marconi, author and historian

Monday, January 20, 2014—

Pioneers of Lake Worth
A multimedia presentation by Janet Devries and
Ginger Pedersen

Monday, February 17, 2014—

Out of Mind, Out of Sight: A Revealing History of the
Florida State Hospital at Chattahoochee and Mental
Health Care in Florida
Sally Ling, Author and Florida's History Detective

Monday, March 17, 2014—

Africa USA – South Florida's Legendary African
Adventure

Shirley Schneider, daughter Africa USA's founder,
John Pedersen

Monday, April 21, 2014—

The History of Boynton Beach – 1976 Digitally Restored
Film

May, 2014 –

Annual Covered-dish Dinner (Date & Program TBA)

YOU TOO CAN HELP TO PRESERVE HISTORY!

Day	ARTICLES	
12/1	12 salmon	1.30
12/2	02 Bacon	1.00
	Egg 1/2 doz	20
4	1/2 doz Potatoes	68
	2 Eggs	50
5	3 Corn	37
6	10 Chocolate	50
7	02 Canned	15
	24 Canned	25
8	1/2 doz new Potatoes	50
9	02 Eggs	70
	3 Sugar	50
13	97 Beans	20
14	2 Sugar	1.40
15	14 Butter	73
16	1/2 doz Beans	15
19	1/2 doz Beans	15
20	1/2 doz Beans	135
21	1/2 doz Beans	36
	1/2 doz Beans	40
	1/2 doz Beans	48
22	3 Butter	2.04
	1/2 doz Potatoes	23
23	1/2 doz Potatoes	60
	1/2 doz Potatoes	40
	02 Cheese	25
	08 Raisin	60
	W. Beans	20.74

The above item was one from a cache of historic documents found on e-Bay that once belonged to George Potter one of the earliest pioneers in West Palm Beach. Potter was an illustrator, surveyor, merchant, builder and bank president among his many titles. He drew the original plat map for the town of West Palm Beach. His brother Richard Potter was the area's first doctor, and their sister Ellen Potter donated the land where the Dreyfus School of the Arts now stands. How did these items end up on ebay from a California seller? Perhaps they were a part of a larger collection from an elderly Potter member who had moved to and died in Las Vegas. Finders Ginger Pedersen and Janet DeVries contacted the owner and bought the items which they gave to the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. The items came from an unpaid storage locker in Las Vegas that was auctioned off.

Save your documents and give them to an Historical Society. Even something as simple as an old grocery bill has historic significance.

**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

In cooperation with our associated historical societies:

COCKTAILS IN PARADISE:

SUNDY HOUSE

Thursday September 19, 2013

5:30-7:30PM



West Palm Beach, FL | August 6, 2013 *Cocktails in Paradise* – a series of social events celebrating history – will kick off in September at the Sundy House Historical Inn, Restaurant and Botanical Garden in Delray Beach.

Young Friends of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, along with their partner historic and civic organizations in the South County region including the Boca Raton, Delray Beach, and Boynton Beach Historical Societies, Delray Beach Preservation Trust, Preservation Generation, Sandoway House Nature Center and the Spady Cultural Heritage Museum invite friends and lovers of history! It's a great way to catch up, network and celebrate events that have added to the distinctive charm of the South County.

The Sundy House was built by Delray Beach's first Mayor in 1902 for his family and, along with the surrounding, one-acre, lush garden, it continues to be a grand symbol of historic preservation, environmental stewardship and intrinsic beauty.

Cocktails in Paradise will be held from 5:30 – 7:30 PM on Thursday September 19. A complimentary signature cocktail will be featured with *hors d'oeuvres* crafted by celebrated Executive Chef Lindsay Autry. Beer and wine will also be available. SPACE IS LIMITED.

For Tickets contact www.historicalsocietytpbc.org



The Young Friends of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County | 2013-2014 season