



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.



2016

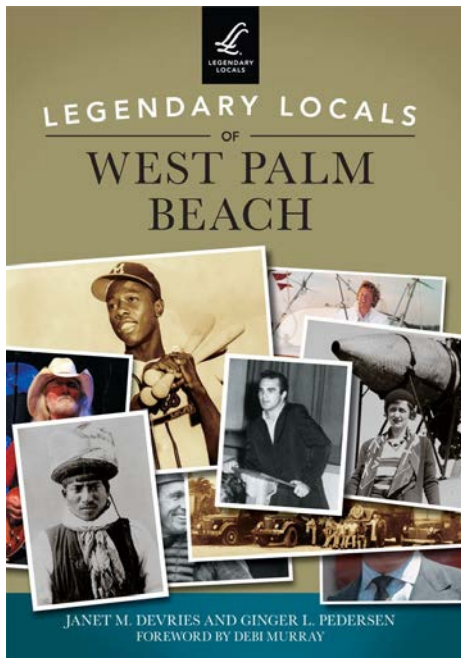


2016 Number 1

January 2016

LEGENDARY LOCALS of WEST PALM BEACH

is the topic scheduled for the program of the Boynton Beach Historical Society at the Boynton Woman's Club on Monday, January 18, 2016, 6:30 p.m.,. It is also the title of their new book which authors Janet DeVries and Ginger Pedersen will discuss for us to introduce many of West Palm Beach's pioneers, civic leaders, educators, business professionals and entrepreneurs who may have become heroes, celebrities, philanthropists, or even villains, but who all contributed to the mosaic we now know as West Palm Beach.



Baseball phenom Hank Aaron, movie heartthrob Burt Reynolds, astronaut Edgar Mitchell, 2015 *The Voice* winner Cassadee Pope, artist Ann Norton, musician George McCrae, agricultural

agent Marvin Mounts, zoo founder Paul Dreher, newspaper columnist Frank Cerebino and stained-glass artist Conrad Pickel are just a few of the personalities the authors describe in this lively multi-media presentation.

Both authors are members of the Board of Directors of the Boynton Beach Historical Society.



Janet DeVries

Janet is the immediate past president of the Boynton Beach Historical Society and continues to serve as our archivist. She earned her M.S. in Library and Information Studies from FSU and

received a B.A. in History from FAU. She is an Information Specialist and Archivist at the Palm Beach State College Library.



Ginger Pedersen

Ginger, a native Floridian who was reared in Jupiter, is the Society's webmaster and archivist. She received her PhD in Educational Leadership from FAU and holds both B.S. and M.S. degrees in Psychology. She is an administrator at Palm Beach State College. She also serves on the Historic Preservation Board of the City of Boynton Beach

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[Non-Elected]

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Our website is www.boyntonhistory.org. The e-mail address is boyntonhistory@gmail.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. Boynton Beach Historical Society number is 561-327-4690.

You can also find us on Facebook and Twitter:

www.facebook.com/historicboyntonbeach

[www.twitter.com/@boyntonhistory](https://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.

LIFE MEMBERS

Lenore Benson Raborn Boonstra
Randall and Ann B. Gill
Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak
Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson
Alexander "Sandy" Simon
Ernest and Norma Simon
Voncile Marshall Smith
Dorian Beck Trauger
Charlotte Tatum Weaver
Curtis and Nain Weems Weaver

CORPORATE MEMBERS – 2016

Florida Coalition for Preservation
George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi

A REMINDER – 2016 DUES

Membership in the Boynton Beach Historical Society is based on a calendar year, so membership dues for 2016 are due January 1. Thanks to all of you who have already paid. Members who have paid by January 1st were listed in the November issue of *The Historian* or are listed in this issue. If you have any questions about your membership status, check the

mailing label on your copy of this issue. If you are paid through 2016, a line above your name on the label will say "Dues expire 12-31-16."

We are happy to report that we have received to date four new Life Memberships. These are from Ernest and Norma Simon, Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak, Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson, and Voncile Marshall Smith. Camilla and Voncile were reported paid in the November issue, but have upgraded their memberships to Life.

The following are members who paid 2016 dues between November 1, 2015 and January 1, 2016:

Life Members:

Robert and Christian Oyer Macoviak
Scott and Camilla Smith Richardson
Ernest and Norma Simon
Voncile Marshall Smith

Corporate Members:

George and Christine Weaver Ternenyi

Patron Members:

Richard Castagnoli and Kathleen Mayberry Castagnoli
John I. Rogers
Daniel R. Suiter and Lisa Ames

Family Members:

Jean and Fred Birdsall
Don and Jeanne Combs
JoAnn, Irma and Delmar Hackle
Richard V. and Judith Merkel Howard
John and Rannie Melear
Ward C. and Martha P. Parker
Ronald and Isabella Pause
Michele Quigley
Leland and Donna Smith

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Helen Adams Bonomini
Jackie Brant
Brian Combs
Gillian Davis
Ramona Somerford Davis
Janet DeVries
Donald R. Edge
Carol Elder
Larry Grosser
Nancy Hogan
William G. (Bill) James
Carol R. Kuenzel
Wilese Jones Langford
Fred W. Love
Jeff Morgan
Susan Oyer
Richard Philpott

[Continued on page 3 –MEMBERSHIP]

[MEMBERSHIP - continued from page 2]

Sandra Pike
Anthony Rawson
Anne Rimler
Nancy Rosa
Mary Patricia Ryan
Mary Lou Muster Ryder
Susan Merkel Shaffer
Ovedia Weeks Stevens
Anne Watts
Herbert Zobel

Thank you all for sending in your dues by early January. We are especially happy to welcome new members Jackie Brant, Jean and Fred Birdsall, Carol Elder, and Michele Quigley.

Please, others who plan to renew, if you send in your check without our having to send a second reminder, you make our lives simpler. All effort completing mailouts, preparing The Historian, maintaining the websites, and planning and scheduling programs and other activities, is done by volunteers. We have no paid staff to help us. Thank you for your cooperation.

If you are renewing, you do not need to complete a membership form unless something has changed—address, telephone, email, etc. Simply place your check for the amount of the chosen type of membership into an envelope, add postage and mail it to Boynton Beach Historical Society, P. O. Box 12, Boynton Beach, FL 33425.

MORE ABOUT THE BAREFOOT MAILMAN

[The following is derived from a posting on Ginger Pedersen's web site
PalmBeachPast.org]

As she has continued to develop her research skills, Ginger Pedersen has given us much new information on some of the people who have contributed to the development of the area. Some are the names she has discovered during preparation for the tours of Woodlawn Cemetery in West Palm Beach that she and Janet DeVries conduct on a regular basis.

One such person was the wife of one of the Barefoot Mailmen, Charles Pierce, who came with his parents to the area around Lake Worth when he was a boy of 8 in 1873. Her name was Yallahs Lizette Wallack whom Charles married in Lemon City in 1896.



Yallahs Pierce in 1906

Relatives of the Pierces admit they knew little of Yallahs.

Ginger found some small articles in Palm Beach newspapers detailing her succumbing to an illness when she was 47, but the family knew little more than that she was born in Jamaica and was the mother of Charles Leon "Chuck" Pierce. After their marriage, Yallahs and Charles moved to Boynton.

A 1910 Federal Census record entry for Yallahs indicates both her parents were born in England. Ginger began internet searches that showed her parents had been theatrical performers who travelled widely in the Caribbean, South America and the American South. Yallahs who was born in 1872, emigrated to America in 1874 at age 2 and was living in Key West where the 1880 Census listed her as Alice Wallack. Her mother died when Yallahs was 13 and the mother's obituary indicates Yallahs was in school in Key West.

Yallahs' mother, Fannie, with her husband Watty Wallack and his cousin and comedian James A. Rider formed a group of three called the Wallack Tripologue. Fannie could sing in seven languages and was much renowned for her singing, dancing and elaborate costumes.



THE LATE MRS FANNIE WALLACK.

Much of what we know of life around Lake Worth comes from journals written by Charles Pierce and his sister Lillie Pierce Voss during their lifetimes. But neither wrote much about Yallahs.



Charles W. Pierce

For more about Ginger's research on Yallahs, visit her web site listed at the beginning of this article.

EXCERPTS FROM THE 1990s

[Editor's Note: In the late 1990s The Boynton Beach Historical Society began printing a quarterly newsletter called "The Historian." In 2000 printing was suspended for a number of reasons, the main one being that no willing editor was available.

In the fall of 2002, we began again, but with a change. *The Historian* served as a meeting notice as well as a newsletter, and since we have 8 program meetings a year, we moved from a quarterly paper to one to be issued to precede each program meeting.

As your Editor, I have completed 14 years of copies, and this issue begins year 15. Although issues from those early years are on line, some readers may not have easy access to them and some of the articles deserve to be recycled today. The material below is from Vol. 1 No 1 Fall 1996 and from January, February, March 1997 (2nd Edition).]

"The following are excerpts from the biography of Boynton pioneer Rose Murray written by her daughter, Mary Lou Muster Ryder:

"Mary Edith Murray was born at home on December 7, 1909, the tenth and last child of Horace Bentley Murray and Mary Elizabeth Smith. She was born in the family home completed in 1909 which still stands at 217 S.E. Third St. The old homestead was built partially from wood washed ashore from the shipwreck of the lumber ship *Coquimbo*. (Editor's note: the antique store on the southeast corner of Ocean Ave. and S.E.4th St. was also built with some of that lumber. The floor is supported by 12 x 12 beams.)

"Mom often told me that at her birth the attending physician and nurse told Granddad to take care of his wife as the baby was too small and couldn't live. But with a lot of love, warmth and patience and a little rum, her father pulled her through. I always believed that my grandparents must have been extremely good nurturers as well as possessing good genes to have given birth to 10 children between 1890 and 1909, all of whom survived well into adulthood. A rare happenstance in those times.

"As a youngster, Mom would fish with her father on the Ocean Beach as she always called it. They would dig a big hole near the water for their captured fish. The hole would fill with water keeping the fish fresh until it was time to put them on a stringer to take home. Her job then was to take some of the fish to the neighbors while Granddad cleaned and smoked the rest. I believe she said Grandma put some down in crocks of salt. Mom was also asked to share Grandma's fresh baked bread with other townspeople. Mom told of her brother raising baby alligators and of the youngest helping with the feeding of the mule, horses and chickens.

"Another fond memory mother related to me was about the town Christmas Tree. The entire community would gather to share the meaning and joy of the season with singing and presents for the children. Another shared remembrance was the town's basketball team, which, although quite good, was soundly trounced by a team from Cuba. Seems her phrase was, 'They were much larger than we were and they beat the socks off of us.' Her early summers were spent with her older sister Florence and her husband Jim Thompson on his sailboat which was chartered

during the winter but turned into family fun during the summer. They idled the time away swimming, diving, rowing the dinghy and catching conch and fish to supplement the family meals. The summer she was 14 or 15 Mom accompanied her parents to California to spend the year with brother Glenn and his growing family in Yuba City. She returned to Boynton and attended Lake Worth High School as the Boynton school was not begun until 1928. She did not graduate from high school but dropped out to marry Paul Taylor Muster. Grandpa Muster owned a bar and confectioner's store on what is now Ocean Ave. near Hy. 1. Grandma Muster owned and managed the Buckeye Hotel at the northwest corner of Ocean and Third St."



The Murrays lived in this palm thatched house before they built the house pictured below where Rose was born



The house where Rose was born still stands today. The basic house was built in part from the cargo lumber salvaged from the shipwreck of the lumber carrier *Coquimbo*

Two of Rose Murray's children are currently 2016 members of the Boynton Beach Historical Society. The youngest, Ramona Somerford Davis lives in Pompano Beach and Mary Lou Ryder Muster lives in Branford in west central Florida. Rose's son Paul and her daughter Cheryl are deceased.

BERTHA WILLIAMS CHADWELL ARRIVED in BOYNTON in 1907

By Mrs. Mark White

[Adapted from an article on May 23, 1963 in the *Boynton Beach Star* based on an interview with Bertha Williams Chadwell by the author.]

She came to Boynton for a visit and stayed.. It was in 1907 that Mr and Mrs. J.J. Williams came down from Deland to visit her aunt and uncle Mr. and Mrs. Jess Daughtery.

J.J. worked in the turpentine industry. The Williams hoped to own their own business, and they had paid a deposit on one which came onto the market after the death of its owner. But a claim against his estate delayed closing the deal, so they came down to visit Uncle Jess and Aunt Ida who have lived in Boynton since 1902.

They found Jess Daughtery busy growing tomatoes, a flourishing business in Boynton at that time. He persuaded J.J. to try his hand as their visit came at the right growing time. After a successful harvest, the Williams returned to the Deland area. The law suit was still not settled, so they returned to Boynton for another try at growing tomatoes. By the next year they realized that the turpentine business they were attempting to buy had lost value because it was not being worked. By now the Williams had decided that Boynton seemed like home and they returned to stay and raise tomatoes.

At that time about 30 families lived in the town and everyone knew each other. It was a quiet country town and Bertha Williams found it a great change from the established college town of Deland. After the Williams had her horse and carriage brought down and she had more mobility, she was happier.

Across the canal on "the ridge" was the Boynton Hotel which had been built by Major Boynton for whom the town was named. It was the most active social spot in the area during the winter season. In its earliest days prospective guests came by train to Boynton and were met by the hotel's mule-drawn surrey. Later the surreys were replaced by the automobile. Train schedules were extremely variable leading to many stories that the trains were often hours late.

Hotels were very interesting to Bertha Williams, an interest aroused in part by the knowledge that an uncle had built the first one in Daytona Beach. Shortly after her arrival, the Williams and the Daughtery family walked over to see the Boynton Hotel. A group of male guests were busy at target practice. One of them offered a friendly challenge to Jess Daughtery who suggested his niece take his place. A girl who was responsible for bringing the payroll out to the turpentine distillery from town needed to be able to shoot—and she was a marksman.

Her ability to handle a gun brought her an immediate membership in the Gun Club. This membership led to a life long friendship with the Boynton family, particularly with the daughters Annie Boynton Parker and Frances Boynton Carpenter.

Many gay times at the hotel helped to enliven the times in the quiet old town of Boynton. In addition to the large ferry which carried the carriages over the canal, there was a smaller one for foot passengers.

In an interview Bertha recalled an early day tragedy. The Austin girls, twins about age 12, headed to the beach with their collie dog. Because they were unfamiliar with the ferry, they accidentally tipped it throwing them into the water. The dog saved one child, but the other drowned. The survivor, who later became Mrs. Clyde Miller, was a lifetime resident of Boynton. Her nephews, Bernal and Howard Austin became local businessmen.

Tomato growing continued to be a thriving business. Some fields were where stores are located today. On one good day, twenty carloads were shipped out. Jobs were abundant for pickers, packers and buyers. Sometimes there were no hotel accommodations available for the workers. Bertha Williams and Norman Campel pooled their own

homes for living quarters and she managed a dining room. The late M.A. Weaver recalled that he had his first meal in Boynton there.

Crops became more diversified. Farmers planted beans and okra as well as tomatoes. They planted pineapples from Fort Pierce to Fort Lauderdale. In Boynton the fields extended from the canal west to what is now Seacrest Boulevard.

The Woolbright family were among the pioneer pineapple growers. Bertha said that this industry was killed by the draining of the land during the early boom days. Irrigation, as it is known and practiced by local farmers today, was not understood.

In the early days here sickness could become a real problem. It was customary for the women to help out at such times, sharing nursing duties. Most babies made their appearance with the aid of a friendly neighbor. When home remedies failed word was sent to Dr. Cason in Delray. Help was unlikely to come in a hurry as he had to travel by bicycle. The Cason Methodist Church in Delray is a memorial to the Cason family.

The Boom brought about many changes, Property values skyrocketed over night.



Bertha Williams Chadwell

[The information from the article continued on another page. Unfortunately what is adapted above was all that was available to your editor at this time. Most library holdings of *Boynton Beach Star* are incomplete. The *Star* was published from 1961-1968. It ceased publication about the time the Boynton Beach City Library was established and long before digitalization made saving newspaper copies readily accessible to libraries and other sources.]

PLEASE COME TO CITY HALL JANUARY 19 TO HELP SAVE THE 1927 HIGH SCHOOL

The Boynton Beach City Commission postponed the demolition of the 1927 school house last fall to allow Rick Gonzalez, a well-known restoration architect from West Palm Beach, an opportunity to develop a plan to save this historic old building. Rick made a preliminary presentation to interested participants several weeks ago. On Tuesday, January 19 at the regular City Commission meeting he will present his final proposal to the Commission.

We urge all of you who can to please attend that meeting at City Hall to show your support for helping to save the school. As many readers know, the Boynton Beach Historical Society has urged the preservation and restoration of this building for nearly 20 years.

**BOYNTON BEACH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

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Name _____

2nd Member's Name _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

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THE SOCIETY IS A 501 © 3 Organization so dues are TAX DEDUCTIBLE!

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP: INDIVIDUAL (\$25.00) _____
(Check one) FAMILY (\$35.00) _____
 PATRON (\$50.00) _____
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 LIFE (\$500.00) One time
 Payment only.

The membership; year is from January 1 to December 31 of each year.
Dues are not pro rated.

Complete this form and mail it with a check for the appropriate amount to
Boynton Beach Historical Society, POB 12, Boynton Beach FL 33424-4012,
You may pay by PayPal at www.boyntonhistory.org

The Historian

Boynton Beach Historical Society
Post Office Box 12
Boynton Beach FL 33425-0012

WHAT: LEGENDARY LOCALS
of West Palm Beach, a Multi-Media
Presentation and book-signing
by Janet Devries and Ginger
Pedersen

WHEN: Monday, January 18, 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Boynton Woman's Club
1010 South Federal Highway

OPEN FREE TO THE PUBLIC



Chuck Pierce, the son of Charles and Yallahs Pierce, in the early 1900s, is shown at the entrance to one of the caves found along the beach south of what is now Woolbright Road. The caves are no longer visible, probably because of storms, shifting weather conditions, and development.